

# pratical guide

## Administrations

- Public service, portal site for French authorities  
[www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr)
- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue  
Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle (DGEFP)  
[www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr](http://www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr)  
Tél. + 33 1 44 38 38 38
- Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research  
[www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)  
Tél. + 33 1 55 55 10 10
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
[www.agriculture.gouv.fr](http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr)  
Tél. + 33 1 49 55 49 55

## Information on training and employment

- Pôle emploi (employment centre)  
[www.pole-emploi.fr](http://www.pole-emploi.fr)
- Orientation pour tous (lifelong career guidance)  
[www.orientation-pour-tous.fr](http://www.orientation-pour-tous.fr)
- Centre de développement de l'information sur la formation permanente (Centre Inffo – Centre for the development of information on continuing training)  
[www.centre-inffo.fr](http://www.centre-inffo.fr)
- Centres régionaux d'animation et de ressources d'information sur la formation (Carif – Regional training management, resource and information centres)  
[www.intercarif.org](http://www.intercarif.org)
- Réseau Information Jeunesse (an information network for young people)  
[www.cidj.com](http://www.cidj.com)
- Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions (Onisep – National office for information on education and professions)  
[www.onisep.fr](http://www.onisep.fr)
- Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles (RNCP) – National directory of professional certification) – a directory registering almost 10,000 current certificates (diplomas, professional qualifications, qualification certification).  
[www.cncp.gouv.fr](http://www.cncp.gouv.fr)

## European Union programs and news

- For information about European education and training programmes, including Erasmus+, please get in touch with the agency in your country.  
[eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/national-erasmus-plus-offices\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/contacts/national-erasmus-plus-offices_en)  
For France : [www.agence-erasmus.fr](http://www.agence-erasmus.fr)
- The Learning Opportunities and Qualifications (LOQ) in Europe portal provides information about study and training opportunities in Europe.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus>
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop): the go-to European Union agency for vocational training and education.  
[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

## Preparing for a stay in France...

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' site provides a large number of recommendations for people wishing to come and study in France. it provides information on the formalities that must be completed prior to a stay in France.  
[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france)
- The Euroguidance France portal has a host of information about the French system and offers help when preparing a stay in France for study or work purposes.  
[www.euroguidance-france.org](http://www.euroguidance-france.org)

### ... to come and study

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

### ... to come and train

- Educagri, the website dedicated to public sector agricultural teaching in France, provides information about schools and colleges, diplomas and sectors within the agricultural teaching system. it also indicates intake sizes for halls of residence and details international co-operation programmes.  
[www.educagri.fr](http://www.educagri.fr)
- The «Assemblée permanente des chambres des métiers et de l'artisanat» (APCMA) provides information on courses in trades and crafts subjects.  
[www.artisanat.fr](http://www.artisanat.fr)
- The «Chambres de commerce et d'industrie» network provides information about all the colleges and schools managed by the Chambers of Commerce and industry.  
[www.cci.fr/web/formations](http://www.cci.fr/web/formations)
- The «Groupement d'établissements de l'Éducation nationale» (Greta) prepares students for the 700 technological and vocational diplomas offered by the Ministry of Education, in more than 190 clusters.  
[www.eduscol.education.fr](http://www.eduscol.education.fr)
- The «Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes» (Afp) organises vocational diploma courses (more than 350 diplomas), in over 200 locations.  
[www.afpa.fr](http://www.afpa.fr)
- The "Conservatoire national des arts et métiers" (Cnam), a public higher education establishment, offers more than 500 courses in the industrial and tertiary sectors, each leading to a diploma or certificate.  
[www.cnam.fr](http://www.cnam.fr)
- The network of French university continuing education departments provides information about courses on offer by region and areas of training.  
[www.fcu.fr](http://www.fcu.fr)
- The "Conférence des grandes écoles" supplies a list of leading colleges by specialist subject. it also indicates entrance requirements for foreign students.  
[www.cge.asso.fr](http://www.cge.asso.fr)

# Vocational training in France

Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Bretagne Centre-Val de Loire Corse Grand Est Guadeloupe Guyane Hauts-de-France Ile-de-France La Réunion Martinique Mayotte Normandie Nouvelle-Aquitaine Nouvelle-Calédonie Occitanie Pays de la Loire Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur



## An Answer to your questions

In France, people have access to learning throughout their lives as part of the on-going education system. In 2014, 43.5 % of the salaries took advantage of a training action, a skills audit or an accreditation of life experience (known as VAE, "Validation des acquis de l'expérience").

On-going education enables individuals to follow a course either in the form of initial schooling, or a university curriculum for school pupils and students, or as vocational training for any person already in the work force, whatever their age. The efforts made in the area of lifelong vocational training and apprenticeships represented 1.48 % of the French gross domestic product in 2014<sup>(1)</sup>.

The vocational training sector in France consists of two areas, each of which is relatively independent of the other:

- initial vocational training, which concerns young people in full-time education and apprenticeships ;
- lifelong vocational training which concerns young people who have left or completed their initial education and adults already in the workplace.

France is undergoing an extension of schooling at all ages. The vocational training sector is also being given greater credence and the work-based learning system is becoming increasingly common, either as part of the school curriculum or within the framework of a contract of employment.

Over the last few years, the co-operation between school and business has increased noticeably and closer bridges have been established. The training/learning sector is enjoying major development, which is also part of EU policy.

Besides, the State attributed to Regions, a whole competence of initial and continuing vocational training.

1. Source : Budget Plan 2017.

Centre Inffo (non-profit society under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Health) is the french national centre for the development of information on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships.

Its role is to provide information, documentation and studies in these fields. Its targets are continuing training professionals who train, inform, advise and guide the end users.

Centre Inffo has a privileged relationship with the State, with regional authorities, with employers and trade union organisations and with main training professionals.

Centre Inffo groups together specialists in law, documentation, data bases, training market and innovative practices, journalism and publishing professionals.

Its role is:

- to co-ordinate information and documentation on continuing vocational education and training,
- to edit and publish periodicals, information documents, technical files and other information tools,
- to contribute to Government information services, awareness operations and campaigns,
- to provide information on the initiatives and operations of international, national and regional institutions,
- to organise study and information days,
- to realise inquiries and studies for bodies or for companies.

Centre Inffo is the national correspondent of Cedefop as the leader of ReferNet project consortium [www.cedefop.europa.eu/en](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en). It is also member of the European network on guidance and mobility issues: Euroguidance [www.euroguidance-france.org](http://www.euroguidance-france.org).

Centre pour le développement de l'information sur la formation permanente (Centre for the development of information on continuing education)

4, avenue du Stade-de-France  
93218 Saint-Denis-La Plaine cedex  
Tél. : 33 1 55 93 91 91  
[contact.europe@centre-inffo.fr](mailto:contact.europe@centre-inffo.fr)





# initial training

to provide a place in the work force

In France, education is organised on a national basis. It is free and, in the main, non religious. Private education accounts for one pupil in five. In 2015, 22.7 % of French population were attending an educational establishment<sup>(1)</sup>, that means 15.5 million of pupil and students at the beginning of the new school year 2015.

## Initial learning

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. It provides young people with teaching in general and professional subjects. The educational system, which is headed by the Ministry of Education, consists of 3 levels divided into "cycles" (cf. table). In 2014, the cost of education within France amounted to 146 billion euros, or 6.8 % of the gross domestic product<sup>(2)</sup>.

## Three educational choices

Three educational choices are available to pupils: general education, vocational courses and technological curricula. The last two result in diplomas ranging from the Certificate of Professional Aptitude (known as CAP for "Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle" / EQF level 3<sup>(3)</sup>) to an engineering degree (EQF level 8) and include the higher-grade technician's diploma (known as BTS for "Brevet de Technicien Supérieur", 2 years' study after leaving school / EQF level 5). They can be obtained by following a school curriculum, taking an apprenticeship, studying on a work-based learning system or obtaining a recognition of skills.

Diplomas are designed and redefined by the relevant public authorities in co-operation with trade unions and employers' associations through Consultative Professional Commissions (known as CPC for "Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives").

All the professional diplomas (EQF levels 3 to 5) are organized in units, you could obtain in a separate way, and registered in a specific directory<sup>(4)</sup>.

## Agriculture education

These courses are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture. They provide varying levels of vocational education ranging from EQF level 3 to level 8, either in the form of initial schooling, continuous training or work-based learning.

## Professionalism for higher education

Higher education offers general courses and vocational training courses from technician level (2 years after school) to engineer (5 years after school). Such courses are open to school leavers holding a secondary school leaving qualification and to holders of the university entrance diploma (known as DAEU, "Diplôme d'Accès aux Études Universitaires").

Enrolments on engineering courses are seeing a significant increase (+ 3.2% as an annual average between 2000 and 2015 outside universities), as are enrolments in business, management and accounting schools (+ 5.2% as an annual average between 2000 and 2015)<sup>(5)</sup>.

The "grandes écoles", elite higher education institutes which have a reputation for excellence, are controlled by various ministries e.g. Education, Defence, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Fisheries.

1. Source : Ministry of Education, Repères et Références Statistiques 2016.
2. Id.
3. EQF : European Qualification Framework.
4. The national directory of vocational certifications, known as "Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles" (RNCP) : [www.cncp.fr](http://www.cncp.fr)
5. Source: Ministry of Education, Note flash : Les effectifs d'étudiants dans l'enseignement supérieur en 2015-2016.

# ... and continuing vocational training

This concerns people already in the work force (staff in both the private and the public sectors, non-salaried workers) and about to enter the work force (job-seekers).

The aim of lifelong vocational training is to give everyone the chance to acquire and update the knowledge and skills required for their professional development and to move up at least one qualification level during their working life. It represents a key factor in securing a chosen career path as well as for employee promotion (see Article L6111-1 of the French Labour Code).

In the past, training opportunities depended on the status of the individual. The situation changed in January 2015 when the Personal Training Account (CPF – Compte Personnel de Formation) came into force, giving every worker the opportunity to call upon his or her right to training (see below).

In general, the regions are responsible for vocational training and learning; they draw up their own training policies and implement a regional public training service (SPRF – Service Public Régional de la Formation).

Social partners play a vital role particularly in the choice of learning for staff in the private sector and the management of funding provided by companies.

Vocational training providers may be private, public or part of the Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Trades or Agriculture (cf. p4). More than 21 000<sup>(1)</sup> have this as their main sector of activity in 2013.

In 2014, France spent 31.6 billion euros on lifelong vocational training and apprenticeship<sup>(2)</sup>. This funding comes mainly from companies (45 %), regional authorities (14 %) and the central government (12 %). The remaining 29 % result from the other public actors and from households.

## Personal Training Account (CPF – Compte Personnel de Formation) and Personal Activity Account (CPA – Compte Personnel d'Activité)

New rights and mechanisms aim to help all workers in managing their career paths and the changes they meet along the way:

- The Personal Training Account (CPF), created by the French Law of 5 March 2014, is available to anyone aged 16 or over (in work or looking for work), from the time they enter the world of work until the time they retire. It takes the form of an account credited in hours every year up to a limit of 150 hours, which is used to finance training courses or support for accreditation of life experience.
- The Personal Activity Account (CPA), which came into being on 1 January 2017, brings together the rights of an individual under one account: the Personal Training Account (CPF), the Personal Account for Prevention of Difficulties at Work (for employees exposed to harmful occupational hazards) and the Citizen's Commitment Account (linked to volunteer activities).

## An obligation for companies to participate in the funding of vocational training for their own staff

The obligation for companies to finance ongoing vocational training was simplified on 1 January 2015. It is equal to 1 % of the wages bill for private companies with 11 employees or more, and to 0.55 % of the wages bill for those employing fewer than 11 employees.

These contributions are managed jointly and in equal proportions (employers/workers) by collecting bodies operating at national or regional level per professional sector, or operating at an inter-professional level.

The ways in which the contribution is distributed vary according to the size of the workforce at the company and the mechanism in question, for example, the Individual Training Leave (CIF – Congé Individuel de Formation) or training plan. In particular, part of the contribution is also allocated to financing the Personal Training Account (CPF). The law no longer obliges companies with more than 300 employees to finance the training plan; instead, it establishes an obligation to ensure that employees are properly suited to their jobs and that they still have the ability to carry out that job.

## Accreditation of life experience: Recognition of prior learning

- University entrance: the accreditation of life experience (system known as "validation des acquis de l'expérience" or "VAE" in France) allows applicants who do not have the necessary diploma or qualifications but who have a foreign diploma, professional experience or informally acquired knowledge to gain entry to university courses.
- Obtaining certification: anyone who can prove that they have carried out a professional or voluntary activity or have held trade union duties, a local electoral mandate or a local elected role for at least a year, relevant to the final aim of the desired diploma or qualification, can have the knowledge and competencies acquired in the course of that activity accredited in order to obtain all or part of the desired certification, i.e. to be exempted from all or some of the relevant examinations.

## Employee training

Employees in the private sector have access to training courses either at the request of their employers within the framework of a training scheme or at their own request within the leave of absence system, the longest period of absence being the individual training leave known as "Congé Individuel de Formation" (CIF). Similar arrangements exist for public sector workers.

### ☐ Training Plan

This includes all the training activities for which the employer is responsible. The scheme is submitted to the works committee for discussion. Employees are considered to be on a work-related assignment and continue to work under their contract as normal. The employer has two possibilities to provide training courses to his employees. On the one hand the member of staff undergoing training is considered to be undertaking professional work and is paid by the company. On the other hand, employees attend training courses outside working hours at the employer's request and receive an allowance equivalent to 50% of their salary.

### ☐ Individual training Leave

This enables any salaried member of staff to follow his/her own choice of training program during working hours. Such a programme is different to any included in the training plan. On average, such training leave lasts for one year. During this period, the employee is paid (between 80% and 100% of his basic salary). He is also entitled to request that his job be kept open for him in the company. Staff covered by a fixed-duration contract of employment can also take individual training leave.

### ☐ Personal Training Account (CPF)

The type of training that can be taken using the credited hours are essentially courses providing professional qualifications, as well as activities to acquire a professional knowledge and skills base, known as CléA certification, and activities to support accreditation of life experience (see box).

### ☐ Vocational skills audit

This enables staff members to analyse their personal and professional skills in order to define a vocational project or establish a plan for vocational training. It can be carried out as part of the training plan or during leave of absence.

## Training for self employed workers

Self employed or non-salaried workers (farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, liberal professionals) can also take advantage of training programs. They are required to participate in the funding of their training through the payment of a contribution to a State-registered collecting body.

1. Source: Budget Plan 2017.
2. Source : Id.

## VET IN THE FRENCH EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

