



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 72 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 summarises the specific features of both initial and continuing vocational training, the methods for accessing additional information, and the main networks of French operators, in terms of vocational training.

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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 granted the Regions full competence in continuous professional training. Initiated in 1982, this decentralisation process has had to be put into perspective since 2018..

The field of vocational training in France consists of two relatively independent units:

- initial vocational training concerns young people with full-time educational 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 market¹.

France is experiencing a context of extending schooling to all ages as well as promoting the vocational sector and developing work-study programmes, with educational status or under an employment contract (mainly through apprenticeships). In recent years, cooperation between the school and the company has increased and there have been more and more gateways.

Furthermore, since the start of the 2020 school year, 16-year-olds have been required to train until the age of 18. This training obligation can be met by several means: schooling, apprenticeship, training course, civic service, support scheme or social and vocational integration.

The efforts made for continuing vocational training and apprenticeship, excluding direct business spending, amounted to €28.3 billion in 2021². Since 2015, the French government has notably supported the development of apprenticeship, from 283,500 contracts in 2015 to 809,000 new contracts in 2022³.

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: Finance Bill for 2023 - Yellow budget Professional training.

3 Source: <https://poem.travail-emploi.gouv.fr>.

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INITIAL TRAINING THAT GIVES PRIDE OF PLACE TO THE VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS...

The French education system is governed by general principles: education is compulsory, public-school education is free, public education is secular, education is a right¹. One in five educates one in five students. At the start of the 2021 academic year, in mainland France and the overseas departments and regions, the entire public and private education system had 12.8 million students². In total, 22% of the population is enrolled in school.

Initial training

It is compulsory for ages 3 to 16 and offers young people general and professional education. The education system, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, includes 3 degrees (first, secondary and higher) shared in cycles (see diagram). Domestic expenditure on education (DIE) is estimated at €168,8 billion in 2021. It has doubled since 1980 and represents 7% of GDP³.

Three possible pathways

Three sectors are offered: general, technological and vocational education. These last two award diplomas ranging from CAP (EQF level 3) to engineering (EQF level 8) via the BTS (EQF level 5). They can be obtained through schooling, as part of apprenticeships, or through validation of learning. Diplomas are designed and renovated by the public authorities in consultation with employee and employer unions as part of Professional Advisory Commissions (CPC). All level EQF level 3 to EQF level 5 professional diplomas are organised into units that may be obtained in a disjointed manner. They are registered in a national directory⁴.

Agricultural education

It is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. It offers varied professional training, in initial, continuing or work-study training, ranging from level EQF level 3 to level EQF level 8.

Professionalization of higher education

Higher education offers general training as well as vocational training, from technician level (EQF level 5) to engineer level (EQF level 7). It is available to holders of a Baccalaureate, as well as holders of a university studies access diploma (DAEU)⁵.

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

Apprenticeship

The aim of apprenticeships is to provide young people aged 16 to 29 with general, theoretical and practical training to acquire one of the diplomas ranging from the CAP (certificate of professional aptitude) to the title of engineer.

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 certification).

At the end of November 2022, there were 979,700 apprentices, up 14.0% year-on-year⁶. 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.

1. Source: The main principles of education <https://eduscol.education.fr/cid47766/les-grands-principes.html>

2. Source: Ministry of National Education. Benchmarks and References Statistics 2022.

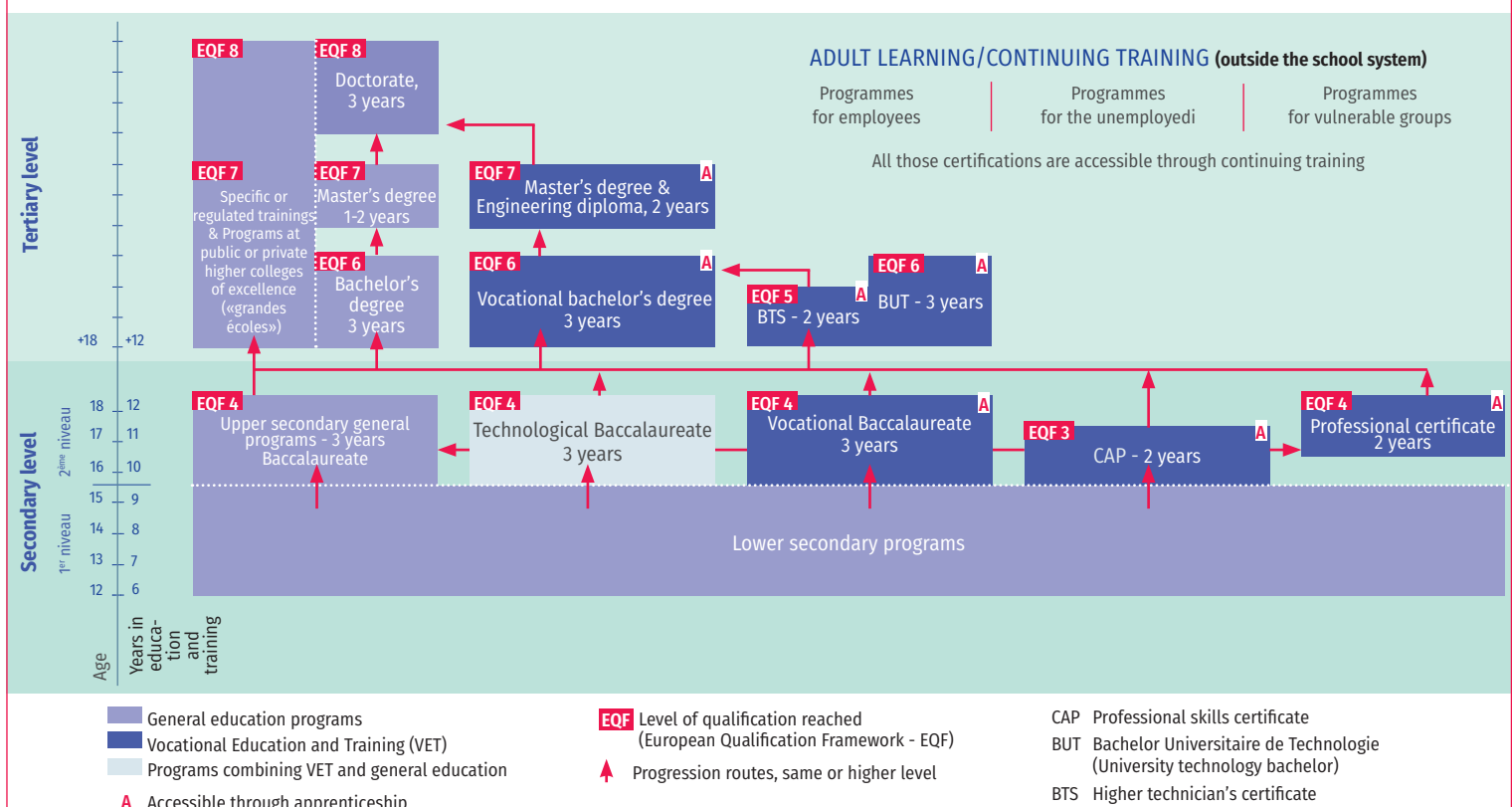
3. Source: Information note n° 22.34, November 2022, Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Directorate (DEPP).

4. The National Directory of Professional Certifications (RNCP): <https://certificationprofessionnelle.fr>

5. Source: Ministry of National Education

6. Source: <https://poem.travail-emploi.gouv.fr>.

VET IN THE FRENCH EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM



...AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

It concerns people already involved in working life (private sector employees, civil servants, non-salaried workers) or who are committed to it (job seekers).

Lifelong professional training aims to enable each person to acquire and update knowledge and skills that promote their professional development, as well as to progress by at least one level of qualification during their professional life. It is a decisive factor in securing career paths and promoting employees (Article L6111-1 of the Labour Code).

Historically, training schemes depended on the status of their beneficiary. The situation has changed since January 2015 with the implementation of the Personal Training Account (CPF), which opens training rights on its own initiative for each asset (see below).

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

The social partners have an essential role, in particular in the choice of training policies for private sector employees and the management of part of financing from companies.

Professional training organisations are private, public or consular (see page 4). In 2021, more than 78,600 organisations generated revenue of €23.5 billion¹.

France spent €28.3 billion in 2021 on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships². This financing comes mainly from skills operators -see below- (32.9%), the Regions (12.7%) and the State (26.3%), other public players among which the national employment agency (21.7%), the remaining 6.4% comes from the households.

France skills

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

Under the supervision of the Minister responsible for vocational training, its role is to:

- distribute the pooled funds to the various players in vocational training and apprenticeships.
- regulate the quality of training.
- make recommendations on costs, coverage rules and access to training.
- manage the national directory of professional certifications.
- ensure the proper implementation of the reform on professional training and apprenticeships.

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

An obligation to participate in financing vocational training for the active population

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

This contribution must be managed by a national public body, France Compétences (see box below). This institution then allocates the amounts collected between different bodies responsible for financing training schemes, including skills operators (financing bodies managed by social partners).

The distribution keys vary according to the system concerned: work-study (apprenticeship and professionalisation), personal training account (CPF), skills development plan for companies with fewer than 50 employees, etc. The law no longer obliges companies with 50 employees to draw up a skills development plan (see below). On the other hand, it establishes an obligation to ensure the adaptation of employees to their workstation, and to ensure the maintenance of their capacity to hold a job.

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

• Personal Training Account (CPF)

To promote their access to lifelong professional training, each person has a personal training account from the time they enter the labour market until retirement, regardless of their status. This account contributes to the acquisition of a first level of qualification or the development of its skills and qualifications.

The CPF, created in 2014, is open to anyone aged 16 or over. It takes the form of an account funded in euros each year, i.e. €500 per year, €800 for an unqualified audience, within the limit of a total over 10 years.

The account is used to finance certifying training, skills assessment, or support for VAE. The person uses a smartphone app to choose and buy the desired action.

Between November 2019 and April 2022: 3.9 million CPF applications were accepted and 5.11 billion euros spent³.

• The skills development plan

A new name for the training plan, it includes all the training actions for which the employer is responsible. This plan is subject to consultation of the economic and social committee (former works council). The employee is considered to be on a professional assignment and continues to perform his employment contract. The employer has two methods: either the employee is trained during working hours and continues to receive his salary, or he is sent to training outside working hours.

• The skills assessment

This is a service that allows employees to analyse their personal and professional skills in order to define a professional or training plan. It may be carried out as part of the plan or on leave.

Validation of acquired experience

- For entering university: the VAE allows candidates who do not have the required diploma or qualification, but who can provide evidence of a foreign diploma, professional experience or informal knowledge, to access university training.
- To obtain certification: any person who, for at least one year, has held a professional or or who has held trade union responsibilities, a local electoral office or a local elective function in relation to the purpose of the diploma or qualification concerned, may have the knowledge and skills acquired during this activity validated, to obtain all or part of this certification, i.e. be exempted, in whole or in part, from certain tests constituting it.
- The right to validate prior learning will be strengthened in 2023.

Training for self-employed workers

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

1. Source: Finance Bill 2023 - Yellow Budget Vocational Training.

2. Source: Id.

3. Source: data on www.moncompteformation.gouv.fr

Administrations

- ☐ Public service, administration portal
www.service-public.fr
- ☐ Ministry of Labour, full Employment, and Integration
Delegate Minister for vocational education and training under the
education and labour ministers'
www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr
- ☐ Ministry of National Education and Youth
www.education.gouv.fr
- ☐ Ministry of Higher Education and Research
www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr
- ☐ Ministry of Agriculture and Food sovereignty
www.agriculture.gouv.fr

Information on training and employment

- ☐ Pôle emploi (National employment centre)
www.pole-emploi.fr
- ☐ France Compétences
www.france-competences.fr
- ☐ Centre for the development of information on continuing education
(Centre Inffo)
www.centre-inffo.fr
- ☐ Mon Compte Formation
www.moncompteformation.gouv.fr
- ☐ Regional animation and training information resource centres (Carif)
www.intercarif.org
- ☐ Youth Information Network
www.cidj.com
- ☐ National Office for Information on Education and Occupations
(Onisep)
www.onisep.fr

To prepare a professional stay in France...

- ☐ The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides numerous tips to people wishing to come to France and informs them of the formalities to be completed
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

... 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.org
- ☐ The ENIC-NARIC France centre is the French information centre for academic and professional recognition of diplomas
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
- ☐ The Permanent Assembly of the Chambers of Trades and Crafts (APCMA) provides information on training in the craft trades
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/ressources/formations
- ☐ The Groupements d'établissements de l'Education 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
- ☐ The National Association for Adult Vocational Training (Afpa)
www.afpa.fr
- ☐ The Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (Cnam), a public institution of higher education
www.cnam.fr
- ☐ The network of continuing education departments of French universities provides information on the courses offered by region and training areas
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