

Training & Employment

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2013 survey of the 2010 cohort

Crisis makes school-to-work transition for CAP-BEP* holders even more difficult

Three years into their working lives, the unemployment rate among the young people who completed secondary vocational education in 2010 was 24%. The crisis has hit holders of the CAP and BEP head on, causing their labour market situation to deteriorate still further. Although not unaffected by the crisis, holders of the technological and vocational baccalaureate are significantly less vulnerable. In the long run, the value of French level V qualifications (CITE 3c/EQF 3**) may well be called into question.

2010 cohort
secondary
education
2004 cohort
unemployment
school-to-work
transition

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Young holders of the CAP and BEP and, to a lesser extent, of the vocational baccalaureate experienced the greatest difficulties in the labour market in 2013. Developed initially as a means of integrating apprenticeships into the school system, vocational secondary education subsequently became a stepping stone to the baccalaureate for many young people from working-class backgrounds. Today, however, it seems to be declining in importance within society. Nevertheless, and despite the emphasis on expanding higher education and the attention paid to drop-outs, it should be remembered that no fewer than one third of young people enter the labour market with a vocational qualification acquired in secondary school (cf. Figure 1).

For the cohort that left education in 2010, as for their predecessors, it was still better to enter the labour market with basic qualifications only than with no qualifications at all. Nevertheless, holders of the CAP-BEP have seen themselves becoming increasingly disadvantaged relative to those with the vocational baccalaureate. However, this general effect varies depending on the training specialism.

Secondary education leavers: the return of the baccalaureate

Comparable in size to the 2004 cohort, the 2010 cohort included a slightly smaller share of leavers with just lower secondary qualifications and almost the same share of higher education graduates. In secondary education, there was a fairly significant shift away from level V (CAP/BEP) towards level IV qualifications (baccalaureate). The earlier cohort, conversely, had seen a distinct increase in the numbers taking level V qualifications, particularly the CAP. At the beginning of the 2000s there had been a tendency for the CAP to return to favour; from 2008 onwards, however, young people appeared to be anticipating the reform of the vocational baccalaureate, which was to be introduced in 2009. This was reflected in a decline in the popularity of the BEP in favour of the various vocational baccalaureates.

While the baccalaureate is accounting for an increasing share of secondary vocational education, holders of the baccalaureate do not constitute a majority in all specialism. In some areas in fact, including construction, services ●●●

*CAP • *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*
BEP • *Brevet d'études professionnelles*
are lower level vocational qualifications obtained in secondary school.

**CITE • *Classification internationale type de l'éducation (ISCED International Standard Classification of Education)*
EQF • *European Qualification Framework.*

Figure 1: Evolution of numbers of leavers by level of qualification between 1998 and 2010



Sources: Céreq, Génération 98, Génération 2004 and Génération 2010 surveys, comparable bases.

to local authorities and multivalent health and social care specialisms, their share is only marginal.

The share of level V apprentices is increasing: the share of apprenticeships at this level rose from 31% in 2004 to 46% in 2010. It is also rising, albeit less markedly, at the other levels of qualification. The construction and food industries are still the sectors that make the greatest use of apprenticeship contracts.

Major difficulties for those with level V qualifications – and they're getting worse

While the difficulties encountered by young people entering the labour market with no qualifications higher than the lower secondary certificate are now well known, those with level V qualifications seem to be less well equipped today to brave an increasingly selective labour market.

The BEP has been in constant decline since the end of the 1990s. Between the 1998 and 2004 cohorts, holders of this qualification saw a significant deterioration in their employment opportunities, particularly those trained in service-sector occupations. There was also an increasing loss of interest in the qualification from 2008 onwards, even before the introduction of the 3-year vocational baccalaureate programme made official the BEP's disappearance as a separate training pathway.

The CAP remains a qualification that potentially facilitates the school-to-work transition in the specialisms in which it has historically played a role, principally construction and catering. Everywhere else, it has suffered from competition with level IV (CITE 3/EQF 4) qualifications and from the crisis. The economic situation has deteriorated to such an extent that the unemployment rates observed for holders of level V qualifications in the 2010 cohort are identical to those for members of the 2004 cohort leaving school with just lower secondary certificates!

Although they have been less harshly affected, holders of level IV qualifications have, despite everything, experienced a significant deterioration in their employment opportunities: the unemployment rate for holders of the vocational baccalaureate rose from 11% for the 2004 cohort to 19% for the 2010 cohort, which is closer to the overall rate for secondary school leavers than to that for higher education graduates, which was not previously the case.

While the increase in the unemployment rate is more spectacular in manufacturing, which has traditionally been better protected than the service sector, the analysis needs to be further refined by examining the various training specialisms in detail.

Indicators of labour market integration three years after leaving education system

Cohorts' interrogation in	Unemployment rate (%)*			Share of permanent jobs (%)**			Median net monthly income (euros)***		
	C1998 2001	C2004 2007	C2010 2013	C1998 2001	C2004 2007	C2010 2013	C1998 2001	C2004 2007	C2010 2013
Lower secondary certificate only	25	32	49	50	48	40	1 140	1 220	1 150
Level V qualifications	13	17	31	61	62	56	1 190	1 320	1 270
CAP in manufacturing specialisms	10	15	32	68	67	63	1 240	1 330	1 330
CAP in service-sector specialisms	17	20	31	65	62	56	1 070	1 170	1 150
BEP in manufacturing specialisms	8	14	28	63	61	55	1 250	1 370	1 300
BEP in service sector specialisms	18	21	31	54	57	49	1 110	1 210	1 200
Level IV qualifications	8	13	20	65	64	62	1 210	1 320	1 300
Vocational baccalauréat in manufacturing spe.	5	7	16	77	76	70	1 340	1 430	1 400
Vocational bac.in service-sector specialisms	9	14	21	67	66	64	1 150	1 250	1 240
Technological bac in manufacturing spe.	8	15	22	65	65	65	1 350	1 400	1 390
Technological bac in service-sector specialisms	11	17	23	50	49	47	1 110	1 210	1 250
Secondary school qualifications	10	15	24	62	62	58	1 210	1 320	1 290
Higher education qualifications	5	7	10	77	77	76	1 670	1 710	1 730

Sources: Céreq, Génération 98, Génération 2004 and Génération 2010 surveys, comparable bases.

* The unemployment rate is the share of unemployed individuals in the active population (young people in employment or unemployed)

** Permanent jobs include non-wage jobs, open-ended contracts, state/civil service jobs and new hire contracts.

*** Median net monthly wage in constant euros in July 2013 (including bonuses, waged employees, incl. part-timers). The median wage is the wage above which half of young people are paid, regardless of working time.

School-to-work transition more difficult than it used to be for manufacturing specialisms

Between 2007 and 2013, very few training specialisms avoided a deterioration in the employment opportunities available to those completing their courses. The phenomenon was widespread, to the point where it affected specialisms that used in the past to offer good employment opportunities, such as those related to mechanical (at level V) or electrical (level IV) occupations, which saw their unemployment rates explode between 2007 and 2013. For their part, the specialisms that had already been in difficulty, such as secretarial and office work, saw a continuous increase in their unemployment rates.

Two trends seem to have been at work between 2010 and 2013. Firstly, there was a gradual deterioration in employment opportunities for new entrants to the labour market in service-sector specialisms (accounting and management, business/sales), which can undoubtedly be attributed to a gradual increase in the qualifications required (with level III qualifications (CITE 5b/EQF 5), now more prevalent, perhaps tending to become the entry level in these service-sector occupations); this was also the case in the

hotel and tourism sector, where activity appeared to be steady while the supply of training at bac+3 level (vocational bachelor's degree - CITE 6/EQF 6) was continually expanding. Secondly, there was a severe deterioration in specialisms linked to manufacturing (construction and mechanics at level V, electrical occupations at level IV), due probably to the reduction in employment in manufacturing as a result of the crisis and a consequent decline in the recruitment of young people. As a result, the labour market advantages that manufacturing specialisms have traditionally enjoyed, particularly among those with level V qualifications, were considerably reduced. Holders of these qualifications are no longer better protected from unemployment as a matter of course. Only holders of level IV qualifications in most manufacturing occupations are still coming out relatively unscathed. One notable exception is electrical and electronic engineering, where employment opportunities for new graduates from vocational degree courses are scarcely any better than those for holders of the CAP. This qualification, traditionally associated with manufacturing and craft occupations, saw its position in the labour market decline in adverse economic circumstances. At the same time, this may also explain the reduction in the share of temporary agency work among young people in the 2010 cohort, since it is in manufacturing that greatest use is made of this employment form.

Unemployment rate three years into the working life by training level and specialism, the 1998, 2004 and 2010 cohorts compared (%)

(by increasing divergence from the unemployment rate among holders of the CAP/BEP between 2007 and 2013)

Unemployment rate among holders of CAP/BEP (level V qualifications)				Spécialité de formation Cohorts' interrogation in	Unemployment rate among holders of vocational bac and BP (level IV qualifications)			
C1998 2001	C2004 2007	C2010 2013	divergence 2007-13		C1998 2001	C2004 2007	C2010 2013	divergence 2007-13
13	13	40	27	Hotels and tourism	6	5	20	15
7	9	30	21	Wood working and furniture making	2	ns	ns	ns
9	15	35	20	Agriculture, stock rearing, landscaping, forestry	5	4	10	6
3	11	29	18	Construction and roofing	0	ns	ns	ns
7	10	28	18	Transport, handling, storage	ns	ns	ns	ns
6	9	26	17	Automobile engines and mechanics	4	5	10	5
25	33	50	17	Secretarial and office work	15	21	28	7
7	9	26	17	Metal structures	ns	16	ns	ns
19	25	42	17	Commerce and sales	7	15	24	9
20	17	34	16	Construction: finishing works	ns	ns	ns	ns
8	17	31	14	Agro-food, food, catering	5	15	14	-1
9	16	30	14	Electricity, electronics	5	7	26	19
21	26	38	12	Accounting and management	9	18	23	5
19	14	26	12	Multivalent health and social care specialisms	ns	13	22	9
3	20	31	11	Energy, air conditioning	3	ns	10	ns
16	21	22	1	Hairdressing, beauty treatments and other personal services	8	11	14	3
6	9	4	-5	Healthcare	3	5	5	0
22	ns	32	ns	Multi-tech manufacturing specialisms	12	17	17	0
8	11	ns	ns	Multi-tech mechanical-electrical specialisms	5	4	12	8

ns : non significant.

Sources: Céreq, Génération 98, Génération 2004 and Génération 2010 surveys, comparable bases. Field: holders of higher education qualifications.

Job quality indicators declining slightly

Access to a permanent job during the first three years of the working life, already very unlikely for school leavers with only lower secondary qualifications, has also tended to become less common for holders of level V qualifications. As already noted, temporary agency work is declining, for structural reasons. At the same time, the share of subsidised jobs is growing, including in the period between 2010 and 2013, when the effects of the Emplois d'avenir (Jobs for the Future) scheme could already be observed. The wages paid to young holders of secondary vocational qualifications tend to lie within a very narrow range, and it is only from level III qualifications onwards that pay starts to become clearly differentiated by level of qualification. Young people who do not go on to obtain higher education qualifications seem to be increasingly confined to pay levels close to the national minimum wage.

First jobs are always structurally precarious. For earlier cohorts, this precarity tended to reduce gradually during the first three years of the working life (between the first job and the job held at the survey date). This is less true of the 2010 cohort, with holders of level V qualifications experiencing greater difficulties in gradually accessing stable employment.

Examination of the typology of trajectories for the 2010 cohort (see box opposite) confirms these observations. The chances of having followed the 'Immediate and lasting access to employment' trajectory were 58% for higher education graduates compared with 41% for those with secondary vocational qualifications. Among the latter group, the chances were 50% for holder of level IV vocational qualifications compared with 36% for holders of level V qualifications. Conversely, the risk of having followed the 'Long-term or recurrent unemployment' trajectory was 7% for holders of level IV qualifications compared with 17% at level V; moreover, there was no difference at this level between manufacturing and service-sector specialisms. The various CAPs in

The 2013 survey of the 2010 cohort

In order to track the trajectories of young people over the first years of their working lives, Cereq set up the Génération surveys. In these surveys, a representative sample of young people who left the education system in a given year are questioned on a regular basis. In 2013, Céreq questioned a representative sample of 33,500 of a total of 708,000 young people who left the education system in France for the first time in 2010 (Metropolitan France + overseas departments).

For further reading on the Génération, surveys, go to www.cereq.fr and click on *Accès aux données/Access to data*.

The typology of trajectories

The occupational diaries compiled in the course of the Génération surveys list each young person's situation month by month (job, unemployment, inactivity, training or return to education/training). The trajectories followed by each young person were grouped together on the basis of similarity: the trajectories of two young people are all the more similar if they experienced the same situation at the same time. On the basis of this approach, nine typical trajectories during the early years of the working life were identified, two of which are used here: 'Immediate and lasting access to employment' and 'Long-term or recurrent unemployment', which applied to 44% and 11% respectively of the 2010 cohort.

For further reading on the trajectories: *Quand l'école est finie, premiers pas dans la vie active de la génération 2010*, Céreq, 2014.

manufacturing specialisms, which until this point had maintained their role as the entry points into the qualifications hierarchy for manual trades and occupations, have now been devalued.

At a time when the European Qualifications Framework is being updated and it is being asked whether there is a need for a set of qualifications below level V, the economic situation in France would actually lead us to question the very relevance of level V qualifications which, with a few exceptions, are increasingly less likely to guarantee holders a recognised place in the labour market. While the difficulties encountered by school leavers with just lower secondary qualifications are now well known and manifestly structural in nature, will those experienced by holders of level V qualifications in the 2010 cohort remain a cyclical phenomenon? This question leads to another one, this time concerning the future of the BEP, which survives as an intermediate qualification, and, by way of corollary, the destiny of the young people who will fail to obtain the vocational baccalaureate in its revised form.

Further reading

« L'injonction au projet chez les jeunes en baccalauréat professionnel : entre soumission et prise en main fragile de son destin », C. Dagot et V. Dassié, *Formation Emploi*, n° 128, 2014.

Enquête 2013 auprès de la génération 2010 - Le fossé se creuse entre les niveaux de diplôme, C. Barret, F. Ryk, N. Volle, *Bref* n°319, 2014.

« L'insertion des sortants de l'enseignement secondaire : des résultats issus de l'enquête Génération 2004 », J.-J. Arrighi, C. Gasquet, O. Joseph, *Nef* n°42, 2009.

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