

VET in France

Vocational education and training (VET) is, by tradition, central to France's adopted priorities: guilds first appeared in the Middle Ages and apprenticeship in the 19th century. The development of lifelong learning in the early 1970s was based on long-standing and highly diverse adult education practices that are the foundation of continuous education.

Initial VET (IVET)

VET at upper secondary level

On leaving lower secondary school (*collège*) at ISCED-P 244, generally at the age of 15, students are steered either towards a general (ISCED-P 344) and technological (ISCED-P 354) upper secondary school (*lycée*), to prepare for a three-year general or technological baccalaureate, or towards a vocational *lycée* (ISCED-P 353, 354), to prepare for a two-year professional skills certificate (CAP) or a three-year vocational baccalaureate. These qualifications are designed to provide direct access to employment, and the training always includes in-company internship. However, access to tertiary level VET programmes in related fields is possible. Upper secondary education is governed and financed largely by the Ministry of Education and partly by other ministries (including agriculture and industry).

VET at tertiary level (ISCED-P 554)

The *lycée*-based higher technician curricula provide a two-year programme leading to the higher technician certificate (BTS). Universities offer also a two-year technological university diploma (DUT); this is designed for entry into the labour market. Students can also decide, on completion, to go on to a vocational bachelor's programme, which enables them to acquire a vocational qualification at EQF level 6 and progress to master's level for a qualification at EQF level 7. Higher education (tertiary level) provides general courses and technical and vocational courses within universities and public or private higher colleges of excellence (*grandes écoles*).

Apprenticeship

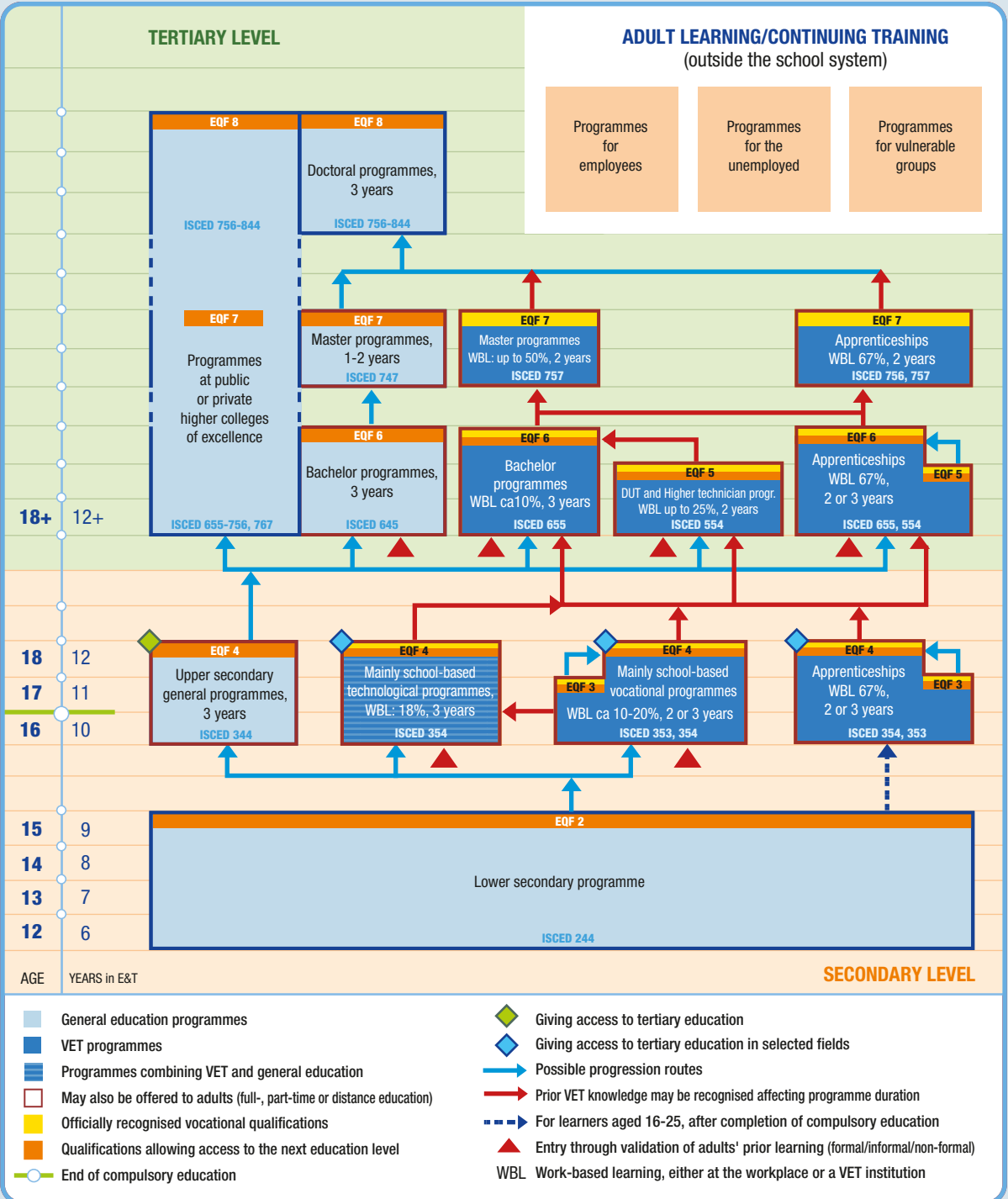
This pathway can lead to all vocational certifications registered in the national directory of professional qualifications, which includes all

secondary or higher education certifications as well as vocational qualification certificates (CQP), created by the professional branches. Young people on an apprenticeship contract (from one to three years) have the status and rights of other employees and receive a salary. The course takes place both in the workplace and in an apprentice training centre (CFA). The system is governed by the State (legislation), the regional councils (policy setting) and the social partners (management of the CFAs). Its funding comes from the State, which exempts enterprises from employer contributions for the amount of each apprentice salary, the regional councils (bonuses on recruitment, apprenticeship subsidies) and companies (apprenticeship tax).

Continuing VET (CVET)

CVET applies to those entering the world of work or already in work, both young and adults. The objectives of CVET include promoting professional integration or reintegration; maintaining people in work; encouraging the development of skills and access to different levels of professional qualification; and contributing to economic and cultural development and social progress. Access and funding procedures for courses vary according to individual status, either as jobseekers or people in employment (private sector employees, public servants, self-employed workers). Training of job seekers is managed by the regions, and partly by the national agency for employment. Employers (private or public) and the social partners are responsible for training people in employment. The training market is open: in 2012, more than 62 000 training providers together earned revenues of EUR 13.6 billion for 24.4 million people. Funding for CVET activities (including apprenticeship) represented 1.52% of national GDP. More than one in two adults followed at least one training action; however the training rate in micro-enterprises (TPE) is still low (only 28% of staff was trained).

VET in the French education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet France.

Distinctive features of VET

Right to education

The State ensures the principles of equal opportunities and the right to education. It has the obligation to organise public education that is free of charge and secular.

Role of the social partners

The social partners have an essential role in regulatory, political and financial aspects of lifelong learning programmes. The inter-professional agreements they sign are the basis for the introduction of reforms and are generally reflected in legislative and regulatory documents. Social partners also manage the different bodies that collect compulsory company contributions to apprenticeship and vocational training, as well as the unemployment insurance system for job-seekers.

Obligation to contribute financially to CVET

French CVET is distinguished by the existence of compulsory contributions allocated to a particular purpose, reflecting the desire to encourage companies to train their staff. The rate is set by the law, but some professional branches have applied rates above the legal minimum.

Recognition of 'individual rights' to training

Another distinctive feature is the recognition of 'individual rights' to training, designed to promote social progress and reduce inequalities in access to training. The best known are the individual training leave (CIF) and the most recently introduced personal training account (*compte personnel de formation*, CPF). The purpose of this measure is to support the use of an 'individual right' scheme, by making it more accessible to all (employed and unemployed) and more portable from one company to another.

Decentralisation/leadership role of regions

The law of 2014 put an end to the process of decentralisation. It gave regions full authority over vocational training, career advice and coordinating job support policies. Regions develop training policies adapted to their needs and implement them within regional public training (SPRF) and guidance (SPRO) services. Regions are now able to define and manage territorial public policies and can articulate their strategies on VET and economic developments.

Challenges and policy responses

Foster key competences

The common set of knowledge, competences and culture was (re)designed in 2015 to ensure the acquisition of key competences in compulsory education (6-16 years) and help learners succeed in VET. The new setting enters into force in 2016-17. It includes personalised support to students throughout their education path.

Strengthen the use of digital technology in education

In 2015, France established a 3-year digital plan for education to pilot new forms of teaching and learning. The aim is to mainstream digital technology in primary and lower secondary education by providing technical resources, teacher training and funding.

Ease career transition

The main aim of the new career guidance service (*conseil en évolution professionnelle*, CEP) is to offer the employed and unemployed support for personal career transitions and suitable training. This requires coordinated actions among national and regional actors, and active social partner involvement. The service is linked to the personal training account (CPF).

Developing quality processes in CVET

According to 2015 legislation, as of 2016 the main CVET funding bodies must ensure the quality of the training they finance, based on predefined criteria.

Create a personal activity account

The active population in the public and private sectors will have online access to information on social rights (as of 2017). This personalised web service will provide information related to their career, including access to training (CPF) as well as unemployment insurance and social protection.

Map occupation changes related to the digital revolution and the green growth plan

Mapping changes in occupations is part of the national employment strategy plan (*Transition numérique*, CNEFOP). The exercise will be carried out by industry and sector to identify training needs related to the digital revolution.

The same exercise will be done to identify emerging (skills for) green jobs in the context of the national plan on green growth (*Transition énergétique*, CNUM).



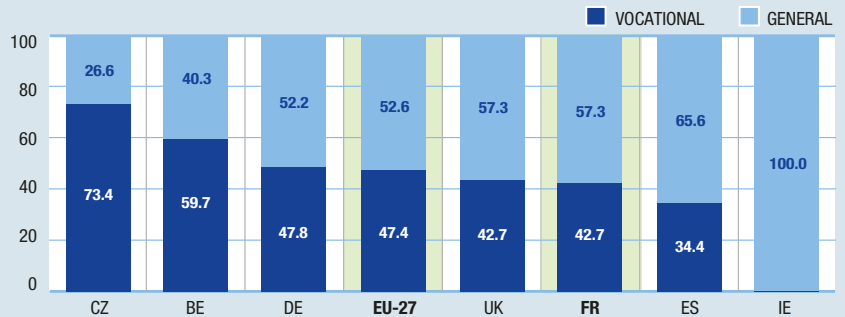
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Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes

% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014

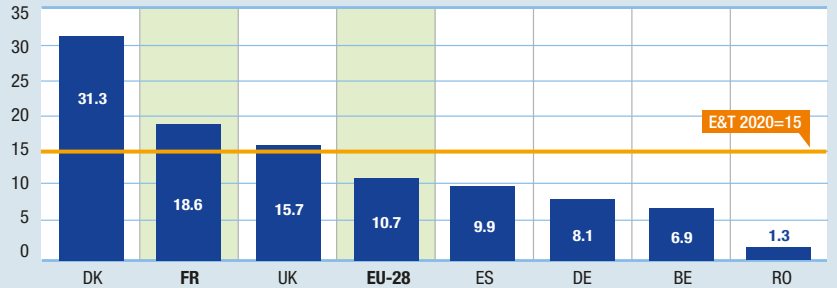


NB: 48.5% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2013 based on available country data (26 countries).

Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 26.04.2016.

Lifelong learning

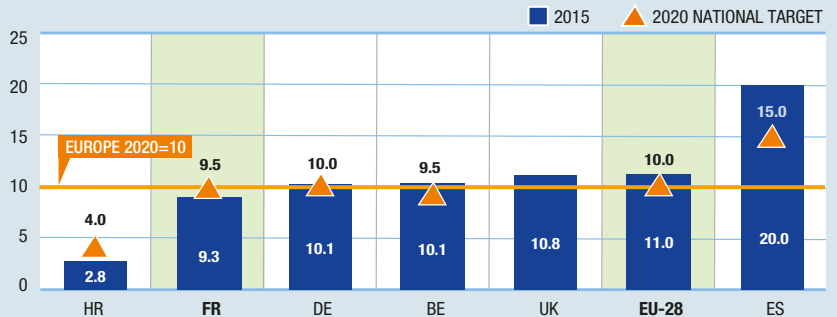
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 26.04.2016.

Early leavers from education and training

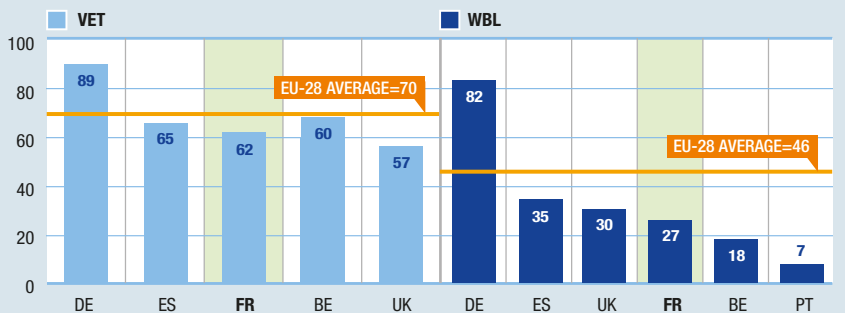
% of early leavers from education and training, 2015



NB: Break in time series in EU-28; low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in DE and ES.

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 26.04.2016.

Share of employees (aged 24 to 65) with medium-level education (ISCED 3-4) who obtained a vocational qualification, and whose highest level of education involved some learning in a workplace (% , 2014)



NB: VET: survey respondents described their highest qualification as vocational;

WBL: studies involved some learning at a workplace (e.g. apprenticeships, internships, other forms of work-based learning).

Results may differ from those reported in national statistics and international surveys, as the online data collection method used does not always lead to fully representative findings.

Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey, 2014.

Further information

- Cedefop ReferNet France (2013). *VET in Europe: country report France*. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2013/2013_CR_FR.pdf
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www.education.gouv.fr	Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue, General Directorate for employment and vocational training
www.agriculture.gouv.fr	Ministry of Agriculture, the Food-processing Industry and the Forest
www.diplomatie.gouv.fr	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
www.cnefop.gouv.fr	National Council for Employment, Vocational Training and Guidance
www.centre-inffo.fr/refernet	ReferNet France
www.orientation-pour-tous.fr	National portal on initial and continuing guidance and training

This spotlight is based on input from Centre Inffo – Centre for the Development of Information on Continuing Vocational Training (ReferNet France 2016).



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Publications Office

ISBN: 978-92-896-2191-5



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