

Training & Employment

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2013 survey of the 2010 cohort

The gap between levels of qualification widens as the crisis deepens

In 2013, three years after leaving the education system, 22% of economically active young people were looking for work. This is the highest level ever observed in Céreq's school-to-work transition surveys. The increase compared with the 2004 cohort is 16 percentage points for non-graduates and 3 percentage points for graduates of long degree programmes. Nevertheless, first jobs are neither more precarious nor less well paid.

Cohort
integration
unemployment
trajectory pay
higher education
qualifications

In 2013, Céreq conducted the sixth wave of its school-to-work transition surveys, focusing on the 700,000 young people who left the education system in 2010.

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This 2010 cohort entered the labour market with a higher level of education than the 2004 cohort. This rise in qualification levels is driven largely by the expansion of higher education. After all, despite the general objective of reducing the number of young people leaving education without nor or only lower secondary qualifications, laid down at European level, this group still accounts for 16% of the 2010 cohort (compared with 18% for the 2004 cohort). On the other hand, the gradual introduction between 2003 and 2006 of the LMD (licence, master, doctorat) degree structure in the higher education system has encouraged students to extend their studies to bachelor's degree (3 years), master's (5 years) or PhDs (7 years min.) level, which has reduced the numbers exiting after 2 or 4 years' post-secondary education. As a result, the share of young people exiting at master's level or beyond is 17% (compared with 14% for the 2004 cohort). The total number of HE graduates remains exactly the same.

At secondary education level, and even though it is not affected by the reform of vocational education, the 2010 cohort already includes fewer hol-

ders of the CAP and BEP and a higher percentage of young people with a vocational *baccalauréat*.

The expansion of apprenticeship schemes is another feature of this cohort. This training pathway has been promoted by the public authorities for several years now and it is attracting an increasing numbers of young people, at various levels of the education and training system. In 2010, one in five leavers had completed an apprenticeship; only one in three was female. This form of training, which in France has historically been provided within the secondary education system, has been extended to higher education and to both long and short programmes. Thus the share of apprentices among HE graduates has almost doubled compared with the 2004 cohort. Holders of vocational bachelor's degrees and the BTS-DUT (higher vocational and technical university diplomas) account for the highest share of these apprentices, but graduates of the grandes écoles are now hot on their heels.

School-to-work transition hampered by deepening of crisis

Three years after their exit from the education system, more than one economically active young person in five was looking for work, the highest level ever observed in Céreq's school-to-work transition surveys.

●●● This cohort entered the labour market under more difficult conditions, for at least two reasons. Firstly, by 2010, the labour market had been weakened successively by the 2008 financial collapse and the sovereign debt crisis of the summer of 2010. Between 2011 and 2013, unemployment rose sharply. Secondly, this deterioration in the economic situation was aggravated by the weakness of state intervention, reflected in a reduction in the number of subsidised jobs intended for young people. So-called 'young people in work' contracts (*contrats jeunes en entreprise/CJEs*), which had been used extensively between 2003 and 2007, were abolished at the end of the decade. This loss was not offset by the slight increase in the use of employment initiative

contracts (*contrats initiative emploi/CIEs*) and single integration contracts (*contrats unique d'insertion/CUIs*) in 2009-2010. The expansion of the 'Jobs for the Future scheme' (*emplois d'avenir*), launched in October 2012, did not start until 2013.

The way in which the French labour market works means that young people seeking their first jobs are generally the most badly affected when the economic situation deteriorates. The 2010 cohort is no exception to this rule.

The process of integrating these young people took place in three successive phases. In the initial phase, which is common to all cohorts, they gradually entered employment until the summer of the year following exit from the education/training system. The unemployment rate, initially very high, declined sharply. During the second phase, unemployment among young people in the 2010 cohort continued to decline but at a slower rate, as it did among the 2004 cohort. During the third phase, however, the deepening crisis meant that the general tendency to enter employment was reversed for the 2010 cohort. As a result, the unemployment rate started to rise significantly again, reaching 21% by April 2013. This cohort differs from previous ones, for which this third phase was one in which unemployment became stabilised.

This situation has obviously had an impact on the young people's trajectories during the first three years of their working lives. Fairly logically, members of the 2010 cohort have spent less time in employment than their elders and more time unemployed. On average, they have spent seven months looking for employment, a month more than members of the 2004 cohort, and two years in employment, two months less than their elders. Approximately 12% of the 2010 cohort have been very far from gaining access to regular work, having spent less than 10% of their time in employment. This figure is four percentage points higher than for the 2004 cohort.

Despite the extent of the deterioration, the majority of the young people continued to gain rapid access to employment, 62% of them finding jobs in less than three months. Almost two in every five even spent more than 90% of their time in employment in the first three years of their working lives. Nevertheless, a higher share of young people in the 2004 cohort were in this virtually permanent employment situation during that period.

Employment conditions maintained

Despite the economic situation and the effects it has had on their entry into the labour market, young people's employment conditions have not deteriorated significantly.

Overall, the share of stable jobs (open-ended contracts, state employees, self-employed) and invo-

Table 1 • A better qualified cohort

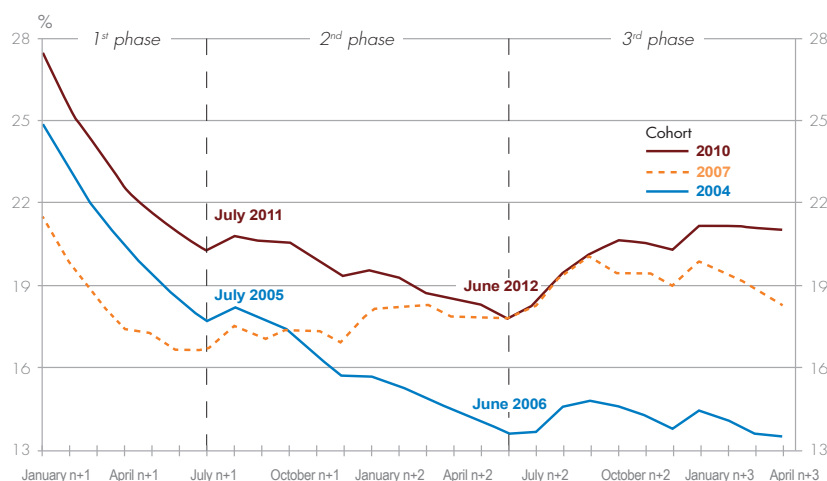
Highest qualification obtained by the young people leaving initial education

%	Cohort leaving in	2004	2010	Difference
No or lower secondary qualifications only				
Upper secondary-school qualifications				
	CAP, BEP, additional specialisation	17	14	- 3
	Vocational or technological <i>baccalauréat</i>	15	19	+ 4
	General <i>baccalauréat</i>	8	9	+ 1
'Short' degree programmes				
	BTS, DUT and other bac+2 qualifications	14	11	- 3
	Bac+2/3 Health and social care	4	4	0
	Bachelor's degree (L3), other bac+3 qualif.	5	5	0
	Vocational bachelor's degree	1	4	+ 3
	M1 and other bac+4 qualifications	4	1	- 3
'Long' degree programmes				
	M2 and other bac+5 qualifications	7	10	+ 3
	Business schools	2	2	0
	Engineering schools	3	3	0
	PhDs	2	2	0
Total		100	100	-

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq.
Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

Graphic 1 • Three-phase labour market integration process affected by the crisis

Unemployment rate during the first three years of the working life



Sources: surveys of the 2004, 2007 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq.
Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004, 2007 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

luntary part-time working remained stable between the 2004 and 2010 cohort surveys. This applies both to first jobs and to the job held three years after leaving education/training. One third of the young people who obtained jobs were hired straight away on open-ended (i.e. permanent) contracts. After three years, two thirds were employed on such contracts, the same share as for the 2004 cohort. This stability conceals a slight rise in self-employment, which is probably related to the launch of the *auto-entrepreneur* (individual entrepreneur) initiative in mid-2008 and a strengthening of medical practitioners' status as members of the liberal professions. The share of state employees has declined slightly as a result of a drop in public sector recruitment.

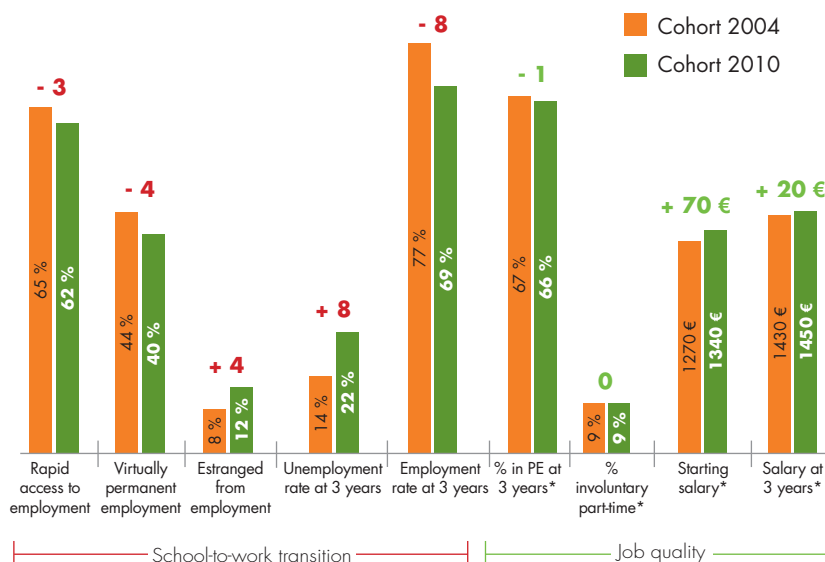
Half of the young employees in the 2010 cohort started on a net monthly salary greater than 1,340 euros, 70 euros more than their elders (adjusting for inflation). On the other hand, their pay increased more slowly. Half of the cohort saw an increase in their wage's purchasing power of less than 1.7% per annum. Consequently, after three years in the labour market, the median salary for the 2010 cohort was almost identical to that of the 2004 cohort. In the spring of 2013, it stood at 1,450 euros.

Thus although the impact of the crisis on the 2010 cohort was reflected in a very high level of unemployment in 2013, it has not led to any significant deterioration in employment conditions. The crisis has also impacted very unevenly on the various levels of qualification. On the one hand, young people with few or no qualifications at all have seen a marked deterioration in their ability to access employment. On the other hand, graduates of engineering schools and health and social care programmes and PhDs have fared well. The pronounced disparities between levels of qualification that already existed have become even more acute.

Record levels of unemployment for those with no or only lower secondary qualifications

Once again, it is those with no or only lower secondary qualifications who have borne the brunt of the crisis. Since the early 1970s and the rise in unemployment, a lack of anything other than basic qualifications has been an obstacle to labour market entry. When the economic situation deteriorates, recruitment to low-skill jobs declines and these young people have been exposed to greater competition for such jobs from those with higher qualifications. Temporary agency work acts less as a bridge into more stable employment because its share in the various employment statuses is declining, probably as a consequence of the decline in temporary agency work in manufacturing. Furthermore, this cohort have had little assistance in the form of subsi-

Graphic 2 • School-to-work transition more difficult, job quality maintained



Interpretation: 62% of the 2010 cohort gained rapid access to employment, compared with 65% for the 2004 cohort, a reduction of 3 percentage points. * Among those in employment

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq.

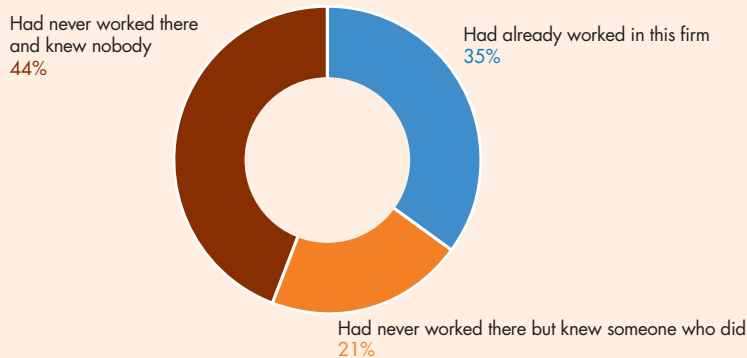
Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

Finding the first job: the importance of networks

Whether based on work, family or friends, networks are effective job search channels. More than one young person in three (35%) found their first job in a firm they knew previously, either because they had completed a placement or had already worked there. This is a somewhat higher figure than for the 2004 cohort (30%) and is probably linked to the expansion of apprenticeships. 21% of them knew somebody who was already working in the firm.

28% of the young people obtained their first jobs by making unsolicited applications. Labour market intermediaries (Pôle emploi, Apec etc.) and training establishments are not frequently cited (8% each).

Link with first employer



Source: survey of 2010 cohort (provisional data), Céreq.

Field: young people who left the education system for the first time in 2010 and have held a job (metropolitan France).

dis jobs, with the Jobs for the Future scheme not coming on stream until the end of the period. The increased precariousness of employment is reflected in a decline in purchasing power relative to their predecessors after three years in the labour market.

CAP • Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle
BEP • Brevet d'études professionnelles
 Lower level vocational qualifications obtained in secondary school
BTS • Brevet de technicien supérieur
 Vocational qualification requiring 2 years' post-secondary study (bac+2)
DUT • Diplôme universitaire de technologie
 Requires 2 years' post-secondary study (bac+2)
L3 • Bachelor's degree
M1, M2 • Master 1, master 2
 1-year and 2-year master's degrees
Doctorat • PhD

●●● Almost one in two young workers with no or only lower secondary qualifications stated that they were looking for work three years after leaving the education system. This is an increase of 16 percentage points compared with the 2004 cohort. On average over the three years they were unemployed for 14 months, which is twice the average for the cohort as a whole, all levels of qualification taken into account. This automatically means they spent less time in employment (five months less than their elders), which increases their risk of becoming estranged from the labour market. Thus on average those in this cohort with no or only lower secondary qualifications have spent as much time unemployed as in employment.

Their employment conditions have become more precarious. Access to permanent jobs has become more difficult (only four out of ten young people in employment were on open-ended contracts three years after leaving education/training) and involuntary part-time work has become more common (affecting 18% of the 2010 cohort, compared with 14% of the 2004 cohort). Having found it difficult to obtain work, 9% of the young people without qualifications have returned to full-time education or training and 13% are on block-release training programmes.

Unemployment among those with the CAP/BEP at same level as among those with no or only lower secondary qualifications six years earlier

Holders of the CAP and BEP are, it is true, less badly off than those with no or only lower secondary qualifications, but they too have seen their difficulties worsen, with a rise of 15 percentage points in their unemployment rate. Ten years ago, these holders of first-tier vocational qualifications were able to take advantage of favourable conditions in the labour market to find skilled jobs in manufacturing industry. Today, their unemployment rate is the same as that of their counterparts in services. Thus the deterioration in the position of holders of the CAP and BEP entering the labour market for the first time that was observed during previous waves of the survey is confirmed. Their rate of unemployment after three years in the labour market has risen from 17% for the 2004 cohort to 32% for the 2010 cohort. It has become more difficult to hold on to a job and only 29% of them have spent virtually all their time in employment, compared with 42% of the 2004 cohort. The length of time spent unemployed has increased by four months between the two surveys to eleven months. Moreover, those young people in employ-

Women have fared better in the crisis because they are better qualified

In contrast to the situation observed in the case of the 2004 cohort, the unemployment rate for women was lower than that for men throughout the period. In the second quarter of 2013, it was 20% for women and 23% for men. The employment rate evolved similarly, with that for men falling considerably to fall into line with that for women. Finally, young men are more likely than young women to be long-term unemployed.

Women's relative advantage is directly linked to their generally higher levels of general education, which has risen faster than that of men. Nevertheless, there are persistent inequalities in the labour market, to women's disadvantage.

After all, for comparable levels of qualification, the female unemployment rate is still higher than that for men, even though the gaps are narrowing. And again for comparable levels of qualification and identical working times, women's earnings are still lower than men's. On the other hand, their pay in the first three years of their working lives has increased at the same rate. Regardless of level of qualification, the part-time rate among women is still higher than among men. In particular, involuntary part-time working affects twice as many women as men, as it did for the 2004 cohort. Finally, women are less likely to be hired on open-ended contracts.

Unemployment rate at 3 years for the 2010 cohort, by gender and qualification



Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq. / Field: Young people leaving the education system in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

Table 2 • The disparities in school-to-work transition between levels of qualification are widening

Young people's situations three years after leaving education*

Cohort leaving in	% Employment rate			% Unemployment rate			Among those in employment					
							Stable jobs			Involuntary part-time work		
	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.
Total	77	69	- 8	14	22	8	67	66	- 1	9	9	0
No or lower secondary qualifications only	57	41	- 16	32	48	16	48	40	- 8	14	18	4
Upper secondary-school qualifications	74	64	- 10	15	25	10	62	58	- 4	11	13	2
CAP, BEP, additional specialisation	76	61	- 15	17	32	15	62	56	- 6	11	15	4
Vocational or technological <i>baccalauréat</i>	78	70	- 8	13	20	7	64	62	- 2	10	12	2
General <i>baccalauréat</i>	62	55	- 7	15	21	6	57	51	- 6	13	11	- 2
'Short' degree programmes	86	81	- 5	7	11	4	74	74	0	7	6	- 1
BTS, DUT and other bac+2 qualifications	85	79	- 6	9	15	6	72	72	0	6	6	0
Bac+2/3 Health and social care	97	96	- 1	2	2	0	83	83	0	5	5	0
Bachelor's degree (L3), other bac+3 qualif.	81	70	- 11	8	14	6	71	70	- 1	11	10	- 1
Vocational bachelor's degree	91	85	- 6	5	10	5	82	76	- 6	2	2	0
M1 and other bac+4 qualifications	83	79	- 4	10	14	4	72	73	1	7	5	- 2
'Long' degree programmes	91	88	- 3	6	9	3	82	80	- 2	3	4	1
M2 and other bac+5 qualifications	90	84	- 6	6	12	6	78	75	- 3	5	5	0
Business schools	94	90	- 4	5	9	4	94	93	- 1	1	2	1
Engineering schools	93	94	1	4	4	0	91	93	2	1	1	0
PhDs	91	92	1	7	6	- 1	73	69	- 4	5	4	- 1

* Situation on survey date April-July three years after exit.

Interpretation: of the young people who left education in 2010 with no or only lower secondary qualifications: 41% were in employment three years afterwards, 16 percentage points fewer than those who left in 2004; 48% of those who were economically active in 2013 stated they were looking for work; 40% of those in employment in 2013 were on open-ended contracts, state employees or in non-wage work; 18% of those in employment in 2013 were in involuntary part-time employment.

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq / Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

Table 3 • Rapid and lasting access to employment more frequent for the more highly qualified

Cohort leaving in	gaining rapid access to employment (in less than three months)			in virtually permanent employment (more than 90% of the time)			estranged from employment (less than 10% of the time)		
	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.
Total	65	62	- 3	44	40	- 4	8	12	4
No or lower secondary qualifications only	45	32	- 13	23	14	- 9	22	36	14
Upper secondary-school qualifications	66	61	- 5	42	34	- 8	8	11	3
CAP, BEP, additional specialisation	64	54	- 10	42	29	- 13	8	14	6
Vocational or technological <i>baccalauréat</i>	71	67	- 4	46	40	- 6	6	7	1
General <i>baccalauréat</i>	63	59	- 4	36	29	- 7	14	12	- 2
'Short' degree programmes	74	75	1	54	52	- 2	3	4	1
BTS, DUT and other bac+2 qualifications	70	70	0	48	45	- 3	3	5	2
Bac+2/3 Health and social care	93	95	2	85	86	1	0	0	0
Bachelor's degree (L3), other bac+3 qualif.	75	70	- 5	49	42	- 7	5	7	2
Vocational bachelor degree	78	75	- 3	59	52	- 7	1	3	2
M1 and other bac+4 qualifications	68	70	2	46	44	- 2	3	5	2
'Long' degree programmes	69	76	7	55	59	4	2	2	0
M2 and other bac+5 qualifications	68	74	6	51	54	3	3	3	0
Business schools	71	71	0	56	53	- 3	0	0	0
Engineering schools	64	81	17	54	70	16	2	0	- 2
PhDs	80	85	5	67	74	7	3	1	- 2

Interpretation: of the young people who left education in 2010: 62% found a job in the first three months; 40% were in employment more than 90% of the time between 2010 and 2013; 12% were in employment for less than 10% of the time between 2010 and 2013.

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq / Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

ment have seen the purchasing power of their earnings stagnate during the first three years of their working lives.

Competition with holders of the vocational baccalauréat probably explains some of these observations. Holders of the vocational and technological baccalauréat have also found it increasingly difficult to obtain employment, but to a lesser extent. At this qualification level, unemployment is rising at the

same rate for both manufacturing and service specialities. Completion of an apprenticeship facilitates school-to-work transition, even though conditions have become more difficult for apprentices as well. After three years in the labour market, the unemployment rate among holders of the vocational and technological baccalauréat who obtained their qualifications through apprenticeships had risen to 13%, compared with only 6% for the 2004 cohort.

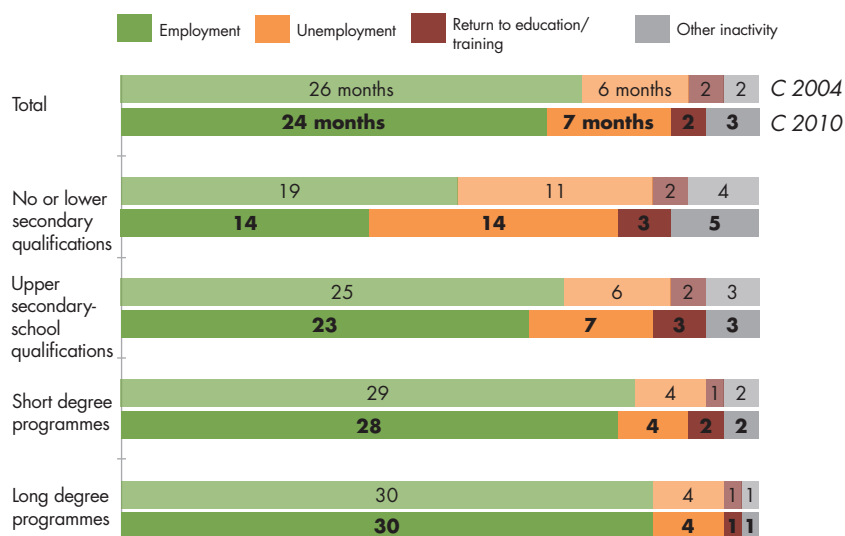
Most of the holders of the general baccalauréat who enter the labour market have in fact begun higher education courses but without obtaining the qualification they were working for. However, the general baccalauréat is often not sufficient to obtain a skilled job. Consequently, the majority of this group do not gain rapid and lasting access to employment. Only 29% of the 2010 cohort were almost permanently employed during the three years and fewer of them gained rapid access to employment. This group has also returned to education or training in increasing numbers. More than a quarter resumed their studies in the three years following completion of their initial education, compared with 16% of the 2004 cohort.

Graduates of short degree programmes are less well protected

Graduates' career trajectories differ depending on the level at which they left the HE system and the discipline they studied. Those leaving at sub-master's level, described here as 'graduates of short degree programmes', enjoy better than average access to employment and higher than average pay but, as for the less well qualified groups, their situation three

Graphic 3 • Those with no or lower secondary qualifications spend as much as time unemployed as in employment

Number of months spent in the various situations during the three years following exit from the education system



Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq.
Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

Table 4 • Young people's salaries have held up but are increasing less quickly

Net monthly pay by highest qualification obtained (in constant euros)	Median salary* (in constant euros)						Annual evolution of pay** (%)	
	On first hire			3 years after exit			2004	2010
Cohort leaving in..	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010	Diff.	2004	2010
Total	1 270	1 340	70	1 430	1 450	20	3,7	1,7
No or lower secondary qualifications only	1 150	1 130	- 20	1 220	1 160	- 60	1,3	- 0,9
Upper secondary-school qualifications	1 200	1 160	- 40	1 310	1 280	- 30	2,9	0,9
CAP, BEP, additional specialisation	1 220	1 200	- 20	1 310	1 260	- 50	2,2	0,2
Vocational or technological baccalauréat	1 180	1 170	- 10	1 310	1 300	- 10	3,5	1,0
General baccalauréat	1 140	1 110	- 30	1 320	1 260	- 60	3,9	2,3
'Short' degree programmes	1 370	1 410	40	1 560	1 520	- 40	4,3	1,9
BTS, DUT and other bac+2 qualifications	1 270	1 310	40	1 460	1 460	0	4,7	2,2
Bac+2/3 Health and social care	1 610	1 630	20	1 720	1 700	- 20	1,9	0,9
Bachelor's degree (L3) and other bac+3 qualif.	1 330	1 300	- 30	1 540	1 450	- 90	5,2	2,0
Vocational bachelor degree	1 430	1 460	30	1 660	1 600	- 60	4,9	2,5
M1 and other bac+4 qualifications	1 380	1 470	90	1 650	1 620	- 30	6,3	2,2
'Long' degree programmes	1 840	1 880	40	2 180	2 100	- 80	5,8	3,2
M2 and other bac+5 qualifications	1 610	1 680	70	1 970	1 920	- 50	6,2	3,3
Business schools	ns	1 990	ns	ns	2 290	ns	ns	3,7
Engineering schools	2 070	2 120	50	2 340	2 350	10	4,8	3,1
PhDs	1 980	2 100	120	2 270	2 350	80	5,1	2,8

* Monthly salary (including bonuses, all working times taken into account), media in constant euros as at July 2013.

** Median evolution (as annual average) of pay (in constant euros) between first hire and survey date.

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq / Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

years after leaving education is less favourable than that of their predecessors.

Holders of the BTS and DUT are less likely to be in employment than their counterparts who left in 2004. Nevertheless, 70% of them found their first jobs quickly (in less than three months) and after three years in the labour market, the share of those employed in stable jobs remained unchanged. The situation has deteriorated most for those in specialisms linked to the service sector; the unemployment rate for this group is now 16% (compared with 11% for manufacturing specialisms). However, those who completed apprenticeships in manufacturing specialisms are less well protected against unemployment than their predecessors.

Graduates with vocational degrees appear to be relatively well protected: 85 % of them were in employment at the end of the period and their unemployment rate is comparable to that of graduates of long degree programmes. However, it is only holders of vocational degrees based on apprenticeships who have really fared well. Their employment conditions have not deteriorated at all and their unemployment rate has remained low.

Holders of general degrees, on the other hand, have suffered badly. At the end of the period, their employment rate was 11 percentage points lower than for their counterparts in the 2004 cohort and they had lost purchasing power. Holders of three-year first degrees and one-year master's have usually returned to education via the standard route, which is probably an effect of the reform requiring teachers to hold a two-years master's degree.

Table 5 • Increased numbers returning to education/training

Cohort of	Return to education		Professionalisation contract or apprenticeship	
	2004	2010	2004	2010
Total	6	9	10	11
No or lower secondary qualifications	6	9	13	13
Upper secondary-school qualifications	7	11	15	15
CAP, BEP, additional specialisation	3	4	13	12
Vocational or technological <i>baccalauréat</i>	7	9	16	16
General <i>baccalauréat</i>	16	27	16	16
'Short' degree programmes	6	9	5	9
BTS, DUT and other bac+2 qualifications	6	8	9	14
Bac+2/3 Health and social care	1	1	1	0
Bachelor's degree (L3) and other qualif.	9	16	3	7
Vocational bachelor degree	2	7	4	7
M1 and other bac+4 qualifications	8	12	3	7
'Long' degree programmes	2	3	1	3
M2 and other bac+5 qualifications	3	4	2	3
Business schools	1	1	1	5
Engineering schools	2	1	1	2
PhDs	1	1	0	1

Sources: surveys of the 2004 and 2010 cohorts (provisional data), Céreq.

Field: young people leaving the education system for the first time in 2004 and 2010 (metropolitan France).

More and more young people who completed short degree programmes in 2010 are seeking places on programmes combining work and training after their initial education. Apprenticeships or so-called 'professionalisation contracts' enable them to acquire certificated work experience and a new qualification for their CVs. During the first three years of their working lives, almost one in ten of the 2010 cohort chose this route. Holders of the BTS, DUT and other qualifications requiring two years' post-

Most young people gain rapid and lasting access to employment

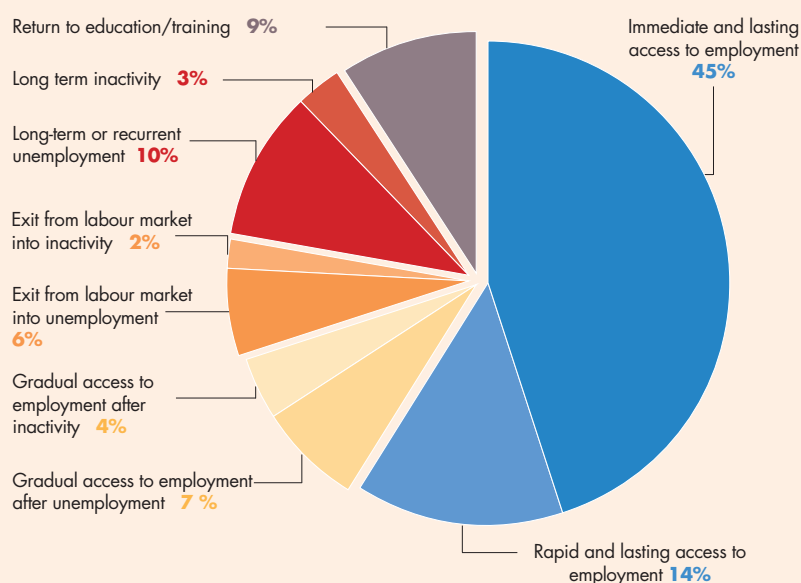
The survey tracks each young person's situation month by month: in employment, unemployed, returned to education, in training or out of the labour market. Analysis of the changes in individual situations reveals nine types of labour market integration trajectories.

Almost 60% of the young people found a job quickly, immediately even, and then remained in employment. For 11%, the first job was a little more elusive but, once obtained, proved lasting: they started the integration process with a substantial period of unemployment or inactivity. On the other hand, 6% of the cohort were quick to find employment but subsequently lost it and became long-term unemployed.

Similarly, a second, less common trajectory (2%) is characterised by a rapid entry into the labour market (in employment or unemployed) followed by a temporary period of inactivity.

For one in ten of the cohort, the early years of the working life were characterised by a long-term or recurrent search for employment. This is the third most common type of trajectory among the young people of the 2010 cohort, after the easiest two trajectories. A smaller number of young people (3%) are permanently inactive and hence distanced from the labour market. Finally, almost one young person in ten (9%) decided to return to education or take part in training for significant or recurrent periods of time.

Distribution of types of trajectories over the first three years of the working life



Sources: survey of 2010 cohort (provisional data), Céreq.

Field: young people leaving the education system for the first in 2010 (France métropolitaine).

●●● secondary education are the most likely to take this option (14%); the trend is even more pronounced in disciplines associated with the service sector.

Graduates of health and social care degree programmes (2 and 3-year courses and PhDs), who benefit from a fairly strictly regulated labour market, virtually all found jobs on completion of their initial education/training. They remain virtually immune from unemployment: they spent only one month on average looking for work over the three years and their unemployment rate was below 2% at the end of the period.

Engineers and PhDs unaffected by crisis

For graduates of long degree programmes (those requiring 5 or more years of post-secondary education), several indicators suggest there has been a very limited deterioration or even a slight improvement in employment conditions. They were more likely to gain rapid access to their first jobs, with 76% of them obtaining employment within less than three months. Over the first three years of their working lives, they spent no more time unemployed than their predecessors in the 2004 cohort (four months). At the end of this period, almost nine out of ten were in employment and, of those, eight were on open-ended contracts. They are the highest earners: their purchasing power increased during the first three years, albeit to a lesser extent than that of their predecessors. Once well established in the labour market, few graduates of long degree programmes return to education.

Nevertheless, these general observations conceal some differences between categories. Thus holders of two-year master's degrees have been more affected by the economic situation. Their unemployment rate at three years doubled between the two surveys; at 12% it is the same as that for graduates of short degree courses. Graduates in arts, humanities, management and law are the worst affected.

On the other hand, engineers and PhDs, regardless of specialism, have not suffered a deterioration in their economic situation and still enjoy a favour-

The 2013 survey of the 2010 cohort

From April to July 2013, Céreq questioned a representative sample of young people who had left the education system for the first time during or at the end of the academic year 2009-2010.

Approximately 33,000 young people of all levels of education responded to this telephone survey that lasted 34 minutes on average.

The aim of the survey was to gather data on differences in access to employment depending on initial education and various individual characteristics (gender and social and national origin). Information was gathered on educational careers and their specific features (work placements, stays abroad), the overall objective being to describe the various employment situations month by month between exit from the education system and the spring of 2013.

This survey, part of the national statistical system, was part of a regular programme of observation and followed on from the surveys of the 1992, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007 cohorts. In order to conduct the survey, Céreq established a database of more than 1,100,000 young people presumed to be leaving the education system, from whom a representative sample was taken. For the first time, young people leaving educational establishments in France's overseas department and territories were included in the survey. Thus the survey became a national survey of France as a whole (723,000 young people leaving the education system). In order to be able to carry out a comparative analysis with previous cohorts, the field of the present study was limited to Metropolitan France.

able position in the labour market. Compared with their counterparts in the 2004 cohort, their employment and unemployment rates have remained stable and they are the only group not to have seen a decline in purchasing power at the three-year mark. The only cloud in the sky for PhDs is the further rise in the share of fixed-term jobs.

The survey of the 2010 cohort confirms that, against the background of a deteriorating economic situation, the transition from education to work has become much more difficult. In particular, it reveals that the differences between levels of qualification are widening. This is not an entirely new phenomenon. In the past, these disparities increased in bad economic situations and then diminished again in economic upturns. However, only time will tell whether the effects of this persistent crisis will be temporary or whether the severity of the crisis will have brought about more radical structural changes in the conditions under which young people enter the labour market.

It remains the case that some of the young people in this cohort, most of them without a diploma, have not crossed the employment barrier in three years, thereby incurring an increased risk of social exclusion. Further surveys of this cohort in 2015 and 2017 will make it possible to track their trajectories over the long term.

Further reading

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