

Vocational training in France

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An Answer to your questions

Centre Inffo (non-profit society under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue) 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 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 professionals of the publishing.

It:

- co-ordinates information and documentation on continuing vocational education and training,
- edits and publishes periodicals, information documents, technical files and other information tools,
- contributes to Government information services, awareness operations and campaigns,
- provides information on the initiatives and operations of international, national and regional institutions,
- organises study and information days,
- realises inquiries and studies for bodies or for companies.

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In France, people have access to learning throughout their lives as part of the on-going education system. In 2011, 42.5% of the salaries took advantage of a training action, a skills audit or a Validation des acquis de l'expérience (VAE – Accreditation of life experience).

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 1.6 % of the French gross domestic product in 2011¹.

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 2014.



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 2012, 22% of French people were attending an educational establishment¹, that means 15.2 million of pupils and students at the beginning of the new school year 2012.

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 2011, the cost of the expenditures related to education within France amounted to 137.4 billion euros, or 6.9% of the gross domestic product.²

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 CAP (Certificate of Professional Aptitude, Level V) to an engineering degree (Level I) and include the BTS (higher-grade technician's diploma, 2 years' study after leaving school). They can be obtained by following a school curriculum, taking an apprenticeship, studying on an work-based learning system or obtaining an 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 (know as "CPC" for "Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives").

Since 2003, all the professional diplomas (level II et IV) are organized in units, you could obtain in a separate way.

Agriculture education

These courses are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture. They provide varying levels of vocational education ranging from Level V to Level I.

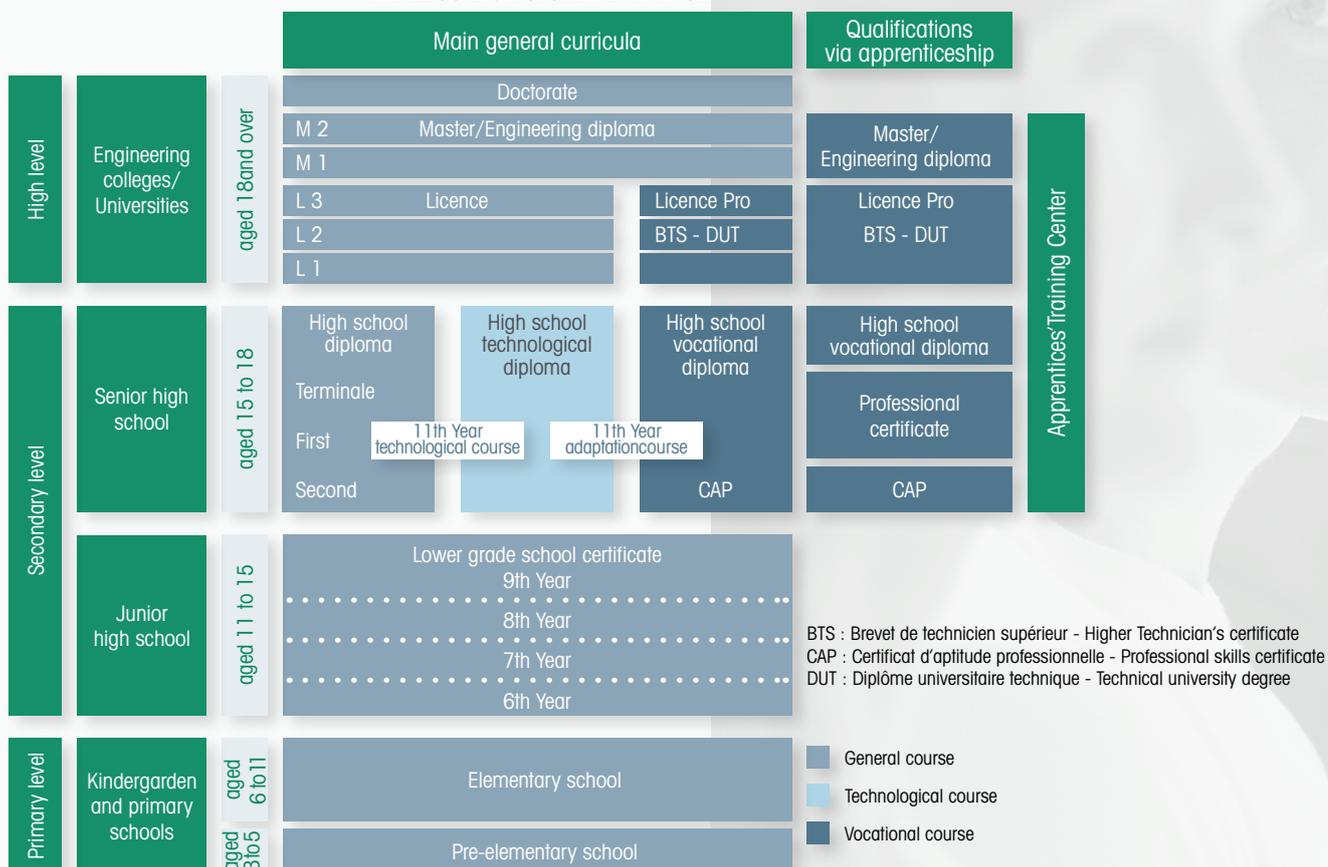
Professionalism for higher education

In 2008-2009, 40% of students registered in courses with a technical/vocational bias³. 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 school leaving certificate and to holders of the DAEU (university entrance diploma).

All the curricula now include diploma accreditation procedures enabling adults to enter the university system and students to be granted examination exemptions. The "grandes écoles", France's leading engineering colleges 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. Répères et Références Statistiques 2013.
2. id.
3. id.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FRANCE



... and continuing vocational learning

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).

Lifelong vocational training aims to :

- make it easier to adapt to changes in working techniques and conditions;
- maintain or improve their vocational qualification;
- assist in their social or professional promotion.

Learning possibilities depend on the status of the beneficiary.

Central and regional governments are responsible for the implementation of lifelong vocational training. Social partners play a vital role particularly in the choice of learning policies for staff in the private sector and the management of funding provided by the companies.

Vocational training providers may be private, public or part of the Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Trades or Agriculture (cf. p4). For more than 18 101¹ of them, training is the main activity in 2011.

In 2011, France spent 32 billion euros for lifelong vocational training and apprenticeship². These fundings come mainly from the central government (15%), firms (43%) and regional authorities (14%), the remaining 28% stems from public agencies and households.

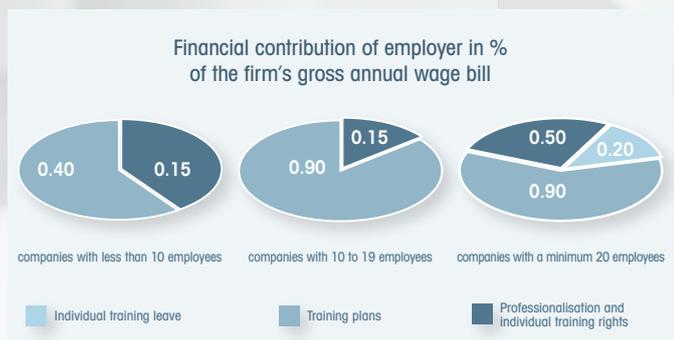
Accreditation of life experience : Recognition of prior learning

- 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 provide proof of having exercised a professional or voluntary activity 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.

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

This obligation is incumbent upon employers, in both the private and public sectors. Since 2005, it is equal to 1.6 % of the wages bill for private companies with 20 employees or more, to 1.05 % for privates companies with 10 to 19 employees and to 0.55 % of the wages bill for private companies employing fewer than 10 employees. These fundings are composed of different financial contributions which will be subject to modification on 1st January 2015.

With the exception of the training plan for companies employing a minimum of 10 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.



Training Reform in the private sector

Social partners signed a national multi-sector agreement on 14th December 2013 on vocational training. A great part of this agreement has been enshrined in the law of 5th March 2014.

These texts implement the personal training account (compte personnel de formation -CPF-), the removal of the contribution for training plan and the transformation of the funding rules of vocational training. They continue the decentralization process of vocational guidance and training.

Employee training

Employees 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.

□ Training Plan

This includes all the training activities for which the employer is responsible. The scheme is submitted to the works committee for discussion. The employer have two possibilities to provide training courses to his employees. In one hand the member of staff undergoing training is considered to be undertaking professional work and is paid by the company. In the other hand, the employee attends training courses outside working hours at the employer's request or with an only subsidy.

□ Individual training Leave

This enables any salaried member of staff to follow his/her own choice of training programme 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.

□ Individual training Right benefit

Under the Individual Training Right benefit (DIF), every employee acquires a training-time credit of 20 hours a year within the limits of 6 years, which allows all employees to pursue a vocational training. Normally, the employee attends training courses outside working hours except when a sector's agreement of the social partners foresees the possibility of being considered to be undertaking on the professional work.

NB : A personal training account should replace this scheme on 1st January 2015.

□ Personal and 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.

Similar arrangements exist for public sector workers.

Training for self employed workers

Self employed or non-salaried workers (farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, professional people) can also take advantage of training programmes. 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 : 2014 Budget Plan.
2. Source : Id.

practical guide

Public services

- ☐ Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
78, rue de Varenne - 75349 Paris SP
Tél. 33 1 49 55 49 55
www.agriculture.gouv.fr
- ☐ Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue
139, rue de Bercy - 75572 Paris cedex 12
Tél. 33 1 40 04 04 04
www.travail-emploi-sante.gouv.fr
- ☐ Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle (DGEFP)
7, square Max-Hymans - 75741 Paris cedex 15
Tél. 33 1 40 04 04 04
- ☐ Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
110, rue de Grenelle - 75007 Paris
Tél. 33 1 55 55 10 10
www.education.gouv.fr

Reception and consultancy

- ☐ Public service, portal site for French authorities.
www.service-public.fr
- ☐ National portal on guidance and initial and continuing training.
www.orientation-pour-tous.fr
- ☐ EduFrance provides foreign students with a specific curriculum, in French, to prepare them for higher education. It also provides a wide range of vocational training courses for foreign students.
www.campusfrance.fr
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Ploteus is a Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space. It aims to help everyone to find out information about studying in Europe.
<http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus>

Preparing a vocational stay in France

Training courses : the main networks in France

- ☐ The Association des chambres françaises de commerce et d'industrie (ACFCI) provides information about all the colleges and schools managed by the networks of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
www.acfci.cci.fr
- ☐ The Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes (Afp) organises vocational diploma courses (400 diplomas).
www.afpa.fr
- ☐ The Assemblée permanente des chambres des métiers (Apcm) provides information on courses in trades and crafts subjects.
www.apcm.com
- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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
- ☐ The Groupement d'établissements de l'Éducation nationale (Greta) prepares students for the 700 technological and vocational diplomas offered by the Ministry of Education.
www.eduscol.education.fr
- ☐ The network of lifelong learning departments within French universities details the courses on offer in each region, by vocational sector.
www.fcu.fr
- ☐ The Fédération de la formation professionnelle (FFP) groups together 300 private training providers.
www.ffp.org

Information on training and employment: the main public agencies

- ☐ Pôle emploi
www.pole-emploi.fr
- ☐ Centre d'information et de documentation pour la jeunesse (CIDJ)
www.cidj.com
- ☐ Centres régionaux d'animation et de ressources d'information sur la formation (Carif)
www.intercarif.org
- ☐ Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle (Cedefop)
www.cedefop.europa.eu
- ☐ Centre de développement de l'information sur la formation permanente (Centre Inffo)
www.centre-inffo.fr
- ☐ Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions (Onisep)
www.onisep.fr