

# Learning becomes modular: Vocational education pathway (PEQ)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BELGIUM-FR

## Timeline



ID number 44756

## Background

One of the objectives of the Pact for excellence in education introduced by the French Community is making of the vocational education a path of excellence, valuing each learner and allowing a successful socio-professional integration, while simplifying its organisation.

The Certification per unit (CPU) system organises the certification of knowledge, skills and professional competencies in Units of Learning Outcomes. It was implemented in parallel with the 'ordinary' school assessment system (with certification given at the end of the school year), with the result that two systems coexisted: one for the options organised in the CPU system and the other for the options outside the CPU system (with distinct principles used among different providers). Therefore, they were extremely complicated for schools to organise simultaneously, and contribute to making the qualification pathway complex, unclear, and inefficient.

To increase the attractiveness of qualification education (technical and artistic education) and vocational education, an evaluation of the CPU system was needed, allowing to analyse if it is advisable to extend CPU to the whole VET system.

## Objectives

The Vocational education pathway (*Parcours d'Enseignement Qualifiant*, PEQ) has been set up based on the strength of the CPU system, and is gradually to be implemented for all learners of qualification education (technical and artistic) and vocational education.

The objectives are:

- (a) positive orientation towards qualification education, so that it becomes as often as possible a first choice;
- (b) the upgrading of technical professions and the sectors that lead to them;
- (c) simplification of the organisation of vocational education for better clarity;
- (d) learning differentiation to fight against premature dropping out of school which leaves too many young people without secondary school certification and feeds the hard core of unemployment;
- (e) mobility between the various training providers in Belgium and abroad;
- (f) increase compatibility with the lifelong learning scheme;

- (g) better integration into the labour market;
- (h) better compatibility between the common core and the vocational part of the programme.

## Description

Following the evaluation of the CPU system, a new vocational pathway was designed in 2021. On 20 July 2022, the Government of the French Community approved the decree redrawing the learners' path in vocational education and implementing PEQ.

PEQ applies to all secondary learners of qualification education (technical and artistic) and vocational education, either school based or in the dual system and includes those VET programmes offered to learners with special education needs. The pathway organises the training and qualification of the learner over three years, from the 4th to the 6th year of secondary education (learners aged 15-18). Learning becomes modular: the training process is organised in learning units which are validated progressively. This system was already available for some programmes and becomes the norm for all vocational education.

The pathway allows the learners to confirm their choice of orientation in the 4th year of secondary qualification and vocational education and, if they have experienced major difficulties, to complete an additional year. Between the 5th and 6th years of secondary VET (learners aged 16-18), the assessment processes are organised in a different way: the learner has two years to acquire the required knowledge and skills in both the general course subjects and in the subjects of his vocational option. After the end of the 5th year, the learner continues his or her education in the 6th year, and repetition will become the exception. At the end of the 6th (or 7th) year, to prevent that any learner who is at risk to drop out, the end of their course is organised in a different way to support the achievement of certification as quickly as possible. For learners who have not obtained their qualification certificate, this end of course must include a professional internship, which is a guarantee of motivation and a transition to the labour market.

The new PEQ system is to be implemented gradually, from 2022 to 2026.

### 2021 Design

In 2021, the PEQ was designed, following the results of the evaluation of the CPU regime. The results of the CPU pilot project showed that the objectives of reducing year repetition were not being achieved, despite the resources invested to this end. The evaluation also showed that only half of the additional school periods (hours) granted to schools were devoted to remedial work, the other half actually being allocated to coordination tasks.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the CPU scheme also highlighted a number of positive elements, on which the reform of the new PEQ is based, including:

- (a) job-specific reference frameworks, common to all providers, drawn up over a three-year period in ordinary full-service education;
- (b) modular approach to apprenticeship, enabling it to be linked to lifelong learning systems, with a view to European mobility;
- (c) three-year course based on progressive validation;
- (d) reinforced learners support, based on a 'personalized' monitoring tool and fostering collaboration between general education and vocational education teachers;
- (e) differentiated learning based on formative assessment and remediation.

### 2022 Approved/Agreed

A Decree on PEQ was adopted on 20 July 2022 on Vocational education pathways.

From September 2022, PEQ is gradually becoming widespread for all learners, starting with the 4th and 7th years of secondary vocational education, in the options formerly

organised under the CPU regime.

### 2023 Implementation

In 2023, all 4th and 7th years of the affected qualification and vocational programmes of secondary education are now organised within the PEQ. The 5th year programmes, previously governed by the CPU regime, have also been transitioned to the new pathway.

### 2024 Implementation

In 2024, all 5th year programmes of qualification and vocational education were organised in the PEQ system. Regarding the 6th year of secondary programmes of qualification and vocational education, the learning programmes formerly structured as CPUs have transitioned to the PEQ starting in the 2024-25 academic year. The complementary end-of-course programme, which can last from one day to an entire school year, was then organised at the end of the 7th year for all learners who have not obtained one or more of the targeted qualifications.

### 2025 Implementation

In 2025, all 6th-year vocational education options were part of the PEQ. The 6th-year options that were previously organised under the so-called “traditional” system were integrated into the PEQ at the start of the 2025-26 school year. As a result, the complementary end-of-course programme (*Dispositif de fin de parcours complémentaire*) was organised for the first time at the end of the 6th year in 2025-26 for the options that were previously organised under the CPU system, since these were integrated into the PEQ at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. The CPU was completely phased out in favour of the PEQ.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of the French Community

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people (15-29 years old)

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies  
Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses  
Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation  
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### European and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

# European priorities in VET

## VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

## Osnabrück Declaration

European Education and Training Area and international VET

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Vocational education pathway \(PEQ\)](#)

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[Decree on PEQ of 20 July 2022](#)

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[What is PEQ?](#)

## Related policy developments

**2015 Approved/Agreed**

### Renewal of the cooperation agreement of the Francophone Service for Trades and Qualification (SFMQ)

In October 2015, a new decree confirmed the renewal of the cooperation agreement of the Francophone Service for Trades and Qualification (service francophone des métiers et des qualifications, SFMQ) by all relevant Francophone parliaments (Government of the French Community of Belgium, Government

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

**2022 Discontinued**

### Certification by learning outcomes units (CPU)

The certification by learning-outcomes units (CPU) divides upper-secondary VET tracks into different CPU. Learners receive the qualification certificate when all the learning-outcomes units are validated.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Pact for Excellence in Education**

The Pact for excellence in education was launched in January 2015, with a view to gradual implementation from 2017 to 2030. This was confirmed and reaffirmed in the Community Policy Statement covering the period 2019-24.

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Reforming the provision of vocational education**

The Observatory on Vocational and Qualifying Education, Trades and Technologies was created on 6 June 2018. As provided by the Pact for excellence in education, the observatory is part of the new governance framework for vocational education (nationally referred to as qualifying education).

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Measures of guidance and promotion of work-based learning**

The Order of the Government of the French Community on work-study contracts was approved on the 17.7.2015 and introduced the single contract, which defines the roles and needs to be signed by the stakeholders involved in dual training, namely the apprentice, the training company and the VET provider.

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**“ … ” Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Learning becomes modular: Vocational education pathway (PEQ): Belgium-FR. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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