

Modernising validation of prior learning (VAE)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 FRANCE

Timeline

2021 Pilot 2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation

ID number 43899

Background

Validation of prior learning (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*, VAE) is the third way to obtain certification alongside initial training and continuing training; it was introduced in France by the Social Modernisation Act of 17 January 2002.

Any person involved in working life is entitled to have their experience validated throughout their life, in order to promote their integration or professional development. Validation of prior learning is a lever for access to qualification available to all without any age, status, nationality, level of qualification conditions. All the qualifications included in the national directory of vocational certifications (*Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*, RNCP), i.e. approximately 2 700 certifications, can be obtained through VAE.

VAE supports continuing professional training and is a tool for promotion and career development. VAE falls within the framework of the European Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and within the framework of the European skills strategy for sustainable competitiveness, social equity and resilience.

However, in recent years, it has been observed that there is insufficient successful participation in VAE, and this is something that needs to change through its modernisation.

Objectives

VAE must become more attractive for job seekers as well as for employees undergoing professional retraining. One of the objectives of the renovation of VAE is to combat recruitment tensions in the labour market, i.e. in the health and social care, early childhood, and social economy sectors.

One main goal is to increase the number of beneficiaries, by targeting 100 000 beneficiaries per year by 2027. It is important to note that the results in 2021 showed 30 000 beneficiaries. Additionally, we aim at an increase of the candidates' success rate.

Furthermore, the right of prior learning validation is expected to be strengthened with regard to the following key points:

Requirements for benefiting from the VAE

The law provides universal access to VAE. Any person, and no longer only people involved in working life, are able to benefit from the validation scheme. The validation system is open to any experience allowing this way all skills directly related to the qualification concerned to be taken under consideration. For example, caregivers are now able to use VAE to demonstrate the skills they have acquired in assisting family members with personal and general health care. Work placement periods (internships) are taken into account over the period of experience, and the minimum of one year for the requested duration of experience has been removed.

Possibility of acquiring a skills block from a qualification

VAE will no longer be aimed solely at acquiring full qualification. It will be possible to acquire one or more skills blocks from a vocational qualification.

Duration of VAE leave

In order to give employee candidates the time needed to prepare for their validation test, the maximum duration of the VAE leave has been increased to 48 hours, instead of 24.

Description

The minister delegated for vocational training announced an ambitious reform at the end of 2022.

Law No 2022-1598 of 21 December 2022 on emergency measures relating to the functioning of the labour market includes several provisions that reform VAE along three lines:

- (a) simplification: facilitating the admissibility stage, shortening routes and harmonising funding rules;
- (b) making validation paths more secure: the law individualises and strengthens the support provided to candidates, giving them the opportunity to take additional training during the validation process and to benefit from a longer period of absence to prepare for sessions before the jury;
- (c) a national public service in the form of a digital platform that concentrates information for users and organises the various stages in the VAE process.

2021 Pilot

Since 2021 several pilots have been launched, in particular by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration, in order to transform the validation of prior learning (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience*, VAE). The methodology used for this reform is an agile method, based on iterations between field trials with the public and evaluation of the effects produced.

The first REVA pilot (*Reconnaître et valider l'expérience*) aimed at simplifying VAE: for four months, under the impetus of the labour ministry and in cooperation with the public employment service (*Pôle emploi*), REVA offered 200 people with experience in the personal services to individuals sector the opportunity to obtain a diploma in this field (i.e. Family life assistant, Dependency care assistant).

2022 Implementation

From 2022, this measure is part of the national implementation plan for the VET Recommendation, and more specifically relates to Actions, 'Bridges between different forms of lifelong learning' and 'Modularisation of training pathways' under 'Reinforcing the individualisation of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning'.

Adoption of Law No 2022-1598 of 21 December 2022 on emergency measures relating to the functioning of the labour market with a view to full employment foresees the creation of a public VAE service (*Groupement d'intérêt public*, GIP). The State, the

regions, the Employment Centre (*Pôle emploi*), the national agency for adult vocational training (AFPA), skills operators (OPCOs) and 'Transitions pro' associations are *ex officio* members of the GIP. The mission of the GIP is to guide and support candidates by providing them personalised guidance, promote VAE, lead and coordinate players and ensure statistical monitoring. The provisions of the same law make it possible to set up a digital one-stop shop, in the form of an online portal for the procedures of VAE candidates.

The law also foresees the continuation and expansion of the pilot project REVA with a second round named REVA 2 from September 2022 to June 2023. REVA 2 started in September 2022 supported by the Ministry of Labour. The aim of REVA 2 is to further simplify and speed up the certification of professional skills through VAE. The pilot focuses on the following professional sectors: dependence; health and care, and early childhood. REVA 2 helps beneficiaries by providing personalised support; funding for support entirely paid for and managed by the support provider; and a simplified process. REVA 2 also makes it possible for employee candidates to obtain the certifications targeted in six to eight months, while continuing to work and carry out their usual activities. The objective of this second pilot was also to support the preparation of the implementing decrees of the law mentioned above.

2023 Implementation

The decree No. 2023-1275 of 27 December 2023 implements the provisions of the 2022 Law on the reform of the validation of prior learning (VAE), namely:

- (a) the whole process is streamlined and handled through a single digital platform (France VAE), where candidates can register, track their progress, and receive support; VAE applicants are assisted from the start in preparing their application and securing funding;
- (b) processing times are shortened; applications are reviewed within 2 months, the candidate's interview with the jury should take place within 3 months after submission of the application; for the employed, the new applicable deadlines for obtaining their employer's approval are shorter too;
- (c) the France VAE digital service is gradually being implemented in the course of 2024, to allow for a smooth transition, ensuring that certifications not yet integrated into the new digital system can still be obtained with the previous process.

Certifying bodies as well as the decentralised services of the Ministry of Labour have been informed on the changes introduced in the new VAE digital service and the gradual transition into the France VAE system by end 2024.

2024 Implementation

With regard to the forthcoming regulatory texts implementing the reform of the VAE, inter-ministerial work was underway. Several decrees relating to state diplomas in social work have been amended to clarify that these diplomas have been integrated into the France VAE pathway.

The order of 21 June 2024 amended certain provisions relating to the VAE for state social work diplomas, namely the State diploma of educational monitor, the State diploma of educational and social assistant, the certificate of aptitude for the functions of director of an institution or of a social intervention service and the certificate of aptitude for the functions of director of a social intervention unit. Individuals wishing to obtain these diplomas through VAE must submit their applications on the France VAE digital platform.

The Centre for Employment and Labour Studies (CEET) published an analysis on how skills acquired through trade union mandates can be recognised and valued in career transitions. The study identified mechanisms that enable these competences to be validated and converted into professional reorientation opportunities.

2025 Implementation

To make validation of prior learning (VAE) more accessible, faster and more transparent, the France VAE platform now centralises all relevant information for awarding bodies and guidance providers.

Procedures have been simplified: smaller juries, shorter eligibility files, a doubled VAE leave for employees, and easier online submission enabling self-managed applications. Timeframes have been shortened with clearer calendars and more frequent jury sessions.

Funding sources have been broadened, allowing the personal training account (*Compte personnel de formation, CPF*) to cover the entire VAE pathway, including guidance and jury costs. This supports equal access to career advancement for all workers through Regional Skills Investment Pacts (PRIC), co-funding by *France Travail* for jobseekers, company training plans for employees, and funding from professional branches and their skills operators (*Opérateurs de compétences, Opco*).

Enterprises now benefit from new opportunities to finance collective VAE schemes, encouraging internal mobility and talent retention.

Since July 2025, 80% of qualifications accessible through VAE have been listed on the France VAE platform. The first results are encouraging: 20 000 pathways co-funded by the CPF within six months since 1 January 2025, over 550 qualifications available on the platform by 1 September 2025, and 18 000 new candidates engaged since January 2025.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration (until 2022)
- Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Inclusion
- Delegate Minister for VET under the education and labour ministers

Target group

Learners

Adult learners
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment
Low-skilled/qualified persons

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Law No 2022-1598 of 21 December 2022 \(OJ of 22.12.22\)](#)

[Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Integration \(2023\). VAE is changing.](#)

[VAE Portal](#)

[Decree No. 2023-1275 of 27 December 2023 implementing the provisions of the law and provides the new procedures for delivering the VAE.](#)

[Order of 21 June 2024 amending certain provisions relating to the VAE for state social work diplomas](#)

[Simonpoli, N. \(2024, December\). Valuing skills from trade union mandates \[La valorisation professionnelle des acquis du mandat syndical : quels dispositifs pour quels objectifs ?\].](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

National qualifications framework

In the reporting period, work to adapt the current five-level structure of the French framework to the eight-level structure of the EQF was carried out.

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Skill sets in vocational qualifications

Skill sets are 'homogeneous and coherent sets of competencies that contribute to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity, which can be evaluated and validated'. Reforming vocational qualifications into skill sets (*blocks de compétences*) started in 2016.

 FRANCE

Type of development

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Modernising validation of prior learning (VAE): France. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/43899>