

National qualifications framework

POLICY DEVELOPMENT **REGULATION/LEGISLATION**  FRANCE

Timeline

2018 **Legislative process** 2019 **Implementation** 2020 **Implementation**
2021 **Implementation** 2022 **Implementation** 2023 **Implementation**
2024 **Implementation** 2025 **Implementation**

ID number 28234

Background

A first-generation national qualifications framework was put in place in 2002. It is fully set up and operational. It covers all vocationally and professionally oriented qualifications, including all higher education qualifications with a vocational and professional orientation and purpose. It includes a growing number of qualifications awarded by social partners, sectors and enterprises and has been supported by a validation system. More than 10 000 qualifications are covered by the framework. The framework was linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in 2010 but has not yet been linked to the qualifications framework in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA).

Objectives

The establishment of a framework improves the visibility of qualifications for all those involved in the training-employment relationship, by associating each vocational qualification with a level of qualification based on the grading criteria for the necessary professional skills. This is recognition for access to further studies and offers practical value for the market, aiding comparisons and mobility at national and international levels.

Description

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. Article 31 of the 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future introduced a new vocational qualifications framework, which establishes the correspondence between the national five-level structure and the EQF levels. The EQF NCP for France is, as of 1 January 2019, hosted by France Compétences.

2018 Legislative process

2019 Implementation

The framework was redefined on 9 January 2019 (by a decree supplemented by an

The framework was redefined on 9 January 2020 (by a decree supplemented by an order) to comply with the European qualifications framework. From 1 January 2020, the nomenclature is replaced by a nomenclature referring to eight levels based on the knowledge and skills acquired, from level 1 (basic knowledge) to level 8 (doctoral studies).

2020 Implementation

The measures is operational and runs as regular practice.

2021 Implementation

The new NQF has been referenced to the European Qualifications Framework and self-certified its compatibility with the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in February 2021.

Through its mission of establishing the national register of professional certifications (RNCP) and the specific register of certifications and accreditations (RS), France Compétences must guarantee the quality and relevance of qualifications listed in the two national registers. It has established and published doctrine briefs, a practical guide and participated in various webinars.

The certification commission established within *France Compétences*, has processed nearly 2 100 requests for inclusion of certifications in the national registers, within a processing time (investigation and then admissibility review) average of 7 months in total.

The quality requirements associated with the reform have resulted in an average acceptance rate to the RNCP of 62% (77% for cases being renewed) and 18% to the specific directory. The RNCP contains 4 882 active certifications compared to more than 10 000 before the reform.

2022 Implementation

The process of revising vocational qualifications, certificates and degrees developed by the Ministries, has been launched. Currently, these qualifications are legally registered (*enregistrement de droit*) in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (*Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*, RNCP), after receiving the assent of the inter-ministerial advisory committees.

The national agency *France Compétences* has distributed a handbook that provides comprehensive information on the registration process of vocational qualifications, the structuring of competency blocks, and the delivery of qualifications.

Regarding current trends in VET related jobs, the Vocational Qualifications Commission of *France Compétences* has drawn up a list of 23 professions that are either emerging or experiencing rapid development in 2023. Vocational qualifications relating to these occupations are eligible for a special registration procedure to be included in the RNCP, in order to ensure a swift response to the evolving needs of the labour market. Among the professions included in the list, seven are newly added, while a portion of the professions from the respective 2022 list have been retained.

2023 Implementation

France Compétences has set up an online tutorial space devoted to vocational qualifications.

As part of its administration of the personal training account (*Compte personnel de formation*, CPF) system, and in connection with its monitoring of the requirement for listed training courses to lead to a qualification, the Deposit and Consignment Office (*Caisse des dépôts et consignation*) has set up an online space specifically for the bodies responsible for issuing the various diplomas and the relevant vocational qualifications.

2024 Implementation

A private training provider has taken the initiative to launch a new search engine, Certifspros+, which allows users to search for a professional qualification or certification before being presented with the corresponding training programmes leading to this qualification/certification. The fact that the search engine prioritises qualifications over training programmes reflects a shift towards certification as a core component in securing professional pathways.

Users can click on a certification block to access the corresponding detailed records of the RNCP or RS qualifications listed in the national registers available online by France Compétences, job and employment records (ROME) provided by the Operational Directory of Trades and Jobs of the national public employment service (PES), and the *Formacode* index on training resources hosted by the Centre Inffo, the information centre on continuing training under the labour ministry.

The Certifspros+ search engine for each qualification provides information on access routes (either initial education programmes, adult education/continuing training schemes, apprenticeships or validation processes) as well as lists of certified training providers authorised to offer training programmes to acquire the targeted qualification.

2025 Implementation

A decree published on 8 June 2025 introduces new registration conditions and defines grounds for refusing applications. From 1 October 2025, applications may be rejected in cases of false declaration, verbatim reproduction of an existing standard (plagiarism), or misleading information provided to the public by the applicant or authorised bodies (Article R6113-8-1 of the Labour Code).

Refusals are decided by the Director-General of France Compétences following a binding opinion of the Professional Certification Committee. Repeated refusals may lead to a ban on submitting similar projects for up to two years; three refusals within five years trigger an automatic one-year ban (Article R6113-11-1).

In addition to existing criteria, applications must demonstrate:

- adequate technical, pedagogical and supervisory resources - for both, training actions and validation of prior learning (VAE) activities - aligned with qualification standards;
- integration of occupational health and safety principles and consideration of ecological and digital transitions.

Graduate employment data will be required for both the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (RNCP) and the second register of additional certifications (*Répertoire spécifique*, RS). For first registrations, data may cover a single graduating cohort, limiting registration to three years.

France Compétences may verify compliance through documentary checks with ministries and other awarding bodies and request additional information (Article R6113-16-8). In case of non-compliance, the Director-General issues a formal notice to the awarding body with at least thirty days to respond (submitting observations, requesting a hearing). Based on this evidence the Director-General may confirm, amend or withdraw the notice; the awarding body then has fifteen days to comply. Failure to comply may result in removal from the registers. Serious or repeated breaches can lead to removal of all qualifications issued by the body and a ban on submitting new projects for up to two years (Article R6113-16-9).

Bodies responsible

- France Compétences

Target group

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Decree No 2019-14 of 8 January 2019 on the national framework of vocational and professional qualifications \[Decret n° 2019-14 du 8 janvier 2019 relatif au cadre national des certifications professionnelles\]. JORF, No 0007, 9.1.2019.](#)

[France Competences](#)

[France competences, Note on the national framework for vocational qualifications](#)

[The updated referencing report of the French national qualifications framework to the EQF for LLL and to the QF-EHEA \(2021\)](#)

[The updated referencing report of the French national qualifications framework to the EQF for LLL and to the QF-EHEA \(2021\) \(in French\)](#)

[Cedefop \(2021\). European inventory on NQF 2020 France](#)

[France Competences, 2023 - National Register of Vocational Qualifications \(RNCP\) Handbook - January 2023 - V1.1](#)

[France Competences, 2023 - 23 professions that are currently emerging or experiencing rapid development in 2023](#)

[France Competences, 2023 - Tutorial space devoted to vocational qualifications](#)

[Caisse des Depots, 2023 Diploma and certification portal for Managers](#)

[Certifs Pros Plus](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Modernising validation of prior learning (VAE)

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:

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Reinforcing access for all to lifelong learning (the 2018 law)

The 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future provides for:

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). National qualifications framework: 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/28234>