

Skill sets in vocational qualifications

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 FRANCE

Timeline



ID number 28233

Background

A national validation strategy was agreed and set up in 2002. The validation system is well established and quite advanced. There are three main types of validation: giving access to education (no diploma associated); validating any part of non-formal or informal learning acquired at work (diplomas issued are the same as formal qualifications); and validating prior learning in formal settings (other studies, study abroad). All VET qualifications included in the national register of vocational qualifications (*Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*, RNCP) must be obtainable through the validation of non-formal and informal learning; the same requirement applies to any new qualifications to be included in the national register. Explicit quality assurance criteria and mechanisms are in place.

Objectives

It will make it possible to adapt reference bases more quickly when certain areas of competence are impacted by technological developments.

Description

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. The first qualifications restructured into skill sets through legislation (decrees 2016-771, 2016-772 and 2016-1037) are the professional skills certificate (CAP, EQF level 3), the vocational baccalaureate (Bac-pro, EQF level 4) and the advanced technician certificate (BTS, EQF 5) offered in initial education and training. An adult candidate who has successfully completed training relating to a particular skills set will receive the corresponding certificate. The three 2016 decrees on skills sets stipulate that the certification of skills sets also applies in the validation process. Work is ongoing to extend this approach to other qualifications that have a significant number of adult candidates.

2016 Legislative process

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

The 2018 reorganisation of the continuing training system and supporting frameworks made the use of skills set mandatory for all RNCP qualifications (Art. L. 6113- 1 of the French Labour Code).

2019 Implementation

Restructuring professional qualifications into blocks of skills enables them to adapt in a more agile manner to changes in professions, as one or more blocks can be redesigned when skills change rapidly, faster than a qualification as a whole. The establishment of interministerial vocational advisory committees (*commissions professionnelles consultatives*, CPCs) with strong participation of professionals is expected to ease information sharing in terms of analysis of economic data and sectoral trends and help develop pathways between certifications.

2020 Implementation

Since 2020/21, learners in upper secondary school-based VET programmes (and in apprentice training centres) who fail to pass the final exam to acquire the vocational qualification, but who have scored 10 or more on one skills block, can obtain a certificate attesting the skills they have acquired.

2021 Implementation

The measure is operational and runs as a regular practice.

2022 Implementation

From 2022, this policy development is part of the NIP Measure 'Reinforcing the individualisation of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning', Actions: 'Bridges between different forms of lifelong learning' and 'Modularisation of training pathways training'.

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, the assessment and the delivery of qualifications.

2023 Implementation

France Compétences has initiated a project aimed at identifying equivalences between vocational qualifications. To this end, the ministries and certifying bodies have been asked to identify possible areas of equivalence between their vocational qualifications and other vocational qualifications registered in the RNCP - National Register of Vocational Qualifications. This process is scheduled to be carried out in the first half of 2023. The aim is to facilitate professional mobility for employees by providing simplified access to qualification pathways and establishing connections between qualifications, particularly at the level of competency blocks.

2024 Implementation

Certifying bodies are now required to identify correspondences between the vocational qualifications they deliver and other existing vocational qualifications as part of regulatory compliance. Following a consultation process, the roll-out of the project has been delayed to start in 2024.

France compétences' work on correspondences between qualifications continued in 2024. The organisation also improved the information system of the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (*RNCP*) and the *Répertoire spécifique (RS)* to improve security, usability and search functions.

At the same time, under the remit of the Ministry in charge of National Education and Youth (DGESCO) and the Ministry in charge of Higher Education and Research (DGESIP), all vocational diplomas at EQF levels 3, 4 and 5 are now structured in skill sets (*blocs de compétences*), in line with Labour Code requirements. New and revised diplomas follow this competence-based engineering approach, ensuring consistency with the national certification framework;

2025 Implementation

In September 2025, France compétences updated the guide to occupations undergoing significant change or emerging. Three new occupations were identified—regulatory compliance manager, digital-twin specialist and virtual production supervisor—bringing the 2025 list to 19 occupations. The update aims to speed up the registration of qualifications aligned with new economic needs and *France 2030* priorities.

The General Commission for Sustainable Development (*Commissariat général au développement durable*, CGDD) published a methodological guide on integrating the ecological transition into vocational qualifications, developed with several certifying ministries and France compétences.

Finally, the Ministry in charge of Higher Education and Research released a practical guide to align certification and training logics, showing how diplomas are listed in the RNCP and organised into skill sets.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
- Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Inclusion
- Delegate Minister for VET under the education and labour ministers
- France Compétences
- Ministry of National Education and Youth (until 2024)
- Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (from 2020 till 2022)
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration (until 2022)

Target group

Learners

Adult learners

Education professionals

Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

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

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

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

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Decree No 2016-771 of 10 June 2016](#)

[Decree 2016-772 of 10 June 2016](#)

[Decree No 2016-1037 of 28 July 2016](#)

[Circular No 2016-133 of 4 October 2016 on methods of delivery of certification of skills sets](#)

[Law of 5 September 2018 Professional future - article 31](#)

[Report 2015-078 prepared for the Ministry of Education by the General Inspection of National Education: Introduction of skills sets in vocational diplomas](#)

[Decree No 2020-726 of 12 June 2020 amending the provisions of the Education Code relating to the recognition of the acquisition of skills blocks for five vocational qualifications](#)

(CAP, vocational baccalaureate, BEP, BMA, MC) (in French)

France competences, 2023 - National Register of Vocational Qualifications (RNCP) Handbook

France competences, 2022 - Launch of the process of identifying areas of equivalence between vocational qualifications

France competences. (2025, September 16). Emerging or fast-evolving jobs - 2025 guide [Les métiers en particulière évolution ou en émergence - Guide 2025].

Commissariat general au développement durable (CGDD). (2025, July). Handbook on integrating the ecological transition into vocational qualifications [Prise en compte de la transition écologique dans les certifications professionnelles : Vademecum].

Ministere de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MESR) - DGESIP. (2025, May). RNCP and programme design practical guide 2025 [Articuler les logiques de certification et de formation : guide pratique 2025].

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:

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Investment in skills plan: building a skills society

The Skills Investment plan (*Plan d'investissement dans les compétences*, PIC) is a government initiative aimed at improving job related skills and employability of 1 million job seekers and 1 million young people.

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28233>