

Transition from lower secondary education to upper secondary VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 FRANCE

Timeline



ID number 28231

Description

A circular from the Ministry of Education issued in March 2016 allows students who made a wrong choice of VET programme to change their mind and move to another programme, whether in VET or general or technological education.

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| 2016 Legislative process |
| 2017 Implementation |
| 2018 Implementation |
| <p>2019 Implementation</p> <p>The orientation/guidance processes at the end of the third year of lower secondary schooling (grade 9, or <i>Troisième</i> in the national context) have been redesigned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) ONISEP (the national office for information on curricula and professions) provides information and resources on training and jobs for students, families and teachers. A guide on how to prepare the orientation plan is available online; (b) a dedicated website (Nouvelle Voie pro) offers information on the vocational path in upper secondary; (c) free advisers from the guidance service answer questions from families about training, careers and planning (through chat, email or telephone). <p>Support for career planning is a priority and a focus in various reforms.</p> <p>Career guidance is integrated into the hours dedicated to career planning at different education levels and pathways: 12 hours per year in grade 8 (<i>Quatrième</i>) and 36 hours per year in grade 9 (<i>Troisième</i>) in lower secondary; 54 hours per year in the general and technological paths in upper secondary schools. Career guidance covers 265 hours (over three years) in the general curriculum of the upper secondary vocational path (<i>Bac-Pro</i>). In the last year of the vocational path in upper secondary education (<i>Terminale</i>), students may choose between two modules on career guidance, the first focusing on professional integration and entrepreneurship and the second on further</p> |

studies.

National policy also aims at improving coordination and interchangeability of training methods. It aims to facilitate transitions from the school path to apprenticeships and vice-versa; and to host apprentices at each vocational secondary school which offers learners a variety of paths (school, apprenticeship, mixed), thus improving the transitions between the two training forms.

The website ÉDUCSCOL regularly posts documents and resources (handbooks, videos, slide shows) to support the education teams in implementing the reforms.

A national reference framework signed on 28 May 2019 specifies the respective roles of the French State and the regions and the principles guiding the intervention of the regions and their partners in establishments. Regional agreements implementing this reference framework are being signed to focus the information provided on the local context better, taking into account the characteristics of the regional training options and local economic needs.

The Decree of 27 April 2019 for the vocational path, choice for one or more families of trades, now organises the vocational class of grade 10 (*seconde*, first year of upper secondary school) by families of trades. Each family of trades includes several specialities of the vocational *baccalauréat*. This measure gives pupils more time and knowledge to choose their profession.

A new territorial organisation entrusts the education authorities of the academic region with responsibility for the major strategic directions in terms of information and guidance.

2020 Implementation

An Order of 13 November 2020 amended the order of 5 May 2020 establishing an automated processing of personal data by the Ministry of National Education (*Téléservice Orientation*)

The *Téléservice Orientation* online service is accessible through the *Scolarité Services* portal to the parents of pupils in the last (*troisième*) grade of lower secondary programmes in public or private schools. Through the service parents may request and register their children online to the career guide scheme of their choice (general, technological or vocational upper secondary programmes).

2021 Implementation

The *Affectation* tele-service allows families to access the training offer after the last year of lower secondary education (*troisième*, in French), including State and private education under student or apprentice status, throughout France. It provides centralised access to an exhaustive, geolocalised offer, enriched with information on training programmes, training institutions and enrolment procedures. Since 2021, a more efficient search engine allows learners and their families to target training offers based on proximity and/or areas of interest.

2022 Implementation

From 2022, this policy development is part of the national implementation plan (NIP), measure 'Reinforcing the individualisation of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning', action 'Measures to strengthen the individualisation in initial vocational education'.

Vocational career guidance for secondary education pupils is supported through:

- (a) an online platform (*Mon stage de 3ème*) specifically dedicated to lower secondary students in grade 9, particularly those in priority neighbourhoods. This platform supports pupils in discovering professions through internships and helps schools, students and companies get in touch with each other;
- (b) new tools, such as the videoconference series are made available to teachers in

order to facilitate the understanding and engagement of pupils with professions and training programmes (*Les métiers en direct*);

- (c) a 'VET schools week' was organised for the first time in December 2021 to raise awareness about upper secondary VET programmes, qualifications and professions. The initiative promotes VET as an excellence pathway in terms of how training is structured around a set of skills common to a number of professions (*familles des métiers*) and offers through new methods and pedagogies co-interventions, project-based multidisciplinary assignments (*chef d'oeuvre*), and teamwork. It also informs on the wide range of different training options and pathways available, such as apprenticeships and other alternative training schemes in a professional environment, international mobility opportunities as well as employment prospects and further studies. Various host locations like careers and qualifications campuses and training centres with residential accommodation, are also showcased.

Regarding career guidance support in June 2022 an analysis of the results of the 2021 guidance and placement procedures for the final year of lower secondary education (*troisième*, in French) and the first year of upper secondary education (*seconde*, in French) was published, along with statistical data on the results of the main round of high schools pupils placements. The analysis was based on the "*Affelnet- regional lycée*" databases.

As a part of a pilot programme, pupils from 642 voluntary secondary schools from across all the regional education authorities in France are exploring different professions over the course of the academic year 2022/23. The aim is to include in secondary schools special sessions on career exploration starting from the second year of lower education (grade 7, *classe de 5ème* in French). These sessions aim to provide pupils with more information about the range of careers and training courses available, to emphasise the value of education in order to offer more effective guidance, and to develop partnerships with businesses and other professional bodies leading to initiatives both inside and outside the secondary school system.

The second annual Vocational secondary school week took place in December 2022. During this week, vocational secondary schools showcased the diversity of their course offerings, including hotel and restaurant professions, fashion, crafts and heritage, arts, telecommunications, hairdressing and more. The event also highlighted some outstanding projects created by their students.

2023 Implementation

The support for choosing an career orientation pathway aims to achieve 3 main objectives:

- raising awareness of the diversity of educational pathways and the economic and professional world;
- valuing all training programmes, including vocational tracks, apprenticeships, and agricultural education;
- challenging representations and stereotypes about careers and training.

Career guidance is an integral part of the time allocated to counselling in secondary schools and is offered progressively from grade 7 (2e) in lower secondary to grade 12 (*terminale*) and is available in all streams (general, technological and vocational education). At the end of lower secondary (grade 9) learners have to make a first choice on their future. A preparatory vocational guidance course has been added to raise awareness of the upper secondary VET pathway and apprenticeship opportunities available. The scheme extends throughout upper secondary to assist learners decide in line with their interest if they will continue studying and investigate ways to enter the labour market. Regions are involved in career guidance by providing information on careers and training options. As the digital transition is ongoing, the introduction of online guidance and placement services is under development.

In 2023/24, 76% of 7th graders and 88% of 9th graders participated in career exploration activities. Between 85% and over 98% of 10th grade learners in upper

secondary general and technological tracks were engaged in a two-week internship in the second half of the academic year, allowing for immersion in the professional world.

Onisep continues to provide freely accessible resources and services online with updated information on careers. Since the start of the 2023 school year, the Avenir(s) website was provided by ONISEP (National Office for Information on Education). This free online platform aims to equip students with the tools and resources necessary to build and manage their educational and professional trajectories effectively. It also provides pedagogical resources about guidance for the teachers.

2024 Implementation

The Inserjeunes website provides information to school learners and their families about employment prospects and further education based on data from the 2020/21 and 2021/22 cohorts.

Since 2024, in grade 10 of upper secondary general and technological pathways, schools learners can follow an observer internship (*stage d'observation*) designed to help them explore various facets of the professional world. The first session of this observer internship took place in June 2024. The initiative aims to enable learners make more informed and less socially or gender-biased career orientation choices, while also addressing the significant ecological, digital, and economic challenges faced by regions and the country. It is integral part of the the individual career guidance and professional discovery programme, *Parcours Avenir*, complementing the earlier 5-day observation sequence in the professional environment conducted in the last year (grade 9) of lower secondary programmes.

From 10 to 15 September 2024, France hosted the 47th edition of the Worldskills competition in Lyon. This major international event aimed to showcase the excellence of youth skills, the quality of vocational training, and the diversity of professions. To encourage young people to attend the event, the education ministry organised a school visit programme. 61 000 lower secondary pupils attended the competition and gains insights into professions relating to digital skills, industry, crafts and sectors, like agriculture and services for individuals. Online streaming was also ensured ahead of the event through the Mission Future platform co-development by Worldskills France and ONISEP for more that 100 000 school pupils not attending in person. The competition featured 1 400 young competitors from over 70 countries and regions, competing in 59 professions across six economic sectors. The French team achieved a 3rd place, securing 37 medals including 6 gold, 4 silver, 3 bronze, and 24 excellence medals in this prestigious competition.

The Ministry of National Education, through the Directorate-General for School Education (DGESCO), continued implementing the *Plan Avenir* in 2024, adding new resources on the *Eduscol* platform. The plan aims to strengthen career guidance from lower secondary school and raise awareness about vocational and technological pathways after grade 9. Educational teams now have access to teaching materials, information on occupations and VET tracks, and tools for personalised guidance interviews. During the 2024–2025 school year, several initiatives helped make vocational pathways more visible and attractive. One key initiative was the National Vocational Schools Week, which introduced programmes and occupations to lower-secondary pupils and their families through open days, school presentations, and meetings with professionals. In addition, the Ministry highlighted its participation in the WorldSkills competition as a way to promote vocational excellence and showcase real examples of training pathways, especially in industrial, craft, and service sectors.

2025 Implementation

Céreq published a study on the role of the *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP)* in education and employment pathways. Based on the *Génération 2013* and *Génération 2020* surveys, the analysis shows a changing student profile, with a growing share from *Segpa* and *Ulis*. It confirms the CAP as a diploma supporting labour-market entry, while underlining differences by speciality, training route, gender and social background. It also shows that dual certification (CAP plus vocational baccalaureate)

improves employment prospects and brings outcomes closer to those of higher-education graduates.

Céreq published a study on the role of the professional skills certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*, CAP, EQF level 3) in education and employment pathways. Using data from the *Génération 2013* and *Génération 2020* surveys, the study shows that the profile of CAP students is changing, with more coming from Segpa (*sections d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté*) and Ulis (*unités localisées pour l'inclusion scolaire*) programmes for people with special education needs. It confirms that the CAP remains a diploma that supports entry into the labour market, but outcomes vary by speciality, training route, gender, and social background.

The study also finds that dual certification (CAP plus vocational baccalaureate/EFQ level 4) improves employment prospects and brings results closer to those of higher-education graduates.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
- Ministry of National Education and Youth (until 2024)
- Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (from 2020 till 2022)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Education professionals

School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

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

Further reading

[Circular from the Education Ministry](#)

[The 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future](#)

[National reference framework for guidance on the implementation of State and regional competences in the field of information and guidance for schools, students and apprentices - May 2019](#)

[Guidance procedure at the end of third-year class](#)

[Orientation tracks at the end of third-year class - Order of 19 July 2019](#)

[For the vocational path, choice for one or more families of trades - Decree of 27 April 2019](#)

[Resources for education teams \(lower secondary schools\)](#)

[Resources for education teams \(upper secondary schools\)](#)

[Resources for students and their families: My online orientation - chat, phone, email / personalised orientation help service](#)

[Order of 13 November 2020 amending the order of 5 May 2020 establishing an automated processing of personal data by the Ministry of National Education: Teleservice Orientation \(national level\)](#)

[Career planning / guidance online support services for lower secondary learners \(Teleservice Orientation, Teleservice Affectation\)](#)

[My grade 9 year: internship platform](#)

[Upper secondary VET schools week](#)

[The vocational track, a path to excellence](#)

[Ministry of National Education and Youth, 2023. Career guidance support issues](#)

[Ministry of National Education and Youth, 2022. Second annual 'Vocational Secondary School Week'](#)

[Ministry of National Education and Youth, 2022. Vademecum: Guidance in the vocational path](#)

[Online tool on career guidance for young learners hosted by ONISEP, the national office for information on studies and professions](#)

[Inserjeunes - find the vocational training that best suits you to enter the workforce!](#)

[The Skills Competition - WorldSkills](#)

[Ministere de l'Education nationale et de la Jeunesse \(MENJ\) - Eduscol. \(n.d.\). Avenir Plan resources](#)

[Ministere de l'Education nationale et de la Jeunesse \(MENJ\). \(n.d.\). VET high schools week \[Semaine des lycees professionnels\].](#)

[Ministere de l'Education nationale et de la Jeunesse \(MENJ\). \(n.d.\). WorldSkills overview](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Promoting equalities and inclusiveness

Within the framework of 2016 partnership agreement between the State and the regions to support employment and social inclusion, a strategy was set out to extend the range of qualifications that can be gained through apprenticeship.

 FRANCE

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28231>