

# Modernising IVET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 FRANCE

## Timeline



ID number 28223

## Background

Transformation of the vocational pathway is the second priority of the Ministry of National Education and Youth. It is coupled with reform of the general and technological upper secondary pathways. It is expected to be more attractive and relevant to the needs of local socioeconomic systems and ensure continuity between secondary VET and higher education vocational programmes.

The reform of the vocational secondary school system is a priority project supported by the President of the Republic. The creation of a ministry delegated responsible for vocational education and training sends out a strong signal that vocational education must be a path chosen and leading to professional success for all young people attending vocational schools.

## Objectives

Modernising IVET aims at making school-based VET more effective (securing ability to self-direct lifelong learning and employability), more attractive (addressing challenges of the 21st century such as digital technology and energy transition), and more open to Europe and the world (through stronger partnerships with institutions in other countries).

The new phase in the transformation of the school-based vocational system is designed to meet two major objectives:

- faster transformation of the range of training courses on offer to meet the skills needs of the various territories,
- improved employment prospects for vocational secondary school students, thanks to greater professionalisation and the involvement of the business world in their training.

## Description

The transformation of the vocational high school, which began in 2018, aims to improve the link between apprenticeship and the academic path. It is a systemic transformation

(covering content and pedagogy, organisation of pathways, evolution of the training offer) in order to make vocational education more effective and more attractive; it aims to involve VET further in preparing learners for promising future jobs, especially in digital technology and the energy transition. Measures include:

- (a) degrees created or revamped in response to economic changes, energy transition issues and the digital revolution;
- (b) a EUR 50 million call for projects issued in autumn 2018 as part of the Investments for the future plan, in order to support the creation of new-generation trades and qualification campuses (*campus des métiers et des qualifications*);
- (c) extending the optional transnational mobility unit to all vocational degrees;
- (d) setting up, within the Ministry of National Education and Youth, a steering committee dedicated to transforming the vocational learning pathway, and providing support (resources, methodology, coordination) to players on the ground during the implementation process.

Regions, social partners, sectors and teacher organisations were involved. Emphasis is placed on excellence and innovation.

## 2018 Legislative process

### 2019 Implementation

Gradual implementation started as of 2019/20 academic year:

- (a) reinforced coordination between vocational education and general education and improved synchronisation between apprenticeships and the school pathway;
- (b) the learning paths are becoming more personalised and progressive: in the case of the professional skills certificate (CAP) for instance, students can study over one, two or three years according to their needs;
- (c) progressive orientation from the first year of upper secondary vocational school programmes (*Seconde*, in the national context); and additional support in the final year of upper secondary vocational education (*Terminale*) for pursuing further studies or employment integration.

Resources (education guides) and information tools (videos, Powerpoint presentations, brochures, FAQs) on the implementation of the reform are made available to the education community (education teams, families and students):

- (a) 13 fact sheets have been published explaining the upper secondary vocational path reform to all interested public;
- (b) 20 fact sheets provide teachers with the tools for implementing the reform: on the CAP programme and other types of vocational baccalaureate courses, on the different types of professions, on training pathways available to pupils, guidance material, information on the trades and qualifications campuses, including the excellence label category.

A reform monitoring committee composed of representatives of the trade unions, parents and secondary school students and the administration responsible for implementing the reform is in place since 2019. The purpose of this committee is to propose any adjustments which may be necessary.

### 2020 Implementation

The certificate of professional aptitude (CAP) is completed in two years by VET learners who have successfully completed their upper secondary education studies. As an exception and only for VET learners enrolled at state or private schools under contract with state, it can be completed in one or three years depending on the profiles and specific needs of the learners. For three-year courses, which may in particular apply to young people who need more time to obtain their diploma, it may be possible either to take all the exams at the end of the 3rd year, or to spread them over the second and third year.

Announced in June 2020 by the committee monitoring the transformation of the vocational pathway, the hours dedicated to co-teaching (vocational and French language classes; vocational and math/science classes) in the final year of the upper secondary VET path will be extended. Implementing regulations (an order and a memorandum) are expected in 2021:

- (a) organisation of co-teaching between vocational subjects and other general education disciplines: history-geography and moral and civic education, modern language A or B, applied arts and artistic culture, and physical and sports education;
- (b) establishment of a 'philosophy workshop';
- (c) extra support for post-baccalaureate (career and study planning) projects for learners wishing to move towards further higher education or joining the workforce.

VET schools may choose to devote the co-teaching hours to one or more of these arrangements.

### **2021 Implementation**

A Decree and an Order were taken on 25 November 2021 to:

- (a) affirm the certification value of the vocational baccalaureate diploma for access to the job market and to higher education;
- (b) emphasise the importance of validating a vocational level sufficient to access the assessment test, which focuses on general and cross-cutting skills;
- (c) redefine the conditions of access to the examination for the vocational baccalaureate in line with the writing of the diploma reference documents in blocks of skills;
- (d) align the catch-up arrangements (catch-up courses) for vocational baccalaureate candidates and those in place for general and technological baccalaureate candidates;
- (e) make the assessment methods and marking criteria more transparent for candidates and teachers.

A memorandum sets out the modalities for applying these new texts relating to the examination for the vocational baccalaureate and will be operational from the 2022 vocational baccalaureate examination session.

### **2022 Implementation**

From 2022, this policy development is part of the national implementation plan (NIP), and can be allocated to various measures:

- measure 'Reinforcing the individualisation of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning', action 'Measures to strengthen the individualisation of in initial vocational education';
- measure 'Develop all forms of training and particularly work-based training', action 'The contribution of national education to the development of apprenticeship';
- measure 'Anticipating and facilitating ecological and digital transitions', action 'Adapting vocational diplomas to ecological and digital challenges';
- measure 'Contributing to equal opportunities in all areas', action 'National education measures for equal opportunities: Equality between girls and boys, mentoring, CAP courses in 1, 2 or 3 years, compulsory training for 16-18 year olds'.

The 2022 session will be the first session of the renewed vocational baccalaureate.

The reform of the vocational secondary school system is one of the French President's priorities. The creation of a ministry responsible for vocational education and training sends out a strong signal that vocational education is a major route to professional success for all young people attending vocational schools, with the aim being to:

- reduce the number of people dropping out of school;
- increase rates of employment;
- provide opportunities for further study.

On 13 September 2022, the French President launched a reform of vocational high schools in the presence of the Minister of National Education and Youth and the Minister for Vocational Education and Training.

Following consultations with trade union organisations, interprofessional sectoral partners, students, parents of students and regions, four working groups were created on 21 October 2022. These groups include representatives from all stakeholders within the vocational education ecosystem. The target questions that summarize the objectives of each one of the four working groups are as follows:

- Group 1: How can we reduce the number of dropouts?
- Group 2: What is the best way to ensure that students can pursue the higher levels of education required by certain occupations?
- Group 3: How can we improve the employment rates after students have graduated?
- Group 4: How can we allow institutions greater flexibility while maintaining the national dimension of diplomas?

### 2023 Implementation

In January 2023, the Minister delegated for Vocational Education and Training presented the conclusions of the working groups on the reform of vocational secondary schools. These conclusions stem from consultations launched in October 2022, involving 160 participants, including 60 experts, key witnesses, and learners. This national analysis process led to 52 proposals, focusing on key stages of each learner VET pathway and cross-cutting factors such as communication, human and financial resources, governance, and tools. A second phase of consultations began with staff trade unions, school heads, interprofessional sectoral partners, student representatives, regional representatives, and parent associations.

The reform of upper secondary VET programmes (*lycée professionnel*) has been progressively implemented since the start of the 2023/24 school year, introducing measures to reduce drop-outs and enhance IVET learners' success in further education or employment. These measures align with the national objective of creating an agile, resilient VET system adapted to local economic needs. Key reforms include:

- (a) a new monthly allowance for all VET learners undertaking internships during their studies;
- (b) the establishment of a liaison office with businesses (*Bureau des entreprises*) in each vocational upper secondary school to strengthen partnerships with companies and align training with industry needs;
- (c) a restructured grade 12 curriculum to better accommodate each VET learner individual learning path through an integrated guidance scheme. A differentiated six-week programme at the end of the school year is tailored to the learner plan to enter further studies or direct employment;
- (d) strengthening general education in French, mathematics, and history-geography, with smaller group teaching to improve learning outcomes. Optional activities in key competences such as arts, digital creation, entrepreneurship, and public speaking are also introduced.
- (e) a strategic review of the regional vocational training map to anticipate and support ecological and digital transitions. This aims to phase out low-performing vocational courses (those with low employment or further education rates) in favour of programmes better suited to regional skill demands. The approach shifts from annual updates to long-term projections over 3 to 5 years. To support evidence-based decision-making, a management tool has been introduced to evaluate the performance of each vocational programme. In terms of skills intelligence, this review uses a management tool based on the measurement of the performance of each vocational course to facilitate decision-making using cross-referenced data, such as figures of enrolments, success rates, further study,

and results in terms of professional integration.

- (f) the creation of 40 new vocational qualifications at EQF levels 3, 4, and 5, designed to meet employment needs arising from ecological, digital, and demographic transitions. These qualifications will be gradually introduced over the next 3 to 5 years, in line with the long-term projections mentioned earlier.

The decree of 25 August 2023, replaced the title *Mention complémentaire* with *Certificat de spécialisation* (CS) for certain IVET qualifications, formalised by the associated order (*arrêté*) on the same date. CPs are classified at levels 3 and 4 of the national framework of professional qualifications (NPQF) and can be taught in VET schools (VET graduates with a CAP, level 3, or a vocational baccalaureate, level 4 can enrol in a one-year specialisation programme), in apprenticeship and/or continuing training schemes. The first CSs will be awarded in the examination session of 2025. CS is a national VET qualification designed for professional integration and corresponds to a speciality linked to the practice of a trade. It certifies that the holder is capable of carrying out a specialised professional activity, and are classified at levels 3 or 4 of the national framework of professional qualifications (NPQF). The legislative change of the name aims to improve the readability for IVET learners in terms of qualification level and professional scope as well as their recognition by learners and employers and thus improve employability and mobility opportunities of upper secondary VET graduates.

## 2024 Implementation

The VET school reform initiated in 2023/24 continues, featuring a new organisation of the 3-year training cycle leading to the vocational baccalaureate (*baccalauréat professionnel*). The reforms aims to highlight the role of upper secondary vocational education as a pathway to excellence and an attractive option for young learners by offering personalised career guidance and orientation, as well as as a means to reduce early leaving from education and training. In the vocational baccalaureate programmes the following changes are implemented in 2024/25:

- (a) smaller class sizes in French and mathematics in the first two years of the programmes (grades 10 and 11);
- (b) additional hours of career guidance and support: 1 hour in the first two years, 1,5 hours in the last year (grade 12);
- (c) implementation of a differentiated learning approach in the last six weeks in the final year of studies, focusing on the successful completion of the learner professional plan: find a job or continue further studies.

The establishment of liaison offices in all upper secondary schools with a vocational section continued. As part of the multiannual forecast on skill needs in the local economies to better align the training offer in each region:

- (a) from 2024/25, 35 vocational qualifications are being either renewed, created, or abolished across various economic sectors, including industry, construction, food, energy, transportation, environmental studies, and traditional craftsmanship;
- (b) each region is actively working to adapt the vocational training offer, providing 1 896 training places in VET programmes leading to specialisation certificates at levels 3 and 4 (*mention complémentaire, certificate de spécialisation*) along with 2 611 training places targeting specific careers aligned with the France 2030 initiative;

The service note of 25 March 2024 details the biennial (2024-25) planning programme the inter-ministerial advisory committees (*Commissions professionnelles consultatives, CPC*) for the review of State-issued qualifications.

In Q4 2024, the reform of vocational upper secondary schools continued under the orientations set by the Directorate-General for School Education (DGESCO). The revision of diploma standards advanced for VET qualifications (the CAP, vocational baccalaureate, brevet professionnel, certificate of specialisation and BTS), aiming to align pathways with regional economic needs. New post-baccalaureate specialisation programmes were introduced, and schools were encouraged to offer locally initiated complementary training in partnership with enterprises. Pedagogically, the revised

timetable for the vocational baccalaureate took full effect at the start of the 2024 school year, introducing small-group teaching in French and mathematics for Grade 10 and Grade 11 classes.

The allowance scheme for *periods of workplace training* (PFMP) was renewed for 2024-2025: around 770 000 pupils were concerned, covering 1.47 million PFMPs entitling them to an allowance. The Agency for Services and Payment (*Agence de services et de paiement*, ASP), a public body dedicated to implementing public policies, processed these allowances through a national application.

## 2025 Implementation

In 2025, several measures were introduced to strengthen and monitor the reform:

- The 2025 review by the General Inspectorate of Education, Sport and Research (IGESR) highlighted the positive impact of the *business liaison offices* - now established in every upper secondary VET school- in coordinating placements and building local economic partnerships;
- Trades and Qualifications Campuses (CMQ) remained central to the reform. By August 2025, there were 121 CMQs, including 74 recognised for excellence, covering 13 priority sectors;
- Differentiated end-of-final-year pathways were implemented for the first time in spring 2025, allowing pupils to choose between a route geared towards entering the labour market or one preparing for further study. The Ministry and IGESR closely monitored this rollout to identify adjustments ahead of the new school year;
- The *Avenir Pro* scheme, designed to prepare pupils for the labour market, expanded significantly. At the start of the 2024 school year, 1 348 institutions were involved, with full rollout to all vocational upper-secondary pupils from 2025. The scheme brought together teaching teams, the national public employment service (France Travail) and the network of guidance and orientation services for 6-25-year-olds (*Missions Locales*) to deliver group workshops, individual interviews and professional events;
- Under the *1 young person, 1 mentor* programme, a dedicated strand for vocational pupils was fully integrated at the start of the 2025 school year, with 66 associations participating, including 34 specifically involved to support around 4 000 pupils;
- The restructuring of the training offer also advanced. At the start of the 2024 school year, 5 % of the offer had changed; by the start of 2025, 11 472 places had been created (including 2 042 in *certificates of specialisation* programmes) and 6 960 removed, a transformation rate of 5.4 %.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
- Delegate Minister for VET under the education and labour ministers
- 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)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

## Thematic categories

## Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Acquiring key competences

Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes

Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

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 and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

# 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 a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

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

Sustainability - a green link in VET

European Education and Training Area and international VET

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

Resources and tools for education teams

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Decree of 21 November 2018 Certificate of professional competence (CAP)

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Order of 21 November 2018 Vocational baccalaureate

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Timetables for compulsory general and vocational education in school-based training courses

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Vocational pathway renovation

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Information video clip about the new vocational school

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New vocational high school

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Circular No of 16-01-2020 relating to the implementation of the professional aptitude certificate (CAP) in 1, 2 or 3 years

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Decree no. 2021-1524 of November 25, 2021, amending the provisions of the Education Code relating to the control test for the vocational baccalaureate

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Order of 25 November 2021 concerning the control test for the vocational baccalaureate

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Memorandum of 31 December 2021, control test as of session 2022

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Ministry of National Education and Youth, 2022. 'Installation of the working groups for a reform of the vocational high schools'

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Ministry of National Education and Youth. (2023). Together, let's build the VET school of tomorrow - closure of the working groups on the reform of upper secondary VET schools

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Ministry of National Education and Youth. (n.d.) Developing social diversity to guarantee equal opportunities in 'the school changes lives - academic year 2024/25' flyer

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Circular of 24 May 2023 on the opening of a liaison office with businesses in all public VET schools & multipurpose schools with a VET section

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Order of 22 January 2024, amending the Order of 21 November 2018 concerning the courses offered in school-based programmes preparing for the vocational baccalaureate

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## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### Education-economy cooperation in VET

A circular of 2 December 2015 from the Ministry of Education announced 12 measures aimed at developing relationships between businesses and education through career guidance and work-based training for young people.

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

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**2025 Implementation****Trades and qualifications campuses label**

In the reporting period, the initiative was further extended through labelling 95 campuses covering 12 growth and job-creating sectors: food and food-processing; chemistry and biotechnologies; creation, design, audiovisual; infrastructures, construction, eco-construction; materials, innovative ma

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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