

Career guidance for IVET learners

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 FRANCE

Timeline



ID number 28217

Background

Improving the integration of young people and preparing them for the professional world requires that all students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the jobs around them.

Objectives

National guidance policies aim to provide learners with information and guidance on their future education and career options, including apprenticeships, and to provide individualised support for forward planning.

Description

The Pathways for the future (*Parcours d'avenir*) measure, announced in 2015, has been in place in all lower secondary education schools since September 2015. It is available to all learners from lower to the end of upper secondary years (from *Sixième* to *Terminale*). A particular focus is placed on apprenticeships.

A practical guide for the implementation of the *Parcours d'avenir* measure has been circulated to the heads of institutions. It emphasises the importance of raising awareness of alternating training, whether in vocational high school or apprenticeship, and suggests avenues for action and concrete resources for developing it. A national ambassador for apprenticeship was appointed by the Ministry of Employment in June 2015. His mission is to attract large companies to get further involved in apprenticeship, and disseminate best practices in relation to apprenticeship. The national ambassador is supported by a network of regional ambassadors for apprenticeship. To increase the effectiveness and quality of work placements, since September 2016 courses have been put in place in all secondary schools to prepare students before going on placement.

To support the quality of work placements, steps have been taken at regional level to:

- (a) train teachers;
- (b) strengthen school/business relationships;
- (c) involve practice experts in teaching and evaluation;
- (d) include young people on youth voluntary service in internship hubs (*pôles de stages*).

The 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future creates a 'preparatory vocational' course for students in their final year of lower secondary school. While continuing to gain common core knowledge, skills and culture, those who so wish will be able to, in parallel, attend this course to prepare for upper secondary VET. The Law also gives the regions new powers in terms of guidance: they now have the responsibility 'to organise information actions on professions and related training, develop the related documentation, and circulate it to pupils and their families, higher-education students and apprentices in schools and universities'.

Information documents from the National Office for Information on Curricula and Professions (Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions, ONISEP), containing information about apprenticeship, are provided to all students at the end of lower and upper secondary education. On the ONISEP website, a section dedicated to apprenticeship provides users with resources.

Each website of the Ministry of Education includes information specifically relating to apprenticeship. The number of pupils applying to join the apprenticeship pathway is on the increase. In July 2018, the number of pupils wishing to enter apprenticeship had increased by 45.1% compared to July 2017. The number of those selecting apprenticeship as their first choice had increased by 40.5%.

The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of National Education and Youth have, since October 2018, been jointly organising 'apprenticeship days' to find contracts for those young people who have stated their desire to enter apprenticeship.

2015 Design
2016 Implementation
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation
<p>2019 Implementation</p> <p>Information and career guidance services at regional level:</p> <p>The September 2018 law gave the regions new responsibilities in terms of informing pupils, students and apprentices of the diversity of jobs and training programmes available in their territories, and gender equality in the workplace. The regions can intervene in lower and upper secondary schools and organise information campaigns targeted directly at students during dedicated time periods. The aim is to focus the information provided better on the local context, taking into account the characteristics of the regional training options and local economic needs.</p> <p>Decree 2019-018 of 21 March 2019 further specifies the new responsibilities of the regions to provide information on jobs and training, and career planning. A national reference framework was signed on 28 May 2019 between the State and the <i>Régions de France</i> association, specifying their respective roles and the principles for implementation of local guidance services provided by the regions in partnership with local education authorities.</p> <p>As of the start of the 2019 academic year, a new pre-vocational class (<i>prépa-métiers</i>) is offered in the last (third) year of lower secondary education. Classes are especially aimed at pupils who voluntarily elect to discover and explore several jobs as they plan to undertake either vocational scholarship or an apprenticeship. Pupils take compulsory classes in the 'third year' and benefit from a placement lasting between one and five weeks, and 180 hours spent discovering the trades and vocational training.</p>

The push towards apprenticeships has produced a positive trend:

- (a) in two years, there has been a 40% increase in expressions of interest in apprenticeships by young people; this is more than 1 000 more expressions of interest from candidates than in 2018, nearly half of them first applications;
- (b) apprenticeships saw a 16% increase in admissions in 2019;
- (c) apprenticeships grew by 8% in secondary education and 30% in higher education in 2019.

On 11 December 2019 the Ministers of National Education, Higher Education and Labour jointly entrusted Mr Guillaume Houzel with responsibility for removing obstacles to the development of apprenticeships and facilitating contact between young people, apprentice training centres (CFAs) and companies. The mission has three main focus areas:

- (a) mapping the apprenticeship training offer, which has developed considerably since the enactment, in 2018, of the law on the freedom to choose one's professional future: a general catalogue of apprenticeship training offer enables the promotion of apprenticeships not only by the State and its agents, but also by other competent institutions;
- (b) improving public information sites: *Affelnet*, which is used at the end of lower secondary; *Parcoursup*, used for orientation after the baccalaureate and for changes in studies; and *Trouver mon master* (find my master) for higher education;
- (c) designing, prototyping and implementing new digital services to provide career guidance and counselling services to young people (and their families) on topics such as quality of training offer, career prospects, skills identification and help in finding companies who may be interested in hiring them.

2020 Implementation

Pathways to success (*Les Cordées de la Réussite*) is a networking programme for education institutions to support career guidance projects. Their aim is to be a driver of equal opportunities in guidance support. Additional funding from the national Recovery plan (EUR 10 million allocated) is dedicated to doubling the number of VET learners benefiting from the programmes, with an aim to reach a total of 200 000 students across the country starting from the 2020/21 school year.

In line with the reforms of the general and technological and vocational upper secondary paths and the Law relating to student guidance and success and the creation of the Parcoursup platform (online centralised system for application in higher education programmes), the new generation of *Cordées de la réussite* aims to make support for career guidance a real driver of equal opportunities. It is intended primarily for those enrolled in priority schools or from priority city districts (*Quartiers prioritaires politique de la ville, QPVs*), secondary school learners from rural and isolated areas and upper secondary VET learners. They aim to fight self-censorship and stimulate students' academic ambition and to offer progressive support from the last two years of lower secondary (*quatrième, troisième*) and throughout upper secondary for career planning, either higher education studies or entering the workforce.

2021 Implementation

The *Inserjeunes* online support service for career guidance for young people provides information on professional integration rates of IVET graduates (and apprentices) per vocational qualification acquired (from the professional skills certificate, CAP/level 3 till the advanced technician certificate, BTS/level 5).

Pathways to success (*Cordées de la Réussite*): for the year 2021-2022, 14,873 vocational high school students have been accompanied.

A public guidance platform for young people, DiagOriente, was deployed in connection with the Youth Guarantee and the support schemes offered within its framework. DiagOriente was supported as part of a State start-up from the Directorate General for

Employment and Vocational Training (*délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle*, DGEFP) of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration. It is a free online service that now also provides guidance for adults. Platform users can receive support to explore their potential, analyse their transferable skills and identify their professional interests that would help them identify and build career choices. In February 2021, DiagOriente had 65 263 beneficiaries, 5 800 professional employment and career guidance users and 532 professions to explore.

2022 Implementation

From 2022 this policy development is part of the national implementation plan (NIP): It can be related to the measure 'Develop all forms of training and particularly work-based training', action 'The contribution of national education to the development of apprenticeship', and to the 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'.

There has been observed also a sharp increase in the number of organisations using Diagoriente (various public employment service operators, including local offices) The usage of Diagoriente has risen from approximately 400 by the end of 2021 to almost 1 000 by the end of 2022.

The effectiveness of the platform is also improving, as indicated by the usage statistics. 100% of end-users add an area of experience to their CV, while over 60% add interests and 85% consult job listings.

After the launch of Diagoriente a social impact assessment study estimated that two hours of career advisor time were saved per beneficiary, and that job search time was reduced by two months.

In their continuous efforts to enhance career guidance, the government and ONISEP (the national office for information on curricula and professions) are launching also the *Avenir(s)* programme. This scheme will improve guidance by enabling students to identify their skills and incorporate them into their individual career plans, and will make it possible for students in both secondary and higher education to document their competencies as they progress through their studies thanks to a competencies portfolio.

Finally, an initial inter-regional career guidance meeting, held in November 2022, brought together 600 participants from the Regions, the French national education system and their partners. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the initiatives undertaken by the Regions in connection with the new career guidance responsibilities entrusted to them under the 2018 Professional Future law.

2023 Implementation

The National Week 'Pathways to success' (*Cordées de la réussite*) took place from 16 to 21 January 2023. The event was organised by the Minister of Education and Youth, the Minister of Higher Education and Research, and the Minister for Vocational Education and Training. This event was an opportunity to highlight the scheme, to showcase the players involved and the initiatives carried out, and to promote the *Cordées de la réussite* to schools and higher education establishments that are not yet involved in the scheme. In 2023, the number of students benefiting from the *Cordées de la réussite* has doubled compared with 2019: 180 000 students in 2023 (compared with 80 000 in 2019).

As part of the *Semaine de l'Industrie*, the Minister for Industry opened the doors of the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty for the second consecutive year to over 1 000 lower and upper secondary education students. They had the opportunity to explore various industrial objects and professions through a photo exhibition, presentations, and demonstrations of products made in France. Students also heard testimonials about available career paths in the industry and

engaged in inspiring meetings with women in the industry from the *Industri'Elles* collective.

2024 Implementation

The National Week 'Pathways to success' (*Cordées de la réussite*) took place from 15 to 20 January 2024.

As usual, this week was organised by several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. Its aim was to highlight the *Cordées de la réussite* players and their achievements, and to encourage other schools and higher education establishments to join the scheme.

Launched by the Ministry in charge of National Education and coordinated by DGESCO, the *Plan Avenir(s)* continued in 2024 with new resources on *Eduscol*. The plan reinforced early guidance from lower secondary level and raised awareness of vocational and technological pathways available after grade 9. Resources for educational teams included teaching sequences, information materials on occupations and vocational pathways, and tools for personalised guidance interviews.

During the 2024–2025 school year, several initiatives supported the visibility and attractiveness of VET school pathways. The National *Vocational Schools Week* promoted programmes and occupations to lower-secondary pupils and families through open days, school presentations and meetings with professionals. In parallel, the Ministry's participation in the WorldSkills competition was emphasized as a tool to showcase vocational excellence and provide concrete examples of training pathways, notably in industrial, craft and service fields.

2025 Implementation

In March 2025, Euroguidance France published an English-language brochure presenting the French lifelong guidance system. It outlines national strategies, the actors involved (education, employment, regions, social partners), professionalisation of counsellors and the integration of skills portfolios in guidance pathways. The *Avenir Pro* scheme has been extended to all vocational upper secondary schools and institutions, enabling final-year CAP and vocational baccalaureate students to be better prepared for labour-market entry or for continuing their studies through work-based learning.

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
- Regional authorities
- Ministry of National Education and Youth (until 2024)
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration (until 2022)
- 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

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

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

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Pathway for the future initiative](#)

[Ministry of Education, Circular No 2016-058 of 13 April 2016](#)

[Practical guide for school heads](#)

National reference framework for the implementation of State and regional competences in the field of information and guidance for the school, student and apprentice population

Decree No. 2019-218 of 21 March 2019 on the new competences of the regions in terms of information on jobs and training

Decree No 2019-176 of 7 March 2019 relating to the class of third-year students known as 'pre-vocational'

Order of 10 April 2019 relating to the organisation of teaching in third year classes known as 'pre-vocational'

Decree of April 11, 2019 - New competences of the regions

Memorandum No 2019-113 of 23-7-2019, definition of a national framework for the class of third year students known as 'pre-vocational'

Guillaume Houzel's mission: to facilitate the entries into apprenticeship

Ministry of Labour - Presentation of DiagOriente

DiagOriente, the public guidance platform for young people

Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation- Cordees de la reussite 2023 Week

Ministry of Education, Les cordees de la reussite

Euroguidance France & Centre Inffo. (2025, March). Lifelong Career Guidance in France

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Monitoring VET graduates

The 2016 Labour Law (Law No 2016-1088 of 8 August 2016 on labour, modernisation of social dialogue and securing career paths) created new obligations in terms of information to be provided by training institutions and apprentice training centres.

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

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). Career guidance for IVET learners: 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/28217>