

France

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

2007

Title: France. Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2007

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Author: ReferNet France

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in France. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities
4. Initial vocational education and training
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
6. Training VET teachers and trainers
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy
8. Accumulating, transferring and validating learning
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing - investment in human resources
11. European and international dimensions, towards an open area of lifelong learning

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: the reference year of this report is, 2006. Later editions can be viewed from December 2008 onwards at: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

France

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The institutions that make up the Republic of France (Fifth Republic) are governed by the Constitution of 4 October 1958, later completed by the 1963 Referendum, which instituted the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage. The President of the Republic is elected for a five-year term. The government is directed by the Prime Minister, who determines and steers the nation's affairs. He is held to answer for his actions before the National Assembly. Within the government, the Minister in charge of Education is responsible for initial vocational training; the Minister in charge of Labour, meanwhile, has powers where continuous vocational training is concerned.

National territory is divided in departments (99) and in regions (22 mainland regions and 4 overseas regions). The departments have been created since the French Revolution (1789) and Region in 1959, but have got a real administrative power since 1982.

Region can consist geographically of 2 to 7 departments except for overseas regions which have only one department. On the other hand, departments and regions are managed by councils which members are elected by direct suffrage and are consequently independent each other.

The French nation is a unitary nation. However since the adoption of Decentralisation Laws, (on 2 March 1982 and 7 January 1983, the Five-Year Law of 20 December 1993, the Law on Social Modernisation of 17 January 2002 and the Law on Local Democracies of 27 February 2002 and the 13 August 2004 law on liberties and local responsibilities), some of the State's duties have gradually been transferred to the departments and regions.

Regarding Education, the centralised State has kept responsibility over the content of the instruction and the examinations, and over the employees, while the Departments and Regions have been given powers regarding how the schooling establishments are equipped and run.

As relates to vocational training, it is now the regional councils which are in charge of apprenticeship and vocational training for unemployed youths and adults.

Along with the Regions, the State jointly funds certain programmes intended for the unemployed people and the employees.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Mainland France (excluding the 4 overseas regions (DOM) : Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion and French Guiana, the two territorial collectivities : Mayotte and Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and the overseas territories (TOM) French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna islands and Austral and Antarctic territories) covers 543.9 million square kilometres.

On January the 1st 2006, the total population of France amounted to 62.9 million.

Table 1: Number of inhabitants (as of 1 January 2006) in millions

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS (AS OF 1 JANUARY 2006) IN MILLIONS		
Mainland	DOM –TOM (overseas regions and territories)	Total
61	1.9	62.9

Source: www.insee.fr

With demographic growth of 4.9% in 2003, France' rank is the fifth in the European Union, behind Italy, Luxembourg, Ireland, Portugal and The United Kingdom. Over the next thirty years, it is expected that this growth will slow down. According to the forecasts produced by INSEE, the population of mainland France will be 64 millions inhabitants in 2030.

Table 2: Ageing demographic - between 2000 and 2030 - Forecast (%age)

AGEING DEMOGRAPHIC - BETWEEN 2000 AND 2030 - FORECAST (%AGE)					
0-19 years		20-59 years		+60 years	
2000	2030	2000	2030	2000	2030
25.6	21.3	53.8	47.6	20.6	31.1

Source: www.insee.fr

The number of elderly people in France, which had increased by 3 million between 1970 and 2000, will rise by over 7 million people until 2030.

The reform of the *Formation professionnelle Continue - FPC* [Continual Vocational Training - CVT] system, initiated by the social partners in September 2003, and confirmed by the law of 4 May 2004, takes into account the ageing of the population by instituting measures that facilitate access to the vocational training for people who :

- have 20 years of job experience,
- or have reached their 45 th birthday.

Such employees are recognised as being entitled to a skills review, provided they have at least one year of experience in the company for which they work.

Moreover, a new system has been offered to employees under permanent contracts, and is known as the Professionalization Period. It is intended to foster job retention for those employees by giving them the opportunity to:

- earn a diploma or a degree with vocational aim or a vocational qualification,
- or take part in training with a vocational purpose, as defined by *Commission paritaire nationale de l'emploi - CPNE* [National joint employment commission] with which the company depends.

These initiatives are funded by the organisations that collect the taxes required of enterprises by law to cover the costs of CVT development.

France is a country with a long-standing history of immigration.

In 2003, migrants accounted for 57 000 people, as compared to total natural population growth of 232 300 people ; both forces made a total growth of 289 300 people.

In March 1999, 4 310 000 immigrants (people of foreign descent, born abroad) were residing in mainland France, making for 7.4% of the population. This percentage has remained stable since 1975. Since 1990 and 1999, the number of immigrants has increased by 145 000 (+ 3.4%), at the same rate as the population as a whole. After a few years of residency, a substantial number of immigrants have been able to acquire French nationality. In 1999, this was the case with 1.56 million people, that is to say one out of every three immigrants.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

After three years of significant growth (+3.4% in 1998, +3.2% in 1999 and +3.8% in 2000), economic activity in France experienced a slowdown in 2001 -2.1%, 2002 -1.2% and 2003 - 0.5%. The slowdown came at the same time as the one experienced at the world-wide level.

Table 1: The evolution of GNP and consumer prices

EVOLUTION OF GNP AND CONSUMER PRICES							
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
GNP	-1.9%	+3.4%	+3.20%	+3.80%	-2.10%	-1.20%	-0.50%
Consumer Prices	0.7	0.4	0.1	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.1

Source: INSEE (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies)

ECONOMIC COMPOSITION BY SECTORS

The proportion of service employments in France is higher than the average of UE and has constantly increased during the last ten years and has declined in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

Table 2: The economic composition by sector

ECONOMIC COMPOSITION BY SECTOR			
	1992	1997	2003
agriculture	5.4%	4.7%	4.1%
manufacturing	26.1%	23.3%	21.7%
services	68.4%	72%	74.3%

Source: Eurostat (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu)

EMPLOYMENT RATE

The women employment rate has increased rapidly since 1995, by 5.1 points, while that of men was only increasing by 2.2 points and has remained constant during the last 3 years. This trend is part of a long-term increase in female employment.

Table 3: Employment rates

EMPLOYMENT RATES						
	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004

Women	52.1	55.2	56	56.7	57.2	57.4
Men	67.2	69.2	69.7	69.5	69.4	68.9

Source: Eurostat

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Total unemployment, as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), amounted 9.6% in 2004. After the steady decrease recorded between 1997 and 2001, the situation has got worse since 2002.

The unemployment rate of women remain much higher than that of men.

The unemployment rate of young people under 25 years has declined until 2000, due to a specific employment policy, but, since 2001 it increases and remains higher than the EU average rate.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Men	9.5	9	7.6	7	7.9	8.5	8.7
Women	12.9	12.2	10.9	10	10	10.5	10.5
Young people under 25	25.6	23.4	20.1	19.4	20	21	21.8
Total	11.4	10.7	9.3	8.5	8.8	9.4	9.6

Source: Eurostat

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Since 1990, the share of education and training expenditure in Produit Intérieur Brut [Growth Domestic Products - GDP] saw a variety of changes. From 1990 to 1993, it rose markedly to 7.8 %, because of the efforts made by regional authorities and because of the reevaluation of teachers salaries. Since 1993, the share of *Dépense intérieure d'Education* [Domestic Expenditure on Education-DEE] in GDP has seeing sustained decline, from 7.8 % to 7.1%.

In 2003, the domestic expenditure on education and training reached 7.1 % of the gross domestic product.

PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN THE GDP		
1999	2002	2003

7.6 %	7.2 %	7.1%
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Source: the state of education, n° 14, ministry of education. *DEP - Direction des Etudes et Prospectives*, October 2005

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Educational attainment of the French population is nearly the same as European average.

Table 1: Educational attainment in 2004 of the population aged 25-64 by Isced Level

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN 2004 OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 BY ISCED LEVEL			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
France	34%	41%	24%
EU	32%	46%	20%

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, Neux Cronos Release date 29/06/2005

Nevertheless, important progresses have been accomplished during the last 20 years. In 2004, nearly 80 % of the French population aged 25-34 years old had an ISCED 3 diploma. This rate is 30 points higher than that of the 55-64 years old generation.

Table 2: Proportion of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training

PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION AGED 18-24 WITH AT MOST LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION AND NOT IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING		
2000	2002	2005
13.3	13.4	12.6

Source : Eurostat

Concerning the young population with at most lower secondary education, the French proportion is lower than that of the European average.

In 2004, 8% of school leavers did not have any qualification. This proportion had declined continually over the last 30 years: 35% in 1965, 14% in 1985, 7 % in 2002.

These result is a combination of different factors :

- creation of the vocational high school diploma (baccalauréat professionnel),
- steps to attract youngsters to the apprenticeship pathway,
- extension of the lenght of studies in IVET.

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

In order to deal with the high unemployment rate posted in the 1980s, in particular that of young people and those lacking qualifications, the last few years have witnessed the adoption of many measures designed to better suit initial training offers to the needs of companies.

A large-scale undertaking to improve the image of vocational training was launched in the 1990s, through the creation of technological and vocational Baccalaureates (high school diploma), as well as instruction intended for advanced technicians (2 years above Baccalaureate level) and the newly-introduced vocational licence (a diploma equivalent to 3 years of post-Baccalaureate training). From 1980 to 2000, the number of young people who exited the educational system without qualifications has fallen by 50% and is now steady.

Table 1: Number of population exiting the educational system and qualifications obtained

	1980 (IN %)	1990 (IN %)	2000 (IN %)	2004 (IN %)
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LEFT THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS	15	12.8	7.3	8
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO EXITED THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITH HIGHEST DIPLOMA (HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR MORE)	31	47	59	59

Source : *Repères et références statistiques- Ministry for Education - 2005*

Starting in 1984, alternating work-study contracts, (to enable students and jobseekers to gain work experience while studying), were set up; these are called qualification contracts, adaptation contracts and orientation contracts. The social partners who created these contracts decided to stop them (national inter professional agreement on December 5th, 2003) and to replace them by one single contract:

- the contract of professionalization intended not only for the young people but also for the adults job-seekers, and which contains a sandwich course and/or a support program.

At the same time, the apprenticeship system modernised in 1987, makes it possible for young people to sign a series of several contracts and thereby obtain a diploma above the professional certificate of capacity level (Level 2).

The number of apprentices in France increased by over 24% between 1995 and 2000. However, in 2001 & 2002 the number of new apprenticeship contracts, has stopped increasing. That is why the government has tried to boost it through hiring subsidies (law of programming for the social cohesion on January 18th, 2005).

The government hopes to reach the number of 500 000 contracts before 2009.

Table 2: New apprenticeship contracts

	1990	1995	2000	2002	2004
NEW CONTRACTS APPRENTICESHIP	131 000	173 569	237 876	236 826	241 781

Source: *Budget plans – 1997, 2002 et 2006*

Considering needs of young people between 16 and 25 with several difficulties and often no qualifications, the law of programming for the social cohesion on January 18th, 2005 set up a strengthened vocational preparation. The objective is to accompany 800 000 young people before 2009. The access to the contract "young people" and to the *Contrat d'insertion dans la vie Sociale - CIVIS* [Contract of insertion in the social life] will be facilitated for the beneficiaries of this vocational preparation.

The social partners signed an agreement on vocational life long learning, on December 5th 2003. That agreement has been included in the law on May 4th, 2004.

They provide for :

- a individual right to training for employees,
- the possibility for employees to attend training courses outside working hours,
- a work contract described as a "professionalization's contract" for young and adult job seekers providing for sandwich courses or programs which facilitate integration (i.e. : validation of learning or vocational skills analysis).

They increase the levels of contributions (taxes) of the firms (from 1.5 to 1.6 per cent of the firm's gross annual wage bill, for the companies with a minimum of 10 employees, and from 0.25 to 0.55 % for the companies with less than 10 employee). In august 2005, a new division of contributions has been decided as followed : the companies with less than 10 employees have to pay 0.55 % of the gross annual wage bill (*MSB - Masse salariale Brute*) ; companies with 10 to 19 employees 1.05%, and the companies with a minimum of 20 employees, 1.60%.

The law relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities on August 13th, 2004 strengthens the role of regional councils by widening the Regions' responsibilities in the vocational training of the unemployed adults. Henceforth Regions define and implement the regional policies of apprenticeship and vocational training, not only for young people, but also for unemployed adults.

The first part of the law of programming for the social cohesion on January 18th, 2005 concerns the employment and in particular :

- the creation of "employment houses" (like the british "job centers"),
- the opening of the market of the employment to the competition,
- the creation (or the revision) of subsidized work contracts.

This law represents a new politic trend to boost apprenticeship.

Finally, the Ministry of Education presented a bill «about orientation for the future of the School". The main objective is the success of all the pupils. That means lead :

- 100 % of pupils to the attainment of a diploma or a recognized qualification, at the end of their compulsory education,
- 80 % of an age group to the level of the high school diploma (end of upper secondary education),
- and 50 % of an age group to a diploma of the higher education.

For two years, this ministry implements a measure of the Bologna's process : the high education in 3 levels, license, master and doctorate. Almost 90 % of the French universities adapted their programmes.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1 - AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The Ministry of National Education, High Education and Research is responsible for making educational policy, governing vocational training in schools and through apprenticeship. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is similarly responsible for professional agricultural training.

The Ministry of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing oversees vocational training for young people entered on the labour market as well as for private-sector employees.

These ministries are organised into various departments, offices, and directorates whose the mission is to ensure that vocational training-related policies are implemented.

Actually, there is no centralised national authority in the area of vocational training. However, the law relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities on August 13th, 2004, established the Vocational Lifelong Learning National Council. Its main aim is to give some appreciation on the implementation of the continuing vocational training (CVT) and apprenticeship by:

- evaluating the regional vocational life-long learning and apprenticeship policies,
- giving its opinion on future vocational life-long learning and apprenticeship legislation,
- writing annual reports on vocational life-long learning and apprenticeship, uses of funds,

- controlling the good using of these funds.

State, local, and regional authorities are responsible for training their staff.

2 - THE REGIONS

The decentralisation process, which began in the 1980s and was stepped up in the 90s, resulted in the 26 regional councils (regions) taking on a central role in vocational training, particularly for young people between the ages of 16 to 25, vocational training interns, and young people working under apprenticeship contracts.

The last law of this process, relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities of August 13th, 2004 strengthens the role of regional councils by widening the Regions' responsibilities in the vocational training of the unemployed adults. Henceforth Regions define and implement the regional policies of apprenticeship and vocational training, not only for young people, but also for unemployed adults.

In order to carry out their new missions, the regions have had to set up their own administrative structures. A division called commission, department, or directorate, concerns vocational training in each regional council.

In order to promote the co-ordination of vocational training policy and action, French laws 2002-73 dated January 17, 2002 and 2002-92 dated January 22, 2002 instituted regional employment and vocational training co-ordination committees. These committees are made up of state representatives in each region, regional assemblies, management and labour organisations, and regional consular chambers (agriculture, trade and commerce and industry). Their mission is to promote co-operation between the many organisations involved in vocational training in order to ensure better harmonisation of vocational training and employment policy.

(Please see attached diagram on the administrative divisions and responsibilities in VET) [Diagram 1](#))

0302 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: IVET

THE LAWS EDUCATION

In June 2000 all laws governing education were compiled, forming a single Educational Code, which, for the most part, has taken the place of all previous educational laws. The code contains general and common provisions as well as provisions that apply to different educational levels.

On February 27th, 2003, the Youth Affairs, Education and Research Ministry issued a circular highlighting vocational high schools as a key element in promoting vocational and technical education.

In December 2004, the Ministry of Education presented a bill «about orientation for the future of the School». The main objective is the success of all the pupils that means, for example, to lead 100 % of the pupils in the acquisition of a diploma or a recognized qualification, at the end of their compulsory education.

Finally, the law n° 2005-380 of April 23rd, 2005, on orientation and programme for the future of the school aims to:

- reduce disparities by the acquisition of a common-core of indispensable knowledge and by the more individualized paths (i.e. in case of redoubling a education's level, they propose an individual contract of educational success – contrat individuel de réussite éducative CIRE),
- prepare the young people for the employment by a better knowledge of the companies and of the economics,
- make the more effective school by developing the language learning in the primary school and the use of information technologies (creation of a computer and internet certificate (brevet informatique et internet - B2i) integrated into the lower grade school certificate (brevet des collèges) and into the high school diploma.

Objectives will be estimated, to guarantee a qualification to 100 % of the pupils and the access of 80 % of an age group at the level of the high school diploma, and improve the access to the higher education.

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For the past 35 years, continuing vocational training has been considered an independent area of labour law. In 1973, the French law dated July 16, 1971 was codified, becoming the ninth and last book of the French Labour Code. Legislative and regulatory provisions related to continuing vocational training have subsequently rounded out the new book of the Labour Code.

Table 1: The most recent laws related to vocational training

THE MOST RECENT LAWS RELATED TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING

July 17th, 2001	This law includes various social, educational and cultural (DDOSEC) provisions that lay the legal foundation for the implementation of back-to-work assistance programs included in the unemployment insurance agreement dated January 1, 2001.
November 16th, 2001	This anti-discrimination law protects employees against all forms of discrimination affecting training (i.e :access to recruitment procedures or in-company training)
January 17th, 2002	The “social modernisation” law includes several provisions related to vocational training mainly in the area of obtaining job experience validation (la validation des acquis de l’expérience or VAE), funding for apprenticeships, determining what training is to be made available, and creating regional employment and vocational training co-ordination committees.
May 4th, 2004	The law reforms the French VET for the employees of the private sector.
August 13 rd 2004	The law relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities strengthens the role of regional councils by widening the Regions’ responsibilities in the vocational training.

Concerning the continuing vocational training for the private sector’s employees, the framework in which regulations are negotiated is specific. First, social partners (trade unions and management) negotiate interprofessional agreements at the national level, and then legislators incorporate all or part of these regulations into a law.

Table 2: Main examples of social partners agreements

MAIN EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS AGREEMENTS				
	Date	Date	Date	Date
Social partners agreements	July 9, 1970	October 26, 1983	July 3, 1991	December 5, 2003
Laws	July 16, 1971	February 24, 1984	December 31, 1991	May 4, 2004

THE AGREEMENTS

Continuing vocational training has been subject to negotiation between the French social partners (trade unions and employers’ organisation) since 1971.

NEGOCIATION AT THE INTERPROFESSIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, trade unions negotiate interprofessional regulations, particularly when they feel reforms are needed.

The most recent National Interprofessional Agreement (accord national interprofessionnel - ANI) was concluded on December 5th, 2003. This agreement, which focuses on vocational lifelong learning, modified the previous interprofessional collective agreement related to continuing vocational training (July 3rd, 1991 agreement). The principal additions included in the agreement concern:

- a individual right to training for employees,
- the possibility for employees to attend training courses outside working hours,
- a work contract described as a "professionalisation's contract" for young and adult job seekers providing for sandwich courses or programs which facilitate integration (i.e. : validation of learning or vocational skills analysis),
- the increase of the levels of contributions of the firms.

Most of the provisions in this agreement were incorporated into the French law dated May 4th, 2004.

Some amendments to the ANI on December 5th 2003 have been signed on July 20th, 2005.

Its concerns :

- professional audit, skills analysis and the implementation of training passport (amendment n°1),
- development of accreditation of life experience (amendment n°2).

NATIONAL NEGOTIATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL BRANCHES (SECTORS)

Since 1984 legislation and the National Interprofessional Agreement have made it possible for representatives of trade union and management to participate in negotiations regarding vocational training goals and resources.

The "five-year law" dated December 20th, 1993 and the National Interprofessional Agreement of December 5th, 2003 have strengthened professional branches' power to take initiatives, in particular by allowing them to take action (adapted to the needs of each professional branch and company) in a wide variety of areas such as the implementation of mechanisms to raise funds for vocational training.

The French law dated January 17th, 2002, known as the "social modernisation law," includes provisions related to interprofessional negotiation of continuing vocational training priorities, goals, and resources. These negotiations must now also include training to ensure that employees are able to adapt to changes in their jobs, the acquisition of new skills, and the objective-based upstream management of positions within the company.

0303 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: CVET

BELOW IS DESCRIBED THE ADVISORY ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS IN IVET AND CVET RESPECTIVELY.

INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Social partners consult:

- the *Commission professionnelle consultative - CPC* [Professional Consultative Commissions] , with the various ministries responsible for the creation of diplomas and technological and professional certificates,
- the *Commission pédagogique nationale* [National Pedagogical Commission] for the creation of diplomas awarded by the *Instituts universitaires et technologiques* [university-level technological institutes] -for two-year programs of study after the high school level
- the National Expert's Board for professional Licence -three-year programs of study after high school
- and the *Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche-CNESER* [National Higher Education and Research Council] – for all higher education diplomas

Social partners, as an advisor, may express their opinions within the Professional Consultative Commissions implemented into the various ministries (National Education, Employment, Youth and Sports, Agriculture) on the creation or modification of diploma or titles.

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

When the State sets priorities for continuing vocational training and apprenticeship policies on a national level, it must first consult its partners, including labour organisations, within the framework of the National Vocational Lifelong learning Council (CNFPTLV).

The regions establish their own continuing vocational training policies. Each region draws up a regional training development plan in order to coordinate the different areas of vocational training for young people, both initial and continuing, at a regional level. The plan is based on an active partnership between all concerned parties. The president of the *Conseil régional* [regional council] is responsible for setting up consultive meetings with management representatives and trade-unions, among other organisations.

DIRECT INVOLVEMENT THROUGH LABOUR-MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

BELOW IS DESCRIBED THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL PARTNERS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

There are two joint labour-management authorities in charge of coordinating and regulating training-related issues: The *Comité paritaire national pour la formation professionnelle* - CPNFP [National Joint Committee for Vocational training] in charge of ensuring that vocational training programs run smoothly and that collective agreements are duly applied within the framework of continuing vocational training's agreements

The *Fonds unique de péréquation* - FUP [Unique fund of adjustment] coordinates issues related to individual training leave and in charge of financial regulations related to professionalisation measures funds.

AT THE PROFESSIONAL BRANCH LEVEL

The Commissions paritaires nationales de l'emploi -CPNE [National Joint employment Commission] are cooperative authorities between management representatives and labour-unions. It is created in each branch by national professional agreement.

It promotes training issues when employment policies and policies governing Individual Training Leave are created.

The *Organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés* - OPCA [Approved Joint Collecting Bodies], which are managed by labour organisations, collect funds and companies's mandatory contributions within the framework of their continuing vocational training plan (CVT).

THE ROLE OF LABOUR ORGANISATIONS IN TRAINING JOB SEEKERS

A portion of unemployment insurance funds is allocated not to direct benefits for the unemployed, but rather to managing employment and training policies. This is the case for the training that are part of personalised action plans for job seekers receiving *-allocation d'aide au retour à l'emploi-formation* - ARE -[back-to-work training funds].

These funds are managed jointly by management and labour representatives, at the national level by Unédic, and locally by Assédic (1). The new unemployment insurance agreement concluded by labour organisations and approved by the state in took effect on January 2006 and includes important provisions for the training of job seekers. Its deadline is forecast for the 31st December, 2008.

Table 1: Main actions and bodies of the social partners

	ACTION LEVEL	
ROLE	NATIONAL	REGIONAL
Decision-making	National joint Committee for vocational training (interprofessional) National joint commission for employment (sectoral) Negotiation on sectoral or interprofessional agreements	Regional observatory of branch
Consultative	Consultative professional commission (education)	Regional coordination council for employment and vocational training
Managing	Directory of OPCA* and Unédic (and Assédics)	Directory of OPCA

* OPCA : approved Joint collecting Bodies

Table 1: Structure of French vocational diplomas

ISCED 3C	Certificat d'Aptitudes Professionnelles - CAP (Professional Skills Certificate) and Brevet d'Etudes Professionnelles - BEP (Professional Studies Certificate)
ISCED 3B	Brevet professionnel - BP (Vocational Certificate) Brevet de technicien - BT (Technician's Certificate) Baccalauréat Professionnel - BAC Pro (Vocational Baccalaureate)
ISCED 5B	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur - BTS (Higher Technician's Certificate) Diplôme Universitaire de technologie - DUT (University Technological Diploma) Diplôme National de Technologie Spécialisé - DNST (Specialised National Technology Diploma) Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaire en Sciences et Techniques - DEUST (University Scientific and Technical Studies Diploma)
ISCED 5A	Licence Professionnelle (Vocational Licence) Master's, Engineering Diploma

(Please see here for [Diagram 1](#) The Education System in France)

Technological education prepares specifically to higher vocational education.

Vocational education trains students to attain a professional qualification (certified by a diploma).

In France, the school system is on the responsibility of the Ministry of national education, high education and research (*Ministre de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche*).

School is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 but all children go to the nursery from the age of three.

PUBLIC PRE-PRIMARY OR NURSERY SCHOOLS

Public pre-primary or nursery schools are on the responsibility of the Ministry of national education, high education and research and are free of charge. At private schools, attended by 1.5% of children, parents pay some of school fees.

Nursery school is equal to the initial education phase. As a general rule, children are grouped by age into three sections: small section (3-year olds), medium section (4-year-olds) and big section (5-years-olds). The main educational points of the activities contribute to the child's overall development and as a preparation for primary school. 85,3 % of children are trained in state schools.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

At six, they enter to primary school for five years and no later than the age of twelve enter to lower secondary school (*collèges*).

Primary schools provide instruments of knowledge : verbal and written expression, reading mathematics as well as lessons in history, geography, civic education, science and technology, living language, physical, sports and artistic education.

Primary education is free of charge in State schools.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Secondary school lasts four years, unless a year needs to be repeated. This consists of Year 6, Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9. When leaving lower secondary school, pupils at 15 years-old (or more if they repeated a year) join either a general education and technological high school (*lycée d'enseignement général et technologique*) to obtain a general or technical education (in three years) or a vocational high school (*lycée professionnelle*) to obtain a *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle -CAP* or a technical school certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles -BEP*) in two years, and then in some cases, a vocational high school diploma (*baccalauréat professionnel*) over two additional years.

The general education diploma (*baccalauréat*) represents the end of secondary school process and qualifies pupils to enter in higher schools (University and so on).

Higher education offers general education as well as technological and professional education, at universities and centres of excellence (*grandes écoles*), run by various ministries: Ministry of national education, high education and research for universities and some engineering schools. Others Universities or engineering schools are run by the Defence, Industry, Transport or Agriculture Ministries.

In 2001, 23.4% of the working population had no qualifications, whilst 7.5% had a *Brevet d'Etudes Primaires et des Collèges* (a qualification obtained at the end of the second phase of secondary education), 29.1% a CAP or a BEP, 14.4% a *baccalauréat* or equivalent and 25.7% a qualification higher than the *baccalauréat*.

France has a long tradition of pre-primary education. It is optional for children between the ages of 2 and 5. 99.9% of children of 3 years-old are in the school system. In 2001/2002, the proportion of 2-year-olds in education amounted to 34.7%.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

The Collège [Lower secondary high school] is attended by all children after primary school no later than the age of 12, apart from:

- children with severe handicap which does not allow them to be educated in an ordinary school. Those children attend specialist establishments, called *établissements régionaux d'enseignement adapté* [Special general and Professional Education Institutes], managed by the Ministry of National Education or the Ministry of Health,
- children who met with serious learning difficulties after primary school. Those children attend *sections d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté - SEGPA* [Special General and Professional Education Institutes] within the *collège* structure.

Lower secondary schooling at *collège* lasts four years, covering school years 6 to 9. Education is organised into three educational phases.

At the end of 9 years' schooling, pupils take the *Brevet d'enseignement primaire général* [lower grade school certificate] examination which is obtained from the exam results and the grades achieved during 8 to 9 years schooling. Delivered by a jury, this diploma gave evidence of the acquisition of general knowledge in the term of the school. From 2007, there is no more exam to obtain this diploma but only a continuous control.

This level does not lead to a vocational qualification. There is no professional education at the lower secondary level. However, there are programmes aimed initiating students in different work sectors. They are called "itinéraires de découvertes" (discovery pathways). The student spend about 10% of their education in companies.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

When leaving *collège*, pupils aged 15 (unless they repeated a year), either attend a *lycée d'enseignement général et technologique* -LEGT-[General education and technological high school], or a *lycée professionnel* -LP [Vocational high school].

At the LEGT, schooling is organised over a three-year period: year 10, upper sixth and lower sixth, which lead to the *baccalauréat* exam.

It is not until the end of year 10, called the determination year, which is common to all pupils, that they need to choose the type of *baccalauréat* they wish to sit: of the three general categories (economics and sociology, literary or scientific) or one of the seven technology categories. The *baccalauréat* exam is taken at the end of the upper-sixth year but in certain disciplines, pupils take their exams at the end of the lower sixth year.

The *lycée professionnel* prepares for the first level of professional qualification over a two-year period: called the *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* (CAP) or *brevet d'études professionnelles* (BEP). The CAP is designed to give pupils direct access to employment. However, pupils who have the capacities can then study over a two-year period (in the professional lower and upper sixth years) for a *baccalauréat professionnel*, in one of the 48 specialisations offered. The main aim of the BEP is now to pursue studies (*baccalauréat professionnel* or *baccalauréat technologique*). However, the BEP remains a professional qualification, giving access to a qualified job.

The reference points for professional qualifications issued by the Ministère de l'Education Nationale are still drawn up in partnership with the appropriate sector of industry within professional consultative commissions. To obtain these qualifications, a period of training in companies is always required.

Table 1: Number of candidates, qualifications obtained and candidates who have passed in technological and professional education Mainland France - 2004

NUMBER OF CANDIDATES/QUALIFICATIONS STUDIED FOR	ADMISSION
CAP candidates	74.5%
BEP candidates	74.7%
Brevet de technicien (and BMA, Brevet des metiers d'art)	75.1%
Technology BAC candidates	76.9%
Professional BAC candidates	76.9%

Source: Direction de l'évaluation et de la prospective (DEP). Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, RERS 2005

Table 2: Full time students in upper secondary education - 2003

	VOCATIONAL PROGRAM	GENERAL & PRE VOCATIONAL PROGRAM
France	56%	44%
EU 25	46%	54%

The data concerning "vocational programmes" include vocational secondary schools and apprenticeship that train students to a professional qualification, technological education geared toward higher professional education.

The percentage of students in vocational and technological programmes has increased during the last ten years because of the development of new higher education graduations for exemple "licences professionnelles" (vocational licence).

The organisation system varies from diploma to diploma :

With CAPs :

- 34% of time devoted to general instruction,
- 42% vocational instruction,
- 24% enterprise-based apprenticeship

With BEPs in the manufacturing sector :

- 40% devoted to general instruction
- 50% vocational instruction
- 10% enterprise-based apprenticeship

With Vocational Baccalaureates in the manufacturing sector :

- 46% of time devoted to general instruction
- 30% to technical instruction
- 24% to enterprise-based apprenticeship

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Apprenticeship offers alternating training provided by both a company and an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation d'apprentis, CFA*). Considered to be a form of basic education, it prepares for all professional qualifications. Since 1987, the qualifications studied by apprentices were for level 2 (ISCED) to level 5 (ISCED). Nevertheless, in 2002-2003, 64 % of apprentices studied for a first level manual worker qualification (ISCED 2).

Apprenticeships are offered within a framework of an employment contract, between the 16-25 year-old (the apprentice), and an employer. The apprenticeship is financed by all private employers (except for liberal and agricultural professions) through an apprenticeship tax, by the State and the regional public authorities.

THE APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACT

The apprenticeship contract is a contract of employment of a particular type which is governed by the *Code du Travail* [labour code]. The purpose of the contract is to provide the young person with general theoretical and practical training, in order to obtain a professional qualification for which a diploma or professional certificate is issued.

In order to conclude an apprenticeship contract, employers must prove that they will take all the necessary actions to organise the apprenticeship and appoint a person, called the *maître d'apprentissage* [apprenticeship supervisor], who is directly responsible for training the apprentice, performing the role of tutor. In small companies, the employer is generally the apprenticeship supervisor.

Typical age of apprentices is between 16 and 22 years old.

The normal term of the contract varies between one and three years - 75% of apprenticeship contracts signed, are for a period of between one and two years. It may be modulated according to the initial skill level of the young.

The broad segments that traditionally train apprentices are craft industries, specialised retail stores, construction, automobile sale and repair, hotels and restaurants and small-scale food shops.

TRAINING

Training takes place both within the company (75% of the total time) and at a *Centre de Formation des Apprentis, CFA* [Apprenticeship Training Centre] 25 % of the total time. The employer is required to conduct the apprentice's practical training, notably by giving him to carry out tasks that comply with the annual progression, drawn up by mutual agreement with CFA.

The employer is required to register the young person at the CFA that offers the required courses for the training stated in the contract. The CFAs are created by an agreement with a regional authority or with the State and the CFA's managing body. It may be a private educational establishment - professional trade union, company or any other legal entity or individual (51% of apprentices or public body 12.5%; a chamber of commerce and industry 10.5%; a Chamber of Trade 22.5% or of Agriculture or a local authority 2.5%). CFAs are subject to the educational supervision of the State (*Ministère de l'éducation nationale*) and the technical and financial supervision of the State or the regional authorities.

The training given by the CFA may not be less than an average of 400 hours per year.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On February 2004, 8 months after leaving a CFA, 65.8% of the apprentices (with all types of qualifications) were in employment, 59.9% were in unassisted employment, 6% were in assisted employment, 3.8 % were involved in training periods, 27.3 % were jobseekers. (Source : DARES)

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Some programmes are specifically tailored to facilitate the integration of young people aged 16 to 25, without or with inadequate qualifications. The aim is to help them to get a job.

For the last 20 years or so, considering the high level of unemployment for young people, alternative job-study programmes have been organised. Those are organised either as part of a work contract, or as part of an internship. In the former case, the young people have employee status, while in the latter, they are interns in vocational training.

Alternative job studies fulfil three priorities:

- offer a remedy to unemployment amongst young people with few or low qualifications
- foster their entry in the job market

- enhance their vocational profile (job suitability, access to qualifications).

Until September 2004, three different programmes were offered to young people, depending on their needs. In 2002, 186 600 young persons were hired through these contracts.

As of October 2004, a new contract - the "professionalisation contract" has replaced the three previous contracts.

CURRICULA

Once is signed the professionalisation contract, the employer has to provide to the young person a job for the specified time (from 6 months up to 24 months) and training that will help him to gain a "recognised vocational qualification": vocational studies diploma, nationally recognised or certifications recognised by sectors.

The general, vocational or technological courses must account at least 15% of the total contract time. This percentage may be adjusted up to 25 % upon agreement of the work sectors.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post secondary (non tertiary) level is offered to youngsters after the baccalaureat and last 2 years.

Senior technical sections in *lycées* offer courses over a two-year period in the *brevet de technicien supérieur* (BTS - Higher Technician's certificate), which is designed to give access to employment.

In addition, technology university institutes attached to universities also offer two-year courses to obtain a professional qualification called the *diplôme universitaire de technologie* (DUT - University Technological Diploma).

CURRICULA

30% of the total time is dedicated during the first year to general subjects, 33% during the second year. Otherwise work experience schemes lasting from 4 to 6 weeks are part of the curricula.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Higher education is possible in universities, public or private higher colleges, some of which are called *grandes écoles*.

Universities accept students without any selection process - except for medical, dental and pharmaceutical disciplines and technological university institutes - who have obtained the *baccalauréat*, or the *diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires* - DAEU [Access to University Studies Diploma] or an equivalent qualification.

Studies are split into semesters and course units for which the student is awarded credits.

A degree is awarded to students who obtain 180 credits, normally over a period of three years.

300 credits are needed to obtain a masters degree - or 120, more than needed for a first degree, over two additional years study.

There is a professional master degree leading to employment, and research masters which permit following a doctorate over a three-year period.

According to the Copenhagen process, France began to adapt the diplomas on 3 levels (licence, master and doctorate). There is also a vocational licence leading to employment, and research masters which permit following a doctorate over a three-year period.

Technology university institutes attached to universities have a student selection process and prepare them in two years for a *diplôme universitaire de technologie -DUT* [Technological university diploma] designed to provide entry into working life.

Students who graduated *DUT* can study for a further one-year period to obtain a new qualification created in 1999 under the Bologna process to build an european higher education area.

University enrolment rights are limited and some students can obtain a financial assistance in the form of grants based on social criteria, university criteria or of interest-free loans on trust. Establishments supervised by the various ministries which have selective process and provide higher education.

These establishments offer short forms of education: in technology, business and paramedical disciplines or a high level long-term education: political institutes, engineering schools, business and management schools, veterinary schools etc.

Private establishments must be issued with a legal declaration of opening. These establishments are highly diversified and have in common a rigorous selective process.

Entry to the most prestigious higher education colleges, known as "grandes écoles" is by competition prepared in two years in *Classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles – CPGE* [preparatory classes].

Table 1: Numbers of students in higher education in 2004-2005 (mainland France and overseas departments) (1)

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT	Universities	IUFM	STS	CPGE	Engineering schools	Business and management schools	Other higher education establishments	Total
NUMBER	1 4254 536	83 622	230 275	73 147	67 263	83 176	306 404	2 268 423

Source : ministry of Education, DEP, RERS 2005 (1) Overseas departments : Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion and French Guiana.

The role of the *Instituts de Formation des Maîtres -IUFM* [Teacher Training Institutes] is to train for primary and secondary school teachers. In 2008, they would be attached to universities.

The *Section Techniciens Supérieurs - STS* are advanced technicians departments, located in the *lycées* [Upper secondary schools] which leads to *Brevet Technicien Supérieur - BTS* the higher technician's certificate, level 5 B.

Some other education college concern : paramedical and social schools, law and administrative schools, artistic and cultural schools.

EXAM PASS RATES DURING FIRST PHASE AT UNIVERSITY

In the 2003 session, over three out of four students obtained their *Diplôme d'Enseignement Universitaire Général – DEUG* [intermediate diploma normally delivered at the end of two years at university] almost half in two years and one quarter in three years.

The *Diplôme Universitaire Technologique - DUT* pass rate is 85% achieved over two or three years.

Table 2: Cumulative pass rate of DEUG and DUT

	CUMULATIVE PASS RATE	IN 2 YEARS	IN 3 YEARS	IN 4 YEARS
DEUG	76.4%	46%	20.7%	7.5%
DUT	85.2%	66.7%	18.5%	0

Source: Ministry of education, DEP – RERS 2005

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Continuing vocational training “is intended to help workers adapt to changing techniques and working conditions and foster their upward social mobility by opening them to the various levels of the economy, society and culture” (Labour code art L.900-1). CVT is open to any individual who has exited the initial training system to enter the job market. CVT concerns people already in the work force (staff in both the private and the public sectors, non-salaried workers) and about to enter the work force (job-seekers).

CVT aims to :

- make it easier to adapt to changes in working techniques and conditions;
- maintain or improve adult's vocational qualification;
- assist adult's social or professional promotion.

Learning possibilities depend on the status of the beneficiary. French people have the same right to benefit training but there are several different kinds of training. There are specific training's accesses for unemployed people or employees. Then there are different training possibilities if you are less than 25 years old, or between 26 and 44, or more than 45 years old.

First introduced in its current form in the early 1970s, CVT involves a number of different players: the State, enterprises, local governments, public establishments, public and private learning establishments, professional, trade and family-related organisations.

Central and regional governments are responsible for the implementation of lifelong vocational training. Social partners negotiate specific agreements for their employees and they are also in charge of the allocation of specific funding collected from companies and allocated to finance CVT.

The provisions regarding CVT are the result of initiatives on the part of the national government, through laws and decrees. Legislative provisions related to continuing vocational training are now part of the Labour Code. At the impetus of social partners, training is now subject to collective bargaining– national interprofessional agreements, industry or economic sector agreements and enterprise agreements.

Last more important provisions : a national interprofessional agreement was signed on December, the 5th 2003, reforming a number of programmes. The law of May 4th, 2004 has officialized these changes.

Changes consist in:

- setting up training programmes outside working hours,
- choosing, by individuals of their training which has been negotiated with their employer,
- promoting VT in sme's,
- fostering VT fo adults in second half of their career life.

THE MAIN ACCESS PROCEDURES FOR TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION PROGRAMMES

Access to individual training is conditional upon the applicant's situation and the specific training and qualification problems that they may encounter. The social partners and the State have designed and established a number of different programmes, which fall into one of two categories: training for jobseekers and training for active workers (private sector employees, civil servants and the self-employed).

Training for jobseekers comes in two main shapes: training sessions (or traineeships), and special work contracts that integrate training (such as alternating job-study training programmes for first-time jobseekers under age 26 or long term jobseekers). In one hand, they can take part to training sessions, free of charge thanks to financing of public authorities or UNEDIC which is an organisation managed by the social partners. In the other hand, special work contracts as "contrat de professionnalisation" or "contrat initiative emploi" organise a practical training in firms and a theoretical one in a training provider. During this contract, the employee receive a percentage of the legal minimum wage. The State finances exemptions from national social insurance contributions granted to companies (same advantages than for the pprentice ship contract).

Training for active workers may be:

- chosen by the employer as part of the enterprise's "training plan",
- chosen by the employee and taken in the form of "training leave", the most widespread version of the latter being Individual Training Leave (congé individuel de formation - CIF),
- negotiated between the employee and the enterprise, individual training right benefit (droit individuel de formation - DIF).This third category is new, settled by the law of May 4th, 2004. One important component of this law states that vocational training may take part partially or entirely outside working hours, with a specific allowance.

A new system was established in 2002: validation of previous experience. Under this system, each individual can ask to have his previous experience recognised. Any person taking part in the active world – whether a jobseeker, an employee or a volunteer worker – can have experience acquired over a period of at least three years validated, in order to gain partial or full exemption from coursework required for a diploma, certification or qualification certificate awarded by a professional branch. This qualification method carries the same dignity and weight as do traditional schooling or university studies, apprenticeships or CVT.

A number of training programmes have been set up for target groups considered particularly vulnerable in terms of social or professional mainstreaming (women, disabled persons, prisoners, refugees).

EVALUATION

The diversity of financing options for adult continuing vocational training (CVT) makes it particularly difficult to perform a global assessment, as each measure (State, regional, company-based) is monitored by the government authority or financial sponsor who implements it.

A number of statistics are gathered and monitored by the Ministries of Education and Labour and by CEREQ and INSEE. They provide a basis for evaluating adult continuing vocational training.

The "Training 2000" survey, which was conducted in March 2000 by CEREQ, INSEE, the Ministry of Labour and the Department of Education provides data concerning employee perceptions of training. "Enquête formation continue 2000" - CEREQ - INSEE (www.cereq.fr).

As regards training for the unemployed, 14.9% of job seekers received training in 2003 for an average of 360 hours of training (source: Aurore Fleuret and Philippe Zamora - *La formation professionnelle des chômeurs in France, portrait social*, DARES, 2004).

According to the authors of the study, the evaluation of training received was based on two main criteria: the return to employment and the quality and stability of the new job found. This type of evaluation is difficult to conduct. In effect, groups that received the same training would have to be compared with "control" groups (individuals who did not receive training and who have similar characteristics, which are obviously not possible).

ALTERNATIVES MODES OF DELIVERY

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

In line with the anti-exclusion policy and the government programme "Preparing France to Enter the Information Society", a special programme was created to develop open distance-learning programmes: FORE ("Open distance learning and educational resources"). As part of the programme funded by the State, a number of nationwide training programmes open to all individuals (FOAD - formations ouvertes et à distances - Open and distance learning) have been set up. These programmes are intended mainly to better spread educational resources across the country and provide those living in rural areas with better access to training.

FOAD, which combines flexible solutions and technologically-advanced tools with a programme accessible to all individuals, wherever they may be, is particularly suited to training initiatives that target special groups, like the illiterate, for instance.

E-LEARNING

Many distance learning programmes organised in France use e-learning tools.

The main users of e-learning programmes are for example the vocational centres under the aegis of ministry in charge of education, under the responsibility of the ministry in charge of the labour, named AFPA (Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes): association for vocational training of adults) the chamber of commerce.

PROVIDERS

In France, the training providers offer training to everyone: jobseekers, employees, individuals (own expense).

The status of organisations that offer training services can vary as follows:

- The public system
- Systems associated with the professional branches
- Consular or semi-public systems (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chambers of Agriculture, Chambers of Trade)
- Independent private organisations doing business in a wide variety of sectors with equally varied legal status.

Public and semi-public training organisations are overseen by the ministries. For example, the National Education Ministry is in charge of GRETA organisations; the Ministry for Employment, social Cohesion and Housing oversees the National Association for Adult Training (AFPA), and other ministries oversee organisations such as professional agricultural promotion and training centres. Consular organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chambers of Agriculture, and Chambers of Trade also oversee training programs. Training methods vary. Direct teaching is the most frequently used, but other distance learning techniques such as correspondence courses (for example programs offered by the National Distance Learning Centre or CNED) or e-learning are also used.

Lastly, private organisations include associations (non-profit making organisations), for-profit organisations, and individual trainers (self-employed people).

In 2003, 9100 training organisations reported training as their primary activity. They provided training to more than 6 million participants. They reported turnover of EUR 3.7 bn.

Please see here for attached figure (The characteristics of training organisations by status [Figure 1](#))

PLANNING AND FORECASTING

Given that powers are now decentralised in France and that they are currently being transferred in the specific area of CVT, most of the tools used to determine and forecast qualification requirements are found at the regional level. However, the state may support national forecast studies in specific economic sectors.

The regions' responsibility in the field of CVT has led them to draft a CVT policy. In order to coordinate the various fields in which VET, initial or continuing, is offered at the regional level, the Regions lay out regional plans for the development of vocational training (PRDFP). These PRDFPs define the medium-term objectives for VT targeting

young people and adults, taking into account the regional economic situation, so as to ensure that they may enter or re-enter the job market, as well as their vocational development.

The Regional Councils can call on a number of tools in the identification process:

- research carried out by regional observatory for employment and training forecasts (*Observatoire Régional de l'Emploi et de la formation OREF*);
- the studies that may have been carried out by the National Vocational Lifelong Learning Board (*conseil national de la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie – CNFPTLV*).

PRDFP set out by the Region requires active partnership between all of the players in VT. It is drawn up by the Regional Council, with the agreement of the State and the employee-employer trade organisations. The partnership can be statutory in nature. For instance, the Region can conclude an “objectives-based contract” with the State and the professional branches. These multi-year contracts (3 to 5 years) set out objectives for the coordinated development of initial and continuing VT in all of the vocational pathways covered by the region. There are different “objectives-based contracts” among which a specific contract for the development of apprenticeship.

Social partners also have access to a tool for forecasting qualification requirements: the Development agreement for the employment and the skills (*l'engagement de développement de l'emploi et des compétences EDEC*)

This is a contract reached between the State and organised labour within a given business sector. It is covered by joint financing, provided by the two signing parties and is designed to draw up an overview of the economic, technological and industrial changes underway in a given sector. The study carried out through this process analyses the concrete consequences that the modifications will have on the development of labour, qualifications and classifications, and jobs and the skills required to fulfil them. It also deals with the market's needs in terms of initial or continuing vocational training and, lastly, equality between men and women on the job market.

According to the 4th May 2004 law, every sector is now asked to create an Observatory for employment and training forecasts which will be in charge of studies, in the areas of employment and training.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The State, the regional councils, local governments, companies, the unemployment insurance system, and households all contribute to funding for adult continuing vocational training.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The State and the regions are the main sources of public funding for the continuing vocational education training (CVET) in France. In 2003, the State funded 32% of total expenditures, while the regions funded 9.4% (source: *DARES*).

Since the first law relative to the decentralisation of government services was passed in 1983, the regions have played an increasingly important role in the area of continuing training.

Each region has now authority over vocational training for adults job seekers or adults seeking a career change, training for apprentices and at risk youth (young people without qualification).

The State keeps the responsibility of the training of civil servants and certain “priority” populations such as the disable people, prisoners, illiterate, and immigrants.

The decentralisation of government programs has granted general authority over training issues, particularly for young people, to the regions.

The State also contributes funding to training programmes targeting job seekers and vocational training for young people and those facing challenges on the job market by granting exemptions to mandatory social security contributions for certain employment contracts that include a training component.

The state unemployment insurance system finances training for job seekers.

PARTICIPATION RATES TO CVT

According to the eurostat survey, 7.8% of the population aged 25 to 64 years followed an education or training programme in 2004.

NEW MECHANISMS

The law relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities on August 13rd, 2004 strengthens the role of regional councils by widening the "Regions" responsibilities in the vocational training of the unemployed adults. Henceforth Regions define and implement the regional policies of apprenticeship and vocational training, not only for young people, but also for unemployed adults.

Now regional authorities have the plain responsibility for implementing the VET except the guidance and counselling which remain a competence of the State.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In France the authorities responsible for handling access to VT vary, depending on whether the target group consists of people excluded from the labour market, or those at a social or professional disadvantage and thus vulnerable to exclusion.

Regions, meanwhile, step in to handle training, a means toward mainstreaming, and thus focus on unemployment resulting from lack of integration (first-time jobseekers, jobseekers who do not have sufficient or suitable qualifications, etc.). These actions are part of traditional training policy.

The State's action focuses on unemployment resulting from exclusion, and covers long-term jobseekers, either older or disabled, whether socially or physically. These actions are part of employment policy.

Law No. 2005-102, dated 5th February 2005 for the equality of the rights and the chances, the participation and the citizenship of the disabled people, recognises that "it is the State's duty" to provide education, training and vocational guidance for minors and adults with sensory, physical or mental handicaps. Although vocational training for the handicapped must be carried out, in large part, in specialised establishments, it can also be offered in regular working or training settings. The disabled people have access to all employee training programs (training plans, individual training leave) and programs for job seekers (internships and assisted employment contracts). Nevertheless, in order to compensate for the disadvantage this population faces in terms of social and professional integration, public authorities have implemented specific training-related measures (professional rehabilitation programs, professional rehabilitation contracts, etc.). Benefits from the Fund Management Association for the Professional Integration of Handicapped Persons (*AGEFIPH*), which runs back-to-work and professional support programs for the handicapped, may be received in addition to state benefits.

In 2004, 43 701 disabled people took part to a training. (Source : DARES, ministry of employment, social cohesion and housing).

Legal immigrants also have access to all training programs open to workers with French nationality. In addition to benefits available to all, the Social Action and Support Fund for Integration and the Fight against Discrimination (*FASILD*) runs specific programs including training and professional integration programs (language training and social integration programs that facilitate access to training and employment).

The other target groups are :

- the inmates and people under legal custody,
- disadvantaged women.

As regards jobseekers receiving unemployment benefits, Unédic provides part of the remuneration for people who take part in training as part of the Personalised Project for the Employment Access (Projet Personnel d'Accès à l'Emploi-PPAE). The jobseekers can receive remuneration paid out by the unemployment insurance scheme (return to employment training grant-AREF).

In order to facilitate access to training for the unemployed, different measures have been put into place. Some, such as state or regionally approved internships that provide trainees with a stipend, concern all job seekers. Job seekers receiving back-to-work benefits (*allocation d'aide au retour à l'emploi or ARE*) may participate in training programs and continue to receive benefits within the limits of the law. Industrial partners run the office that manages unemployment insurance funds (Unédic), which is in charge of managing and distributing unemployment benefits. Furthermore, job seekers facing difficulties related to retraining for a new occupation may conduct an in-depth skills survey in order to better focus their professional goals and establish a strategy for re-entering the workforce. In addition, jobseekers can also request an "In-depth skills review" (BCAs). The review is intended to help jobseekers with trouble moving in a new direction on the job market to refocus their vocational plan and define a new pathway for their return to employment. ANPE (National Agency for Employment) estimates that 153 129 BCAs were carried out in 2004.

Young jobseekers aged 16 to 25 with difficulty finding a job, in particular due to low skills levels or poorly suited qualifications may sign a special work contract including training. This may be either an apprenticeship contract, or a professionalisation contract (see DI 0404 and 0405).

The Employer groupings for integrating and qualification (GEIQ) play a major role in re-integrating jobseekers on the job market. GEIQ is a grouping of employers intended to help mainstream and secure qualifications for disadvantaged people, through a pathway based on a work contract based on alternating job-study training programmes.

Lastly, employees working under a fixed-term contract enjoy an individual entitlement to vocational training, in the form of individual training leave (CIF) and/or skills review leave (CBC). Similar rights exist for temporary workers. This right is usually exercised when a work relationship ceases.

Table 1: Responsibilities, target groups and funding for training for the unemployed and others vulnerable to exclusion

	STATE	STATE	REGION	UNEDIC
OBJECTIVES	Fostering re-entry into the job market and/or social and professional mainstreaming.	Depends on the guidelines set out at the national level	Set each year in the annual agreement and given concrete form in the PRDFP (see 0502)	Funding for initiatives in response to identified needs, which must be fulfilled before an individual can be hired; offering, through programmes to improve vocational skills, a response to needs for qualifications identified at the local level or in sectors recognised as buoyant, by the trade branches, at the national or regional level.
BENEFICIARIES	Long-term jobseekers aged 50 and above, receiving RMI or other minimum social aids, some freed inmates, people with serious difficulties finding a job, due to their age, family situation or social standing, etc.	Depends on which fund is covering the training (FNE, ANCSEC, see 0502)	Any young person between ages 16 and 25, any adult looking for a job.	Jobseekers receiving aids and covered by the personalized project for the employment access.
STATUS	Employees working under special contracts or receiving VT.	Jobless VT participants, AREF recipients, active workers.	Young people: employees (apprenticeship and alternating job-study training for first-time jobseekers, or VT trainees. Adults: VT participant.	Jobseekers
REMUNERATION	Salary (minimum wage or salary equal to that of job held) or statutory remuneration for VT participants (if approved training programme).	Statutory remuneration for VT participants, salary, (minimum wage or salary equal to that of job held) where active workers are involved.	Young people: with salary status, remuneration to be equal to set percentage of minimum wage. Adults: statutory remuneration for VT participant (if	AREF (subsidy replacing aid provided to the unemployed)

			approved trainig programme)	
FUNDING SOURCES	State budget, Exemption from industrial (employer) taxes on certain contracts funded by grants	FNE, ANCSEC, labour Ministry budget, subventions	FRAFP, subsidies Exemption from industrial (employer) taxes by State (apprenticeship contract, alternating job-study contract).	UNEDIC funds activated (managed jointly)

NEW MECHANISMS

On 5th december 2003, the social partners, as represented at the national interprofessional level, reached an agreement that reforms CVT (see 050102). The agreement establishes a new mainstreaming contract, targeting jobseekers in particular: the professionalization contract. It replaces other alternating job-study training programmes for young first-time jobseekers;

In order to address the needs of young people between 16 and 25 with severe difficulties and often no qualifications, the law of programming for the social cohesion implemented on January 18th, 2005 set up a strengthened vocational preparation. The objective is to accompany 800 000 young people before 2009. The access to the contract "young people" and to the contract of insertion in the social life (CIVIS) will be facilitated for the beneficiaries of this vocational preparation.

The law n° 2005-102 on February 5th, 2005 created a national observatory for research and training on handicap, and foresees for the social partners the obligation to negotiate every three years on professional training for disabled people.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Some of the programmes listed above are subject to special monitoring and evaluation procedures. This is true of:

- in-depth skills review: ANPE assesses the effectiveness of the in-depth skills reviews on a one-time basis, looking at the percentage of participants who successfully enter a new field and the number of participants who enter training, three months after the end of their skills review, as compared to a population with comparable characteristics, but not involved in the programme. It also measures the participants' satisfaction;
- Women returners programmes: monthly monitoring carried out by ANPE, with the first qualitative evaluation carried out in 2001;
- "Objective: Manager": a national monitoring committee has been set up, composed of all of the Ministries involved, institutions associated with the programme and the industrial partners. Each year, it evaluates the programme, looking at the regional implementation work performed by the DRTEFPs and their regional partners, and the overall monitoring carried out at the national level.

The programmes and measures that receive State funding (employment ministry's budget, FNE, ANCSEC) are monitored and evaluated by the relevant managing and co-ordinating bodies.

The ASSEDIC offices, employer-employee organisations that manage the unemployment insurance system within each region and for the training programmes that they accredit, have set up an evaluation system based more specifically on how successfully the unemployed are re-oriented into new fields. In addition, in conjunction with AFPA, they perform quality controls to ensure that the training offered is indeed achieving the stated objectives.

Insofar as they are responsible for the training policies that they have set up, the regions also perform quantitative and qualitative monitoring.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

In France, the CVT is different depending on the private sector and the public's one.

ACCESS TO TRAINING FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES

In the private sector, CVT is managed by both enterprises and the social partners. Its main characteristic is the fundamental distinction between the training plan, which is established at the company's initiative, and the individual training leave, which is taken at the employee's initiative. In addition to these two major components, the

system also includes other, less common programs but especially a third main entryway created in 2004 : the individual training right (droit individuel de formation - DIF) negotiated between the employee and the employer.

French employers are not required to train their employees, but they are legally obligated (a strong incentive) to contribute funds to continuing vocational training. The financial contribution of enterprises to the development of CVT is actually the final sum of a number of smaller contributions.

The law states that mandatory contributions to CVT development must be equal to 1.6% of total payroll in companies with 10 employees or more, and 0.55% of payroll for enterprises of less than 10 employees (see theme 10). It should be noted that certain business sectors have set mandatory contribution levels at a rate higher than the legal minimum, through a joint agreement. The enterprise may decide to fulfil its obligation by paying all or part of its mandatory contribution – to a special body: an approved employer-employee collecting organisation (organisme paritaire collecteur agréé - OPCA), which has authority at the trade or professional segment level. There also exist OPCAs with interprofessional powers.

COMPANY TRAINING PLANS

Establishing a training plan is one way in which employers may fulfil their legal obligations. The training plan may be made up of all training and skills surveys conducted for employees (with the exception of Individual Training Leave) in order to further the company's own development objectives. These training programs are provided under the employer's authority and at the employer's expense (maintaining salaries, training costs, etc.). Training provided as part of company training plans tends to be short-term (40 hours on average) and does not tend to result in the employee obtaining formal qualifications.

An employee taking part in training under the training plan is considered "on assignment", since training is seen as one way of executing a work contract. Therefore, the employee continues to receive remuneration throughout the duration of the time spent in training.

Over the last ten years, initiatives launched to enhance workers' skills foresee that training may, under certain conditions, take place during non-working hours. This system was reaffirmed by the national interprofessional agreement reached by the social partners on 5th December 2003. It provided that this time (training during the non-working hours) does not exceed 80 hours per year and per employee. In this situation, the employer must pay the employee participating in training a subsidy that shall be equal to 50% of his net salary.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING LEAVE

Employees with a certain level of seniority in their company or professional branch are eligible to take time off work through the Individual Training Leave program (*congé individuel de formation or CIF*). The length of leave taken corresponds to the length of the training program and is legally limited to one year for continuing training or to 1,200 hours for periodic training schedules. Except in particular cases provided by the law, an employer cannot refuse an employee's request for training as part of the Individual Training Leave program. State approved joint collecting organisations (OPCA) are responsible for the implementation and funding of this program. There are particular clauses governing the use of Individual Training Leave by employees with temporary employment contracts and for temporary workers.

Training programs under the Individual Training Leave program are most often long programs resulting in formal qualifications (910 hours on average in 2004), which contrasts sharply with training carried out as part of company training plans.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING RIGHT BENEFIT

Set up by the social partners' agreement on 5th December 2003, and ratified by the law of 4th May 2004, Individual training right (droit individuel à la formation - DIF) is based on employee's initiative and negotiated with his or her employer.

Any working employee holding an open-term contract shall be entitled to 20 hours of training per year (or 120 hours over a six-year period) to take part in training as described in the enterprise's training plan. Employees holding a fixed-term contract may be eligible for this plan, under certain conditions.

ACCESS TO TRAINING FOR PUBLIC-SECTOR EMPLOYEES

Training is set up for civil servants at the national and local levels through a policy agreed upon by all of the parties involved, including the administration and employee representatives.

Framework agreements signed for a period generally limited to three years, are negotiated and establish binding financial commitments, the general objectives of the training policy and its content.

As regards the procedures for accessing civil servant training, a distinction is traditionally made between "initial training", which is intended to prepare trainees for civil service exams, and "continuing training", which is focused more on initiatives to further and fine-tune skills.

The training programmes can be initiated either by the employer or by the employees (training leave).

Actually, there is a law's projection which forecasts to create the individual training right benefit and the accreditation of vocational experiences system (validation of formal learning) for civil servants.

Like private-sector enterprises, the administration, the local governments and the public establishments are required to pay a contribution to fund training for their civil servants. Special organisations are in charge of

collecting the funds, in certain cases: this is true with civil service at the local level (towns, regions and departments) and civil servants working in hospitals

As concerns State civil servants, the rate of contribution is negotiated between the Ministry for Civil Service and the trade organisations that exist within that sector. A three-year framework agreement establishes the minimum contribution thresholds applicable to each administrative department, under the training plan and the training leave system.

Table 1: Rate of contributions for public-sector employees (% of gross annual wages bill)

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION	STATE	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	PUBLIC HOSPITALS
Training plan	3.8%	1%	2.10%
Professional training leave	0.2%	0.1%	0.20%

NON-SALARIED WORKERS

Non-salaried workers (craftsmen, farmers, the professions, store owners, freelance workers) can also enter training programmes. Since 1991, they are required to contribute to funding for such training, by paying a special flat fee.

SYSTEMS COMMON TO EMPLOYEES AND JOB SEEKERS

All individuals are eligible for the skills' audit. Employees may request a survey as part of the training leave program, employers may request the survey as part of the company training plan, and counsellors at the National Employment Agency (ANPE) may recommend the survey for job seekers.

The last system to undergo reform has been the job experience validation program. All individuals, whether they are employees, job seekers, or volunteer workers, may earn credit for experience gained over a minimum of three years in the workforce. Credit can then be applied instead of formal diploma or certificate studies toward nationally recognised official qualifications.

TRAINING FOR JOB SEEKERS

All job seekers may, under certain conditions, participate in paid training programs.

Particular provisions have been set up depending on the population involved: young people over the 16 to 25 age group, unemployed workers, and specific populations such as the handicapped, immigrants, and prisoners.

Job seekers are eligible to participate in training programs. Under certain conditions they may participate in training programs while continuing to receive unemployment benefits such as back-to-work benefits (ARE-training) financed by Unédic, the joint organisation that manages unemployment insurance. Some training programs are state or regionally funded. These programs have the necessary approval to pay trainees. The goal of such programs is to help participants enter the workforce, facilitate access to jobs requiring qualifications, or prepare them for new professional activities. These programs can also include a period of on-the-job training in a company. During the training period, trainees may receive payment, which can vary depending on the individual's situation. Training costs are not always fully covered by state and the regional organisations.

MEASURES TO SUPPORT TRAINING

MEASURES TO SUPPORT TRAINING IN SMES

The law does not set out a definition of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The criteria used to identify such enterprises are numerous and varied: headcount, turnover, legal structure, etc. In the field of vocational training, the most frequently used criteria is headcount. This is due in part to the distinction, in the law, between enterprises with more or less than 10 employees, with respect to the requirement to contribute to funding CVT.

The following classification is used:

- VSEs: 0 to 9 employees,
- SEs: 10 to 19 employees, 20 to 49 employees,
- MEs: 50 to 249 employees.

The Very Small Enterprises (VSEs), with 0 to 9 employees, are the least easily dealt with, in particular due to the highly diverse nature of their formats (craftsmen, the professions, limited one-person enterprises) and business sectors (from craftsmanship to high-tech enterprises). This great diversity leads to highly varied behaviours, making it difficult to make comparisons and perform analysis.

Whereas enterprises with fewer than 10 employees have only been required to contribute to funding for vocational training since 1991, their training initiatives go much further back. Craftsmanship, for instance, has always been a prime sector for apprenticeships. VSEs and SEs are, moreover, huge consumers of alternating job-study contracts (see Theme 4).

Recent studies on access to training in VSEs show that only one-third of those enterprises used at least one day of training over the last three years. This average obviously hides a great variety of situations, as some highly technical professions have a well-established, longstanding training culture, but nonetheless remains an important indicator of VSEs' attitude to training.

The training sessions are often very short (an average of two days per year). Training rarely leads to qualifications or diplomas (except where alternating job-study contracts or apprenticeship contracts are used).

There are also special measures to facilitate the access to training for :

- SME decision-makers (Training in entrepreneurship, Post-formation training, etc)
- SME employees (State's actions based on public funding with the aim of developing training and advising)
- enterprises in specific economic sectors (forecast study contracts with the sectoral social partners).

NEW MECHANISMS

The social partners signed an agreement on vocational life long learning, on December 5th 2003. That agreement has been ratified by a law on May 4th, 2004. They provide for :

- an individual training right for employees,
- the possibility for employees to attend training courses outside working hours,
- a work contract described as a "professionalization's contract" for young and adult job seekers providing for sandwich courses or programs which facilitate integration (i.e. : validation of learning or vocational skills analysis).

They also foresee several mechanisms for SMEs to facilitate the access to training.

In a regulation on August 2nd, 2005, the French State decreases the levels of contributions for the enterprises with 10 to 19 employees (from 1.60 to 1.05% of the firm's gross annual wage bill: 0.9% for the training plan and 0.15% for the DIF and professionalization).

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING

Initial entry training programs include apprenticeships and work-study programs for people aged 16-25. Since 2004, one employment contracts has been created at the industrial partners' initiative. Professionalization contracts for those under the age of 26 aim to provide training that prepares young people for a specific job or type of skills. Training is usually provided in the form of work-study contracts combining general, professional, and technological coursework provided by training organisations and the acquisition of professional skills through direct experience with one or more jobs in the workplace. Throughout the duration of these contracts young people have employee status and are paid a salary set at a percentage of the minimum legal wage (30 to 75 %) and according to their age.

Personalised educational workshops (*ateliers pédagogiques personnalisés* or *APP*) are designed to ensure that anyone no longer in the school system has access to basic general and technological training. The workshops constantly respond to requests in an individualised manner by offering short training programs (80 hours on average). In 2004, 467 such workshops provided training for 200,000 people including 8,500 people using the distance learning. 68% of the trainees are job seekers. (source : DARES - Ministère de l'éducation)

REGIONAL COUNCIL TRAINING VOUCHERS

Since 1999, responsibility for work-study programs and authority over the resulting qualifications has been in the hands of the regions. Several regional councils have started training voucher programs. The vouchers are designed for individuals belonging to specific populations such as young people, apprentices, and job seekers. Each voucher represents one or more hours of training. A voucher book is offered to jobseekers that need further training in a foreign language or computer sciences to find a job.

ADULTS AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

More and more adults who wish to go back to school are enrolling in universities. In 1999 public institutions of higher education (*conservatoire national des arts et métiers* or *CNAM* network, other universities and affiliated schools) provided services to 410,000 trainees including 125,200 company employees as part of continuing training programs. Universities also trained 40,300 job seekers and 226,700 people who enrolled at their own initiative. The possibilities created by the credit for professional experience program (since 1985) and by the job experience validation program (since 2002) have contributed to the increase in enrolments.

Some towns may offer courses for any individual residing within their geographic boundaries. The most prominent example is that of the City of Paris, which has been providing courses since 1820. These “Adult Municipal Courses” (CMA), run by an entirely distinct division within the City of Paris’ Educational Affairs Department, offers coursework toward general learning diplomas, such as the lower secondary school *Brevet*, and the various baccalaureates. The training sessions also prepare participants for vocational diplomas, like the CAP, the BEP and the vocational baccalaureates. They also offer an opportunity to learn or further one’s knowledge in a variety of areas. Many of the training programmes lead to ability certificates, awarded on the basis of an exam held at the end of the training session by the CMAs. The adult municipal courses are constantly being adapted to suit the needs of their target population. Today, the CMAs encompass 143 subject areas, taught at 345 levels to 30 000 participants.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Various types of teachers and trainers correspond to the various streams and systems of the French vocational training system, and their recruitment, training and career paths differ according to the relevant activity. As a first step and with a view to greater clarity, the terminology applicable to the French context will be explained:

IN INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

- The teacher (or lecturer) is an educator working in the formal education system: the school (primary and secondary school) and university environment, whatever the level of teaching concerned.
- The apprentice master is an employee responsible for training a young apprentice within the company.

For the most part (90%), teachers are civil servants, and their status and rank is determined by national entrance examinations for admission to the profession and regulated by the state. Teachers then teach the same discipline throughout their career. There are two categories of teachers:

- Teachers in mainstream education. Their entrance examination is based on academic knowledge in a particular discipline (such as history, mathematics, French, etc.).
- Teachers in vocational and technical education. Their entrance examination is based on their professional knowledge and on previous professional experience in the relevant trade (accounting, hotel management, cabinet-making, etc.).

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IN CONTINUING TRAINING

The trainer is a professional engaged in vocational training activities, inside or outside the company and, in general, in the private training market. More precisely, he/she is an educator of adults.

Other players are involved in the training process: consultants, training managers in training centres or within a company, tutors within a company, and other “facilitators”. Their status is not covered by the regulations, and is primarily a question of private law.

There is no national regulation governing the status of trainers or other training professionals. A large majority of trainers are private contractors, working full- or part-time. They are selected on the basis of their qualifications and/or skills and professional experience in a particular sector.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

(Please see attached the table on different types of Teacher's training in IVET [Table 1](#))

TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

INITIAL TRAINING

Most teachers are trained in the University Teacher Training Institutes (IUFM), as well as by distance learning (CNED) or in one of the four ‘*écoles normales supérieures*’ (ENS) or in certain universities or private institutions.

The minimum level of qualification required before taking the vocational and technical education entrance examination is Bac + 3, although Bac + 5 is preferred. A university doctorate is the equivalent of Bac + 8, and is sufficient for teaching at a University.

TRAINING AT IUFM MAY LAST TWO YEARS:

The first year covers preparation for the external or internal recruitment examination, with admission based on case file and interview.

If successful in the examination, the second year covers, alternately, professional, theoretical and practical training, at the end of which the student teacher receives a certificate and becomes a civil servant.

IN SERVICE CONTINUING TRAINING FOR TEACHERS RELATES TO ACADEMIC SKILLS

- in initial training, can take part in “Summer Universities” (one or two week seminars) arranged at national level by the Ministry and in training courses organised in each academy by the IUFMs (University Teacher Training Institutes).
- Since 1998, the IUFMs who have signed a contract of agreed objectives with the rector organise the continuing training of teachers, by means of internships of specific sessions, 5 days a year throughout their time in service.
- It is possible to take a sabbatical for training, but this is rarely used.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS

There are few trainers who provide initial training (scarcely 10%) and they are mainly selected on the basis of specific qualifications that are suffering from a shortage of qualified teachers.

Professionals are therefore contracted in areas such as accounting or civil engineering, as well as in the arts, applied arts and design.

Very often they come directly from their area of activity, with no prior training before they take up their posts.

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN APPRENTICESHIP

Teachers are often ex-tradesmen and women, experts in the field they are teaching (baker, engineer), they may be employed on a contract (full- or part-time) in the Apprentice Training Centre, or they may be self-employed.

They must have a certificate of “non-opposition to teaching”, issued by a national apprenticeship inspector.

The regions are responsible for apprenticeship and they establish and fund teacher training programmes for Apprentice Training Centres, especially in relation to the management of placements in the workplace. These training plans are developed at the regional level, and vary from region to region, depending on the objectives and priorities determined by the regions.

THE APPRENTICE MASTER

The status of “apprentice master” is not governed by law, and no specific training or qualification process is required (including the title of “confirmed apprentice master” created in 1997). It is a function performed by the employer (in a very small company), which is secondary to his/her usual occupation, or else by an employee appointed by the employer. The apprentice master is chosen from volunteers among the qualified employees, according to their diplomas, professional experience, and a level of qualification at least equivalent to that for which the apprentice is being prepared. He/she is directly responsible for the apprentice’s training, and provides a link to the apprentice training centre. He/she must be at least 18 years old, and must provide full character references.

TUTORS IN THE WORKPLACE (PROFESSIONALIZATION CONTRACTS)

The function of tutor does not have any equivalent in law, and requires no training or qualification. It is a function carried out by an employee appointed by the employer that is secondary to his/her usual occupation. The tutor is chosen from volunteers among the qualified employees, according to their diplomas, professional experience and a level of qualification at least equivalent to that for which the apprentice is being prepared.

However, given the vital role played by tutors in the quality of alternating training, the public authorities strongly encourage employers to send tutors for training: tutor training can then be financed by joint collecting bodies, up to a limit of 40 hours. This training mainly consists of providing an understanding of the regulations governing alternating training, and providing the basis for the development of a training programme and its evaluation.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

Table 1: Different types of teachers and trainers in CVET				
DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET				
PLACE OF WORK	TYPE OF TRAINERS	RECRUITMENT	TRAINING	
			INITIAL	CONTINUING
Private training centres or companies	Training manager For advice, consultant, expert, coach Trainer, expert in the subject	Recruited on the university bases of graduation and professional experience Recruited on the basis of professional experience and knowledge. Many of them work are casual trainers	Non compulsory Training takes place either inside the company or in private or public training centers.	Non compulsory Many packages available organised by regional authorities
Public sector training bodies				
Ministry of education GRETA	Civil servant trainers (non-tendered) temporary trainers	Recruitment through competitive exam+ previous professional experience Professional experience	Governed by IUFM (see table 1)	
Ministry of agriculture	Qualified agricultural teachers or casual staff			
AFPA (Association for adult Vocational training)	Trainers	Experimented professionals specialized in a specific sector	compulsory	

Trainer is the generic term for anyone involved in continuing training. Many of them do not have a specific teacher/trainer diploma.

The trainer is a teacher who operates in the field of continuing training. He/she trains young people and adults who have left the school or university system, in a training centre or in the workplace. There are very few trainers who only work with young people: the relevant centres tend to mix the user groups for training, and bring people together according to their level of training rather than their age.

Many of them work as casual trainers in companies or training centres on the basis of the expertise they are able to provide due to their principal activity.

INITIAL TRAINING

Since there is no specific status for the trainer except for that provided by the AFPA, (Association for adults vocational training, the main operator of the French ministry in charge of employment), there is no specific initial

training for trainers in continuing training. Bodies or enterprises who employ them, may nonetheless arrange specific training.

For example, AFPA arranges basic 4 to 12 week modules, for all its trainers, to enable them to learn to teach their own subject area, using reference bases.

The major private training networks, profit- or non-profit making, also have an internal training facility that aims to provide both familiarity with the culture of the institution as well the attainment of specific skills.

Certain large companies arrange internal training for their trainers, focusing more on specific professional teaching aspects to supplement their technical expertise.

CONTINUING TRAINING

It is difficult to provide a national overview of the continuing training available for trainers: the major institutions that dispose of a national trainers' network (Education and Agriculture ministries, the AFPA, Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Chambers of Trade, private education federations, large companies, private adult training networks) fund a national programme for training of trainers for their own staff. These programmes involve only the staff of these institutions. They are often supplemented by training courses organised at the regional level, for adaptation or development of trainers according to local needs.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

France has implemented a number of programmes to anticipate needs in the areas of qualification and skills:

- The General Planning Commission carries out studies to gauge developments in trade areas and qualifications. A "Trade and Qualification Forecasting Study" was delivered to the Prime Minister in December 2002. It deals with the short- and medium-term changes in labour resources in France, as well as with the impact of ICTs on work methods and professional mobility.
- Additional forecasting studies are carried out in each broad business sector and occupational category, from time to time, at the request of the Ministry of Education. The latest studies took place in 2001 and led to a forecasting report on "Employment and Training in 2010".
- The Foresight Study Contracts developed by the public authorities in late 1988 and renamed "Forecasting Study Contracts" in 1993, help provide an overview of the economic, technological and social changes that a given sector might undergo. In 2005, these contracts disappeared and have been replaced by the EDEC (development agreement for the employment and the skills - engagement de développement de l'emploi et des compétences).

The State, the representative organisations within a trade sector and one or more external operators take part in the study, which is intended to help better anticipate changes.

They generally involve three phases: diagnostics, possible change scenarios and recommended actions. Between 1988 and 2005, more than 50 contracts have been signed in industry and the services sector, with the latest covering fisheries, the non-profit social and medical-social sector, aeronautics and plastic-works.

The Regional Training and Employment Observatories were set up through the planning contracts drawn up with the regions, starting in 1989. They bring together a number of different offices at the regional level: the Regional Council, Ministerial departments in charge of employment and training, departments at the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, departments under the Ministry of National Education, and sometimes consular chambers and industrial partners.

Their role is to produce an overview of all information relating to employment and training and to enable forecasting on trades and qualifications at the regional level.

The regional observatories of professions and qualifications (observatoires régionaux des métiers et des qualifications) were created by the law of May, the 4th 2004. These observatories are managed by the sector organisations (social partners) to produce diagnostics on employment and training and forecast the future needs in their own sector.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

By overhauling and developing new vocational diplomas, France will ensure that lifelong training pathways run smoothly.

Since September 2002, the CAP, the most frequently awarded vocational diploma, has been set up units, like the vocational Baccalaureate, the vocational certificate and the advanced technical certificate. Some units can be shared by several different CAPs. The system is now such that it allows exemption from certain tests for those who want to work toward an additional diploma at the same level.

France's vocational diplomas, which are awarded by the Ministry for Vocational training, have also been reorganised into vocational skills units, so as to enable students to learn in modules and to benefit from job experience validation more easily.

The first "Trade secondary schools" were established in December 2001. They offer all of the various training paths connected with a given trade or set of related trades, from CAP level to higher education, and are open to all types of students (those still in the educational system, apprentices, young people, adults working under alternating work-study contracts, and continuing trainees).

A large number of partnerships have been launched between the professional bodies and the trade branches or enterprises, to further continuing training.

Specific actions have been carried out as part of this effort, including: the creation of a new forecasting tool on training programmes leading toward diplomas in the food industry; the establishment of a resource centre on automobile trades; and exchanges between teachers and professionals from the construction industry. 71 "engineers for a new approach to schooling" were sent out from their enterprises on assignment to run over 100 projects in 18 school districts (on such topics as technological platforms, preparation for entry into the job market, ICTs, etc.)

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT

The main ministries that award vocational diplomas or certificates have set up advisory vocational commissions, in charge of looking into how new certifications can be created or overhauled. These commissions call upon the advice of professionals, while also basing their work on forecasting studies carried out in their respective sectors.

The *Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives* - CPCs – [The advisory vocational commissions] bring together all of the industrial partners from a given sector to create new certifications or overhaul existing ones.

The CPCs are composed of for collegiate bodies: employers, employees, public authorities and qualified eminent figures.

The diploma design or overhaul process includes the following elements:

An analysis phase, during which studies are undertaken to determine whether it would be appropriate to create a new diploma.

It also includes the elaboration of reference guidelines on the trade activities, intended as a 5-year forecast on the main activities involved in jobs that are likely to be performed by the future diploma-holders.

Since school year 2000, *ICT Technologies de l'information et de la communication* [information and communications technologies] have been gradually introduced into the curricula at the primary and secondary levels.

Other changes in pedagogy include: 1 700 pilot establishments and schools having experimented innovative ways of using *ICT* or promoting widespread use of these technologies in teaching are described in a database with multi-criteria search functions. (www.educnet.education.fr/pilotes)

The new programs designed to introduce a variety of knowledge acquisition modes for students (multi-disciplinary activities in lower secondary school, individual practical work in secondary school, multi-disciplinary vocational projects in vocational secondary schools) rely greatly on the use of *ICT*.

The newly-established computer science and Internet certificate (B2i) is also apart of this process: This certificate attests to the fact that its holder knows how to use *ICT* in an independent and reasoned manner to read and produce documents, look up information that can be of use to him and communicate using an electronic mail system.

The school-based B2i currently consists of a Level I, intended mainly for elementary users in lower secondary school. Established in 2000-2001, it was extended to all lower secondary schools in 2002 and will be offered in all schools as early as 2003. A GRETA B2i (offered by groups of national establishments under the national education system open to adult trainees) has also been designed for adults, and an *ICT* skills certificate is currently being prepared for higher education.

Teaching media have been created in several disciplines in college (Junior high school) and lycée (Senior high school) classes in particular in: visual arts, economics & management, physical education and sport, mathematics, physics-chemistry, life and earth sciences.

The production of educational media may be issued with the Ministry of National Education seal of approval. This seal of approval described as "Recognised to be of Educational Benefit" [French acronym RIP] is granted on completion of a specific procedure.

In 2004, out of the 154 products presented to the multimedia commission, 74 products received the RIP seal (the largest number being in languages, life and earth sciences and in history-geography). The RIP commission asked for 23 of the products to be amended and refused applications for 57.

L'espace numérique des savoirs – ENS [Digital Expertise Space] set up in 2003. The digital knowledge space is a portal of digital resources that are free from usage rights. Ministry of National Education bought them to permit to a panel of 1.500 schooling establishments in a first experimentation stage to use this portal. The acces to ENS is secured. People at the outside of schooling establishments don't have access to this portal. 45 public and private publishers provide educational tools online via this portal. These tools are available for schooling establishments at the following addresses:

www.cns-edu.net

www.kiosque-edu.com/frontoffice/pages/Accueil.aspx

In tertiary education, the certification of proficiency in the Technologies de l'information et de la communication Information and communication technologies ICT has been introduced

The *certificat informatique et internet- C2i* [informatique and internet certifications] were introduced in universities in 2000: at graduate level (3 years of higher education):

- the level 1 C2i certifies the proficiency in the competencies needed by the students to conduct the activities required by university course;
- The level 2 C2i certifies the competencies connected with the professional usage of ICT. It has been adapted to certain sector such as teaching and law and health.

The *Universités numériques thématiques -UNT* [thematic digital Universities] were set up at the initiative of the government en 2000 in order to bring together by theme universities and higher education establishments which themselves have developed *campus numériques* [digital campuses] to create some “*Pôles d'excellence*” [excellence centre]. Until 2007, it is planned to set up 10 international UNT.

There are currently five UNT:

- the *université médicale virtuelle francophone –UMVF-* [Frenchspeaker virtual medical University],
- the *université numérique juridique française - UNJF* [French legal digital University]
- the *université numérique ingénierie et technologie –UNIT* [technological, ingenior digital University]
- the *AUNEGE (économie-gestion)*
- the *UNED – Sustainable development and environmental digital University*

This entails a national offer of *Formation Ouverte A Distance - FOAD* [Open and distance learning] which is of a high standard and is competitive on the international market.

Two universities are being elaborated:

- *l'UOH l'université ouvertes des humanités* [open humanities university]
- *Le staps* about sport and physical activities

One more is being studied on basic sciences : physic, chimie, mathematic.

On average, The UNT unit about twenties universities : ones gives information to accurate international visibility (as UNIT) and the others give training (as UMVF) and award diploma

There are currently 64 digital campuses which have been developed since 2000 by universities and higher education institutions.

They offer almost 1.200 course units split over six main areas: multi disciplinary science & technology, medicine & health, engineering & training, human and social sciences, law-economics management. They offer a total of 69.700 hours per traineeship of training.

The main partners of the digital campuses are:

- the *Centre national d'enseignement à distance - CNED* [National Centre for Distance Learning]
- 50 businesses
- 48 associations

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

France's vocational certification system stands out for the predominance of national diplomas awarded under the State's responsibility, primarily through the Ministry for National Education. The Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Culture, Defence, the Sea and Labour have also established certificates and diplomas in their respective fields, or to satisfy the requirements of specific stakeholders, in particular job-seekers or employees looking to enter a new trade, where the latter is concerned. The juries presiding over the examinations are composed mainly of teachers and professionals.

Vocational qualifications can also be created by consular bodies and by certain private establishments.

Lastly, vocational qualification certificates are established by the industrial partners in each of the trade branches.

Formal training generally leads to a diploma, degree or branch certificate, facilitating the learner's insertion in the labour market.

Certifications for this category are listed in the national directory of vocational certifications or RNCP (*répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*) and are valid nationwide.

Certifications are created and/or updated regularly by the State and social partners, to take account of labour market needs, after a desirability study, based on long-range, quantitative and qualitative analysis. They give particular attention to the recruitment procedures and prospects for employment in the short and medium term.

Overall, the French labour market is not strictly regulated. Except where certain professions – e.g. doctors, dentists, lawyers, pharmacists, psychologists, veterinary surgeons, midwives, nurses and architects – are concerned, employers are free to define their own recruitment criteria. However, a large number of professions may be exercised only by persons who have been granted appropriate authorisation or cards (journalism, property trading, etc.). Since the passing of the law of 6 July 1996 on the development and promotion of commerce and the trades, certain activities may be exercised only by persons with appropriate vocational qualifications or by those under their actual control. Examples include hairdressers, painters and plumbers in the trades, and artistic agents, notaries and chartered accountants in the service sector.

For IVET qualifications, the diploma programmes are divided into general subjects, technical subjects and on-the-job training. Vocational diplomas are arranged into general and vocational certification credits. Each examination includes one or more cumulative credits.

The students are evaluated by an examination panel, composed of an equal number of teachers and professionals. They are evaluated based on written, oral and hands-on examinations. The certification guidelines are set out at the national level, as are the curricular, types of exams and coefficients. However, each school district (when the Ministry of National Education is the authority) or region (when the Ministry of Agriculture is the authority) sets out the content of the examinations.

0802 - ACCUMULATING, ACCREDITING AND VALIDATING NON-FORMAL/INFORMAL LEARNING

The law of 22 July 1992 on validation of professional experience introduced a system of dispensations for credits leading to qualifications where such are awarded by the Education and Agriculture Ministries. These conditions have been extended to cover all certifications recognised at national level and included in the national directory of certifications (see section 803) as a result of the social modernisation law of 17 January 2002.

The social modernisation law states that any person with a least three years' paid or voluntary experience may be granted part or all of a professional certification from the national certifications directory (diplomas, degrees or certificates) on the basis of his experience.

This competency-evaluation procedure is organised by the authorities, ministries or other bodies with responsibility for awarding certifications. The evaluation may be conducted based on the contents of the application or on a real or simulated work situation. The validation is decided by a board composed of teachers and professionals.

For secondary-level qualifications, dispensations or examination postponements are authorised by Ministries, which, in the regions, are responsible for organising examinations.

Concerning higher education, individual universities examine candidates' entry applications.

RECOGNITION BY THE LABOUR MARKET

Validation of experience is relatively recent in France. A study conducted by Céreq in 2001 for the Ministry of Education shows that people applying for validation of professional experience obtain additional qualifications in order:

- to enhance their careers, gain promotion or change branches,
- to obtain recognition of their "value" as a mean of officialising their expertise levels in order to reduce the risk of unemployment.

It is not known yet if Validation of experience has allowed employees to have career growth.

0803 - IMPACT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION

0804 - FACILITATING EU MOBILITY

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

France's situation where information, guidance and counselling are concerned is characterised by a great deal of variety and complexity in the services offered to its users.

The large number of information, guidance and counselling services relies on the different types of groups targeted (school-aged students, young people, adults, the unemployed, women, the handicapped), the types of services offered (individual counselling, skills reviews, group or individual services, training, information), the qualification levels of the practitioners (counsellors, psychologists, teachers, informers, social workers) the type of status held by the structure (public, private, associative, commercial, professional), and the type of funding used (national, local, joint employer-employee organisations, enterprises, users).

Nonetheless, even though the State currently tends to delegate, outsource and entrust other parties (the semi-public sector, the associations and even the private sector) with some of these actions, it still handles the bulk of information, guidance and counselling activities and plays a large role in their funding.

Two of the Ministries are particularly involved, namely those in charge, respectively, of education and employment. The Ministry of National Education's services are targeted mainly toward the school-aged population (students of lower and upper secondary schools as well as university students). Its activities take place inside schooling establishments, but also in information and guidance centres (CIO). The services are offered mainly by specialists - psychologist-guidance counsellors - but are also handled by non-specialists, namely the students' main teachers. In addition, the Ministry is responsible for a major organisation in charge of producing information on studies and professions - the National Office for Information on Instruction and Professions (ONISEP).

The services offered by the Ministry in charge of Labour are involved more with adults actively seeking work, entry into a new field, mobility or training. Its activities are based in the various national agencies for employment (Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi ANPE), which covers the whole of the country and are staffed by employment counsellors. In addition, this Ministry is responsible for an organisation that provides information on continuing training: (Centre pour le Développement de l'information sur la formation permanente - Centre INFFO.)

Alongside the two Ministries, a large number of public and semi-public organisations, private organisations and associations of all kinds have come into being over the last twenty years. The standing reception, information and guidance centres (Permanence d'Accueil d'Information et d'Orientation), and the local missions (Missions Locales MLs) for young people between ages 16 and 25 with difficulties entering the mainstream and the job market were set up by the public authorities. Other organisations include the inter-institutional skills review centres (Centre Interinstitutionnel Bilan de Compétences CIBCs) for employees and job-seekers looking to define their career or training development plan, funded partially by the State; and the private organisations, like "L'Etudiant", which informs secondary school and university students.

Employer organisations play a minor but growing role in the information and counselling landscape. That being said, they participate indirectly in the schemes through the charges they pay to the various unemployment subsidy funds, as well as through funding for continuing training, the apprenticeship tax and the leave time granted to employees who wish to undergo skills review or benefit from training to foster mobility.

Consular organisations also play a role: these include the chambers of commerce and industry, the chambers of trade (craftsmen), the chambers of agriculture, and the private enterprises that build up information and counselling services. Some of the more noteworthy efforts including the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry's guidance service, the national information and vocational guidance bureaux (BIOPs) and centres that assist in decision-making on alternating work-study programmes and apprenticeships (CAD).

Employee labour organisations play a very limited role in organising and funding information, guidance and counselling services.

They act only as an advisory body on career management and salary levels for professionals involved in guidance.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

- Information and guidance centres (*Centre d'Information et d'Orientation CIOs*) mainly address students in lower and upper secondary schools, as well as university students, but are also open to adults.
- The National Agency for Employment (*Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi ANPE*) is open to adults, regardless of whether they are job-seekers or employed.
- The local missions (*Missions Locales MLs*) and the (*Permanence d'Accueil, d'Information et d'Orientation PAIOs*) are qualified to assist young people from 16 to 25, who have left the school system without qualifications or with obsolete qualifications.

For the purposes of the French employment market, "adults" are defined as those who are above age 26 and who have exited the initial training system.

Public employment services, with ANPE as its centrepiece, are by far the main provider of information services for adults. ANPE has modernised over the last five years in order to standardise its "service offerings", move closer to fulfilling its "customers'" requirements, and approach enterprises to present customer profiles (in particular to assist job-seekers with no qualifications).

Larger continuing training organisations might include guidance, counselling and positioning services all in one. For instance, the National Conservatory for Arts and Trades (*Conservatoire Nationale des Arts et Métiers CNAM*), which operates as a public educational service and, most of all, the National Association for Adult Vocational Training (*Agence pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes AFPA*), are both considered part of public labour services, and work psychologists can offer people applying for vocational training sessions a situational review at one of the organisations before guiding them in a given direction.

The employer-employee structures that manage insurance funds for training, in particular the Individual Training Leave Management Fund (*Fonds pour la gestion du congé individuel de formation FONGECIF*), manage a large body of documents, inform their members of their rights and advise them on the steps to take.

France's system stands out in that it has developed a special service offering for managers, run by the Association for Managerial Employment (*Agence Pour l'Emploi des Cadres APEC*), a joint employer-employee association, throughout the country (45 centres): the association offers counselling, personal reviews, assistance in re-entering the job market, information, a journal, and online services, to name but a few.

Certain associations, like *Retravailler* (re-entering the job market), originally founded to help female job-seekers also offer help through guidance and market-entry techniques.

A more marginal initiative is that of the Information and Orientation (*CIOs - Centres d'Informtion et d'Orientation*) Centres and Information and Documentation Centres for Young People (*Centre d'Information de Documentation de la Jeunesse CIDJs*), which are also open to adults looking for information or counselling.

Experiments of limited geographical scope, bringing together services from several institutions on a "walk-in" basis are currently developing: these include special "houses" offering information on continuing training and employment (*MIFE*) and Paris' Trade Metropolis (*Cité des métiers*), an information and counselling area run by professionals in guidance for students and workers, training, employment and entrepreneurship (*AFPA*, *ANPE*, *CIBC*, *CIO*, etc.). Paris' *Cité des métiers* is based on the network concept which, though difficult to implement within the French environment, especially taking into account how many different players are involved, seems to be better suited to reality than a "single-counter" system.

The social cohesion's law on January 18th 2005, created the "Maison de l'Emploi" (employment's houses look like the job centre in Great Britain). These centre are located in a local area (region or department) and as well as the *Cité des métiers*, bring together services from several institutions on a "on stop shop" basis. In the same place, young people and adults, employees and unemployed people can find guidance and counselling with *ANPE*, *Missions locales*, *OPCA*, local authorities representatives, and so on.

Commonly-used methods:

- Tests, questionnaires,
- Trade forums,
- Guidance groups,
- Individual interviews,
- Resource centres: *CIO*, documentation and information centres (*CDI*) (in schooling establishments), information and documentation centres for young people and youth information stands (*Point Information Jeunesse- PIJ*), (*Service Universitaire Information et d'Orientation - SCUJO*),
- Training sessions in the workplace
- Assistance from local figures (on a case-by-case basis).

Methods being developed: Educational methods in guidance,

- Documents on CD-Rom to carry out a personal review and begin a job search,
- Software to help in guidance.

Finally, State, regional authorities and social partners wished to create a national portal on guidance to help everyone to information on IVET and CVET. The main guidance's organisations are involved in this project. The portal was launched on June the 30rd 2006 and will be finished (with all the information) on December 2007. www.orientation-formation.fr

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Out of the 30 000 positions held by people responsible for guidance and counselling in France, 5 000 are statutorily psychologists: the psychologist-guidance counsellors and the directors of public education service Information and Guidance Centres; and work psychologists from the Association for adult vocational training (AFPA), within the public education service (source : Ministry of employment, social cohesion and housing).

The other counselling professionals are from varying professional backgrounds.

In addition to the work carried out by personnel specialising in guidance counselling, occasional services are provided by people whose main job is not in this area. These can be professors, socio-cultural personnel, specialised instructors, etc. Most of them have not received specific training in counselling. Lastly, volunteer workers from associations can also offer their services.

In France, three main types of training in guidance counselling professions can be distinguished:

- Higher full-time university instruction that is specific to a single profession: training for psychologist-guidance counsellors who wish to work in public guidance services.
- Higher alternating instruction specific to a single profession: this is the type of training offered to counsellors who wish to work at the National Agency for Employment.
- University training that leads to employment opportunities in the field of guidance for workers and human resources, as in the *Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées* (Advanced Specialised Studies Diploma): Psychology and vocational guidance practices, offered by *Institut National d'Etudes sur le travail et l'orientation professionnelle I-NETOP*). Research is also part of the coursework for the *Diplôme d'études approfondies DEA* (In-Depth Studies Diploma): the psychology of work and transitions, offered at Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers CNAM/INETOP, and integrated into the Multi-Partner Doctoral School "Enterprises, Labour and Employment" (CNAM/Université de Marne-la-Vallée). This *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA)* can lead to a Doctorate in Psychology.

Alongside these three forms of instruction, there exist continuing training actions and tutorial-based training programmes, or training offered by public organisations like AFPA, an association that operates under the Ministry of Labour or the Centre Académique de Formation Continue CAFOCs (the Ministry for National Education's Academic Centre for Continuing Training) or private organisations.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

The most important reform is about decentralisation of education and training. The decentralisation laws dated 2 March 1982 and 7 January 1983 and, most recently, the law dated 13 August 2004 relative to local freedoms and responsibilities, give the Regional Councils general authority over apprenticeship and continuing vocational training for young and adult job seekers. The law dated 13 August 2004 relative to local freedoms and responsibilities further developed the decentralisation process. Regions have been granted general authority over vocational training for "young people and adults seeking employment or a career change." In practice, this transfer of power concerns qualification-based programmes for adult job seekers formerly handled by the National Association for Adult Vocational Training (*Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes - AFPA*). This transfer of power will also mean a transfer of financing and of public sector employees from the state to the Regional Councils.

The state and companies provide the majority of financing for continuing training. The regions are the third largest source of funding for vocational training.

Table 1: Sources of funding in 2003 (in millions of euros)

	STATE	ENTERPRISES	REGIONS	OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES	HOUSEHOLDS	OTHERS	TOTAL	% OF THE GDP
IVET	67,982	6,471	23,500		12,752	843 (1)	111,300	7.1
CVET	9,633	9,296	2,030	29	656	1,254 (2)	22,898	1.47

(1) Other administrations

(2) Unédic (employment insurance) and others public bodies

Sources : DARES - Budget Plan for 2006 –Ministry of Employment & RERS 2005 -Ministry of Education

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In France, young people follow a common-core curriculum up until fourth year (generally up until the age of fifteen). They are then oriented towards the following tracks:

- General or technological education in a secondary school; this pathway prepares students for high education (58.48% for the 2003-2004 school year)
- Vocational education in a vocational secondary school; this pathway prepares students to earn a vocational diploma (27.54% for the 2003-2004 school year)
- Vocational training thus Apprenticeship or professionalization work-contracts; this training, which alternates classroom study with hands-on experience, also prepares students/employees to earn a vocational diploma (13.98% for the 2003-2004 school year)

In addition, there are “specialised” pathways for at-risk students.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

This type of training is funded by the State, and in particular the Ministry for national education, higher education and research, as well as by the local administrative units, as part of the decentralisation process.

The State remains responsible for:

- determining the various training tracks, establishing national programmes, and the organisation and content of what is taught,
- establishing and granting national diplomas and granting university-level degrees and titles,
- recruiting and managing teaching staff,
- allocating resources earmarked for education,
- monitoring and evaluating educational policies with a view to ensuring that the educational system is consistent.

The State is responsible for the remuneration of teachers and other educational and guidance staff. However, it is the local authorities that are now responsible for investment and operations.

The Regions, with regard to higher secondary education establishments in particular (high schools and regional special education schools or *EREA*s, for example), are responsible for:

- use of the facilities by trainees, food services, housing, and general and technical maintenance, with the exception of the guidance and supervision of students for establishments under regional responsibility,
- recruiting and managing technicians, labourers, and service staff,

- building, renovating, expanding, performing major repairs, equipment, and operations for establishments under regional responsibility.

The regions contribute to functioning costs in secondary schools, agricultural secondary schools and special education institutions. They can also give investment grants to help private technical instruction (technological and vocational secondary schools).

IVT UNDER SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS: APPRENTICESHIP AND ALTERNATING WORK-STUDY PROGRAMMES

The French system offers young people under the age of 26 two possible employment contract-based training paths. The organisation and operation of continuing vocational training for young people aged 16 to 25 were transferred to the regions. The coordination and organisation of apprenticeship programmes is also the responsibility of the regions.

APPRENTICESHIPS

The apprenticeship track is considered a form of initial vocational training and apprenticeship are considered employment. Funding for apprenticeship is covered by the apprenticeship tax (paid by the enterprises), the State (through exemptions from labour charges), as well as by the Regions (through grants for hiring the apprentices, and for operational expenses of the training centres – CFA)).

ALTERNATING WORK-STUDY PROGRAMMES

Alternating training programmes, so-called "alternating" work contract, (professionalization contracts) are financed by companies, the regions, and the State (exemption from mandatory payroll taxes). These contracts, based on alternating periods of work and study, are considered a form of continuing vocational training.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING

STATE-FUNDED GRANTS

The State has set up a grant system to further the objectives set out in its employment policy. Such actions are designed, in particular, to develop consulting to trade branches on the developments in particular trades and qualifications and to promote training in enterprises with fewer than 250 employees (*Engagement de Développement de l'Emploi et des Compétences, EDEC* -- Commitment to expand employment and skills, and furthermore, council and training). In that case, it defines specific criteria or priority actions to that end.

REGION-FUNDED GRANTS

Since 1983, the decentralisation process has been shifting general powers over CVT to the Regions. As a result, alongside the public grants given for training within enterprises, which can be funded jointly by the State and the region (EDEC), the Regions have sovereign powers over special grants to enterprises (e.g., specific measures to fight illiteracy, grants for job-seekers in training programmes through language vouchers, partial coverage of training costs, scholarships, loans at zero interest rates, etc.).

TRAINING OF PUBLIC-SECTOR EMPLOYEES

The state is responsible for the training of public-sector employees. The state must adopt a coordinated vocational training and career development programme similar to policies adopted by private-sector companies that takes into account the specific nature of public service.

Like companies from the private sector, public administration offices are required to set aside resources to fund training for their employees.

Table 1: Expenditure for continuing training of national civil servants in 2003 (million of EUR)

EXPENDITURE FOR CONTINUING TRAINING OF NATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS IN 2003 (MILLION OF EUR)	
Ministry employees	3 017
Of which National Education	1 028.8
Workers in local administrative units	1 304
Hospital employees (non-medical)	639

La Poste	216.09
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Sources : DARES - Budget Plan for 2006 –Ministry of Employment

FUNDING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Corporate funding for training is covered by:

- the mandatory financial contribution required of enterprises,
- partial or full collection of the said contribution by organisations established and run by the social partners,
- the State and the Regions, through the public grants they offer,
- the employees themselves, as they can be asked to contribute to funding their own training.

Where private sector enterprises are concerned, the amount of the contribution and the calculation methods used vary depending on the type of enterprise involved and its staffing levels. The law requires that companies with less than 10 employees have to pay 0.55 % of the gross annual wage bill (MSB) ; companies with 10 to 19 employees 1.05%, and the companies with a minimum of 20 employees, 1.60%. In 2004, the average contribution rate for enterprises amounted to 2.99% of total gross payroll.

It should be noted that certain business sectors have set mandatory contribution levels at a rate higher than the legal minimum, through a joint agreement. The enterprise may decide to fulfil its obligation by paying all or part of its mandatory contribution – to a special body: an approved joint collecting organisation (organisme paritaire collecteur agréé - OPCA), which has authority at the trade or professional segment level. There also exist OPCAs with interprofessional powers (see detailed thematic analysis on financing VET).

The financial participation of companies with more than ten employees is divided up as follows:

- one payment toward financing the training plan,
- one payment intended to cover alternating work-study (professionalization) and the individual training right (droit individuel de formation – DIF ; see theme 5),
- one payment intended to fund individual training leaves.

As regards the financial participation of companies with fewer than ten employees, it is divided into:

- one payment to fund the training plan,
- one payment intended to cover alternating work-study (professionalization) and the individual training right (droit individuel de formation – DIF ; see session 5).

Table 2: Developments in spending for private-sector enterprises (in million EUR)						
YEARS	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003
FUNDING	8 489	8 533	9 290	9 200	9 195	9 296

Sources : DARES - Budget Plan for 2006 –Ministry of Employment

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

A large number of training actions have been set up by the public authorities (with funding from the State and/or the Regions – see 1002), and the social partners who manage the unemployment insurance scheme (Unédic - Union nationale pour l'emploi dans l'industrie et le commerce - National Union for Employment in Industry and Trade at the national level and by ASSEDIC at the local level) in order to foster re-entry into the job market for job-seekers.

TRAINING FOR JOB-SEEKERS

The *UNEDIC* (the National Union for Employment in Business and Industry) agreement dated 18 January 2006 relative to the return to employment and unemployment benefits, which was signed by labour, management, and government representatives, established a national inter-professional unemployment benefit system designed to promote the return to work of the involuntarily unemployed.

Job-seekers who are eligible for unemployment insurance, receive subsidies in the form of remuneration. If they decide to participate in training, a special subsidy (*allocation de retour à l'emploi-formation - AREF*) is offered to them during the training period. The said subsidy is funded by the unemployment insurance scheme (UNEDIC).

Lastly, a flat remuneration is paid to job-seekers who are not eligible for the conventional unemployment insurance programme, when they participate in State- or regionally-funded training programmes or are eligible for measures funded by the FNE. In 2004, this funding by the State represented 312.27 million of euros (source DARES).

Table 1: Structure of expenditure for job-seekers in 2003 (in million EUR)

STRUCTURE OF EXPENDITURE FOR JOB-SEEKERS IN 2003 (IN MILLION EUR)	
State	1 542
Regions	1 474.6
UNEDIC	218

Sources : DARES - Budget Plan for 2006 –Ministry of Employment

Relations between management and labour representatives via *UNEDIC* and the state take the form of the co-financing of remuneration and social protection for training participants. The partnership between management and labour representatives and government authorities is also visible through the state and regional regulation of training programmes eligible for *AREF* benefits. Training costs (registration fees, transport, lodging) may be covered by the state or the regions as part of this programme.

MAINSTREAMING SYSTEMS THAT INCLUDE A TRAINING PERIOD

Mainstreaming systems that include a training period have been set up as part of employment policy. These systems include on-the-job training in companies or special employment contracts. These programmes are financed mainly by the state.

The law dated 18 January 2005, known as the “programming for social cohesion” law, simplified measures designed to promote the entry of job-seekers into mainstream employment. The following types of contracts are now available: “contrat d’avenir”, “contrat d’accompagnement dans l’emploi” and “contrat initiative emploi” (see detailed thematic analysis on financing).

The social partners have also created an alternating work-contract which is funded by the companies’ contribution, as well as the State ((through exemptions from labour charges). The professionalization contract is available to job seekers aged 26 and over and young people trying to enter the job market (for this population, see 1002). The goal of this type of contract is for the employee to obtain a recognised (by the concerned professional branch) qualification or diploma. The contract is for a six to twelve-month period, which may be extended to 24 months in the event of a professional branch agreement for persons who have left the educational system with no recognised qualification or if the nature of the qualification requires a longer training period. The length of the training component is set at 15% of the term of the contract with a ceiling of 150 hours. These minimum levels may be increased through branch agreements.

PROGRAMMES TARGETING SPECIFIC GROUPS

These actions are intended to foster access to training and qualification for certain groups, namely the handicapped, the illiterate, inmates and refugees.

Such actions are funded by the State, the Regions and the ESF as well as public institutions, private and public educational institutions, volunteer organisations, professional organisations, labour unions, family organisations, and companies.

TRAINING FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Law number 2002-73 dated 17 January 2002, known as the “social modernisation law,” established education, training, and career guidance for physically and mentally handicapped minors and adults as a “national obligation” (Article L. 114-1 of the Social and Family Action Code).

In 2004, 43 701 disabled people took part to a training financing by the State (13 822 people), the regions (6 943 people) and AFPA-AGEFIPH (AGEFIPH is a public organisation for the employment of the disabled people) (10 300 people).

TRAINING FOR PRISON INMATES

Literacy programmes are the main form of training offered to prison inmates. The “prison” component of the Mainstreaming, Return to Employment, and Literacy Programme (*Programme insertion, réinsertion et lutte contre l'illettrisme - IRILL*) provides financing for training for prison inmates and, more generally, anyone in the court system. The goal is to provide special consideration for the nature of prison populations. Some 25% of all prison inmates are illiterate and more than 50% have completed only primary-level education.

In 2004, these programmes are financed by the state (6.81 million of euros) and by the European Social Fund (ESF- 4.73 million of euros). All credits allocated to training for prison inmates have been dispersed at the regional level among the 26 regional Departments of Labour, Employment, and Vocational Training (*directions régionales du travail, de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle - DRTEFP*).

TRAINING FOR FOREIGN WORKERS

Actively employed foreign workers have the same rights as other employees as long as they have legal residency.

In addition to the common law provisions concerning access to training, the Fund for Action and Support for Integration and the Fight against Discrimination (*Fond d'action et de soutien pour l'intégration et la lutte contre les discriminations - FASILD*), a government body, designs and implements educational programmes. It also provides full or partial funding for programmes for immigrant and foreign populations living in France run by public and private organisations and local authorities (law number 2001-1066 dated 16 November 2001; Article L. 762-2- of the Social Security Code).

In 2004, this Fund offered a linguistic training to 36 000 interns with a financing of 55.3 millions of euros.

RETRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR EMPLOYEES MADE REDUNDANT

The law dated 18 January 2005, known as the “social cohesion” law, established a new system designed to provide employees with support in the event that they are made redundant.

For companies with fewer than 1000 employees, the employer must offer each employee he plans to make redundant personalised retraining services once the employment contract has been terminated, including mental health services, career orientation and guidance, an assessment of the employee's skills, and training designed to facilitate the return to employment. The employee is considered a vocational training participant for the duration of the personalised retraining programme.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Most of the reforms engaged in France during the last years come within the strategy of Lisbon, targeting a best investment feedback.

The alternance and apprenticeship funding were simplified.

The State wants to make apprenticeship more attractive. It created a system of tax credits for companies that employ apprentices. The amount of the credit is 1600 € multiplied by the number of apprentices employed per year whose contracts were signed a minimum of six months beforehand. The aim of the government is to increase the number of apprentices by 40%. The aim is 500 000 young people by 2009. The increase of the number of employees and the corresponding funding for apprenticeship programmes will be gradual : between 30 000 and 40 000 additional apprentices per year over five years.

In December 2005, the government created a contract of professional transition (*contrat de transition professionnelle CTP*). This will be experimented during 2006. This contract is proposed to the redundant employees in the companies of less than 300 employees. These last ones will sign with a public structure a contract, insuring them a training then the exercise of their professional activity in public bodies or private companies. During this period, the job-seeker will receive remuneration equal to 90 % of his former salary.

In January 2006, the government created two new types of work contracts for young people (less than 26 years old) which both propose a trial period of two years in a permanent work-contract. During this time, the employer can dismiss the employee without any explanation and without redundancy's allocation but only a kind of “severance pay”.

Finally, on January 18th, 2006 the social partners (trade unions and management bodies) signed an agreement relating to the return to employment and to unemployment benefits. This agreement established a national inter-professional unemployment benefit system designed to promote the return to work of the involuntarily unemployed and would be re-negotiated at the end of this year.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The objectives for the education and training systems adopted by the European council in the Bologna and Copenhagen process have served as references for the reform of the french vocational training and education system.

Three major initiatives have been launched:

- The modernisation and reform of the education system is present in the guidance and programming law relative to the future of school which was adopted on 23rd April 2005.
- The implementation, in France, of an education strategy based on lifelong learning by the State and by labour and management representatives that includes the creation of a training's right for each employee.
- The structural reform of education and training institutions as part of the ongoing decentralisation process.

It sets four objectives directly linked to european construction. These objectives are:

- the teaching of modern languages,
- the gender equality,
- the mastery of information and communication technologies,
- the support for at-risk students.
-

IMPROVE BASIC SKILLS (INCLUDING FOR DISADVANTAGED PERSONS SUCH AS YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL PROBABLY DROP OUT OF SCHOOL) - OBJECTIVE 1-2.

Among the 13 objectives put forward in Lisbon, some have already been translated in the french laws system as :

The law of 23rd April 2005 established a common core of skills and knowledge that students must master at the end of the compulsory schooling. The law also put forward a *Programme personnalisé de réussite éducative – PPRE* [personalised program for educational success] for at-risk pupils. This program may be offered at any point during compulsory schooling to pupils experiencing difficulties or who are lacking specific educational skills.

ENSURE ACCESS TO THE TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION ET DE LA COMMUNICATION- TIC [INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES-ICTS] FOR ALL – OBJECTIVE 1.3.

The necessary infrastructures have been developed and the information and communication technologies have gradually been introduced into the lower secondary school and upper secondary school.

The *Brevet Informatique et Internet - B2i* [Informatique and Internet Certificate] was created for pupils and adults and attests a level in the use of *Technologies de l'information et de la communication - TIC* to read and produce documents, search useful information and communicate by electronic mails. – BOEN – Bulletin de l'éducation national n°42 du 23/11/2000 -

There are currently 64 digital campuses, which have been developed since 2000 by universities and other higher education institutes. In total, they offer 1.200 course units.

IMPROVE THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES - OBJECTIVE 3.3.

Since the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the teaching of two foreign languages at the high-school level has been mandatory in all general and technological levels and the *Certificat de Compétences en Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur - CLES* [Higher Education Certificate of Competency in Languages], which is aligned with the common reference framework put forward by the Council of Europe, is currently being tested.

The April 2005 framework and programming law relative to the future of school introduced the teaching of a second modern language starting in the second year of secondary schooling.

IMPROVE THE LINKS WITH THE WORKING WORLD – IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - OBJECTIVE 3.1.

The creation of *lycées des métiers* [profession-based high schools] was designed to meet this dual objective. The schools include educational tracks and training programs relative to a certain profession or professions, grant qualifications from the vocational training certificate to the higher-education level and serve all population from pupils to apprentices to young people/adults on alternating work-study contracts or as part of continuing training programmes. A quality approach was launched as part of a certification procedure based on a thorough set of specifications. As of 31 December 2004, 195 schools had earned the quality certification.

INCREASE MOBILITY AND EXCHANGES - OBJECTIVE 3.4.

Increasing mobility means harmonising national university programs at European level with common diploma (bachelor's/master's/doctorate) as part of the "Sorbonne-Bologna" process initiated by France in 1998.

France has created vocational bachelor's degrees and the master's degree. The country is also working to develop the *System de Transfert de Crédit européen* [European Credit Transfer System – ECTS] This system, which has already been adopted by some engineering schools, is expected to gradually be extended to all educational levels.

During the 2001-2002 school year, 18.150 French students participated in the ERASMUS program and 1.700 students in the Leonardo da Vinci program.

THE IMPLEMENTATION, IN FRANCE, OF AN EDUCATION STRATEGY BASED ON LIFELONG LEARNING. FACILITATE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS FOR ALL - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.

The French continuing vocational training system was overhauled following the signing of a national inter-professional agreement the 20 September 2003 relative to access to lifelong learning employees and the main provisions of the agreement were included in the law of 4 May 2004.

Therefore, as a result of the agreement, starting in 2004, the law mandated a financial contribution to continuing vocational training for all the companies with 10 or more employees. The amount of the contribution varies from 1.5% to 1.6% of total payroll costs for the current year. For companies with fewer than 10 employees, the contribution ranged from 0.25% to 0.40% effective 1 January 2004 and then increased to 0.55% effective 1 January 2005.

This new legal framework sets four measures to increase investment in human resources by coordinating the actions of the State and of the businesses in order to boost the level of involvement of employees. The three most significant measures are:

- The creation of an individual right to training of 20 hours per year for each employee; hours may be accumulated during six years.
- The creation of a *Contrat de professionnalisation* CT [professionalisation contract], a single system that will replace the former alternating work-study contract system. This contract is open to young people who wish to enter the active workforce and to adult job-seekers. The State offers businesses an exemption from mandatory payroll contributions for contracts signed with young people between the ages of 16 and 25 and adults aged 45 or older.
- The State pays a flat-rate grant to companies with fewer than 50 employees in order to offset the cost of replacing employees who have taken leave for the purposes of training (the job rotation system).

RECOGNITION FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In France, the creation of the *Validation des Acquis et de l'Expérience- VAE* [Life and Work Experience] system results from the law no. 2002-73 of January 17th 2002 relating to social modernisation.

It developed and expanded the accreditation of work experience system created in 1992.

The VAE system is an individual right that allows any person in the active workforce to earn partial or full credit to obtain a diploma, a vocational certificate, or other professional qualification (lists have been drawn up by the joint commissions on employment of the different professional branches).

This experience can be a salaried/ non-salaried experience or volunteer experience and must be at least of three years.

The Fonds social européen – FSE – [European Social Fund –ESF] which the purpose is to support structural innovation, has consequences the spectacular development of the VAE system.

In 2004, more than 50.000 applicants initiated the VAE process.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The "common European reference system" initiative, which was picked up by France in the field of vocational education, resulted in a intergovernmental agreement between nine European countries and the various bodies of the European Commission. It enabled the creation, on a trial basis, of common reference systems for two vocational diplomas at the "bac +2" (two years beyond the school leaving certificate) level in the automotive and hospitality sectors.

The EUROPRO certificate, which accompanies a vocational diploma (vocational training certificate, technical school certificate, vocational school-leaving certificate, advanced vocational training certificate or additional distinction), is a means of validating a student's professional experience following a vocational course of study that includes the in-company training required by a given diploma in a European country. Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the European dimension of the profession at an exit interview. Requirements will be broken down into levels ranging from V to III.

The creation of European Summer Universities reflects the desire to promote mobility for students and teachers at the European level. This system concerned 5,000 students and 100 universities in 2002. A number of participating universities have agreed to grant ECTS credits.

Exchanges have been set up with various European Union countries to promote trans-national mobility. Here are just a few of the many initiatives taken:

- The Franco-German Secretariat for Vocational Training Exchanges (*SFA*) sponsored exchanges involving nearly 1,000 apprentices, students and adults in initial and continuing vocational training programmes in 2004. The *SFA*, which is located in Sarrebruck, is financed equally by the French and German governments.
- A Franco-Dutch network for cooperation in higher education has been set up in conjunction with the Netherlands. As part of this system, the recommendation has been made to unite the existing cooperation networks between the two countries in the field of higher education (these include 47 inter-university agreements and 88 agreements between other higher-education institutions and engineering schools). The University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and the Lille-Nord-Pas-de-Calais European University Centre in France were chosen to serve as network coordinators by the higher-education conferences in France and their Dutch counterparts, the *VSNU* and *HBO-Raat*.
- With the United Kingdom, an initiative taken in the autumn of 2001 in collaboration with The Technology College Trust resulted in the creation of 60 twinning programmes between French secondary schools and general and vocational high schools with European sections and British language colleges, which specialise in modern language education.

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THEME 08: Accumulating, transferring and validating learning

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