

VET in France

France has a long tradition in vocational education and training (VET); the foundations of continuing VET were laid in the early 1970s. Initial VET is mainly regulated by the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. Different ministries develop VET qualifications and certificates valid nationally. Vocational training for adults is under the remit of the Ministry of Labour.

A major reform of the vocational training system is under way. It aims to improve VET attractiveness and responsiveness to the labour market by restructuring its governance, funding mechanisms, and apprenticeship provision. Reforming the upper secondary vocational path started in May 2018; it is part of the national skills strategy and will be developed in line with the regional development strategy.

Initial VET (IVET)

VET at upper secondary level

On leaving lower secondary school, generally at age 15, students are steered towards three main upper secondary paths (*lycée*):

- general (ISCED 344) and technological (ISCED 344) three-year programmes leading to a general or technological baccalaureate, providing access to tertiary education. The first year is common to both paths, with technological studies being vocationally oriented in the last two years;
- a vocational programme leading to a vocational baccalaureate (ISCED 354) in three years or a professional skills certificate (ISCED 353 - CAP) in two years. Both qualifications provide direct access to employment, and the training always includes in-company internship. Access to tertiary-level VET programmes in related fields is also possible.

Upper secondary education is governed and financed largely by the Ministry of Education and partly by other ministries (including agriculture and industry).

VET at tertiary level (ISCED 554)

The *lycée*-based higher technician curricula provide a two-year programme leading to the higher technician certificate (BTS). Universities offer a two-year technological university diploma (DUT) designed for entry into the labour market. Students can also decide, on completion, to go on

to a vocational bachelor programme to acquire a vocational qualification at EQF level 6 and progress to master level for a qualification at EQF level 7. Higher education (tertiary level) provides general courses and technical and vocational courses within universities and public or private higher colleges of excellence (*grandes écoles*).

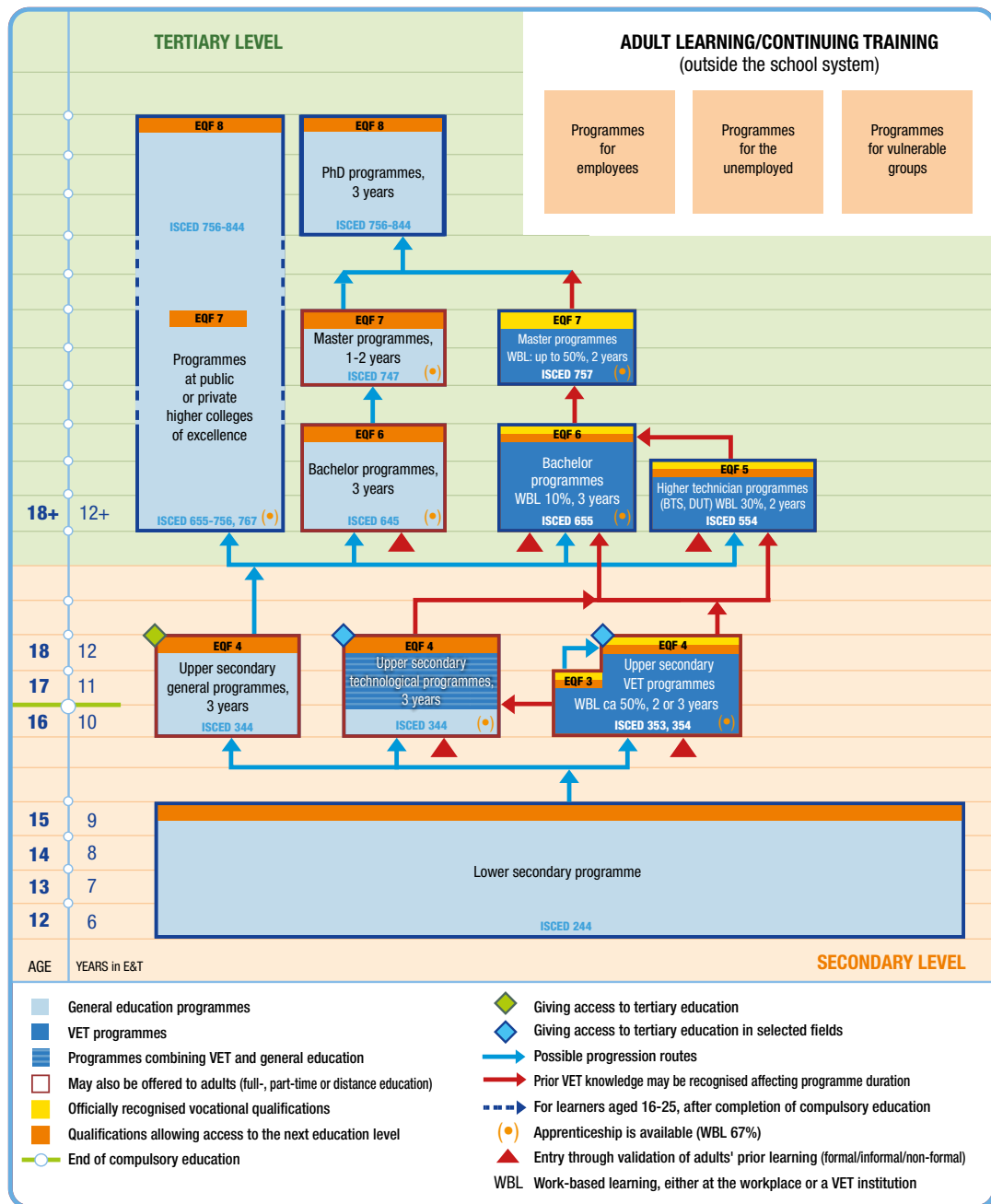
Apprenticeship

This pathway can lead to all vocational certifications registered in the national directory of professional qualifications; it includes all secondary or higher education certifications as well as vocational qualification certificates (CQP), created by the professional branches. Young people on an apprenticeship contract (from one to three years) are considered employees and receive a salary. The course takes place both in the workplace and in an apprentice training centre (CFA). The system is governed by the State (legislation), the regional councils (policy setting) and the social partners (management of the CFAs). Its funding comes from the State, which exempts enterprises from employer contributions for the amount of each apprentice salary, the regional councils (bonuses on recruitment, apprenticeship subsidies) and companies (apprenticeship tax).

Continuing VET (CVET)

CVET applies to those entering the world of work or already in work, both young and adults. The objectives of CVET include promoting professional integration or reintegration; maintaining people in work; and upskilling.

Access and funding procedures for courses vary according to individual status, either as jobseekers or people in employment (private sector employees, public servants, self-employed workers). Training of jobseekers is managed by the regions, and partly by the national agency for employment. Employers (private or public) and the social partners are responsible for training people in employment. The training market is open, with 68 500 training providers and 24.9 million people trained in 2014. Funding for CVET activities (including apprenticeship) represented 1.1% of the national GDP in 2015.



NB: ISCED-P 2011. The French qualifications framework is not linked to European qualifications framework levels 1 and 2.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet France.



Publication:

Spotlight on VET – 2018 compilation:
vocational education and training systems in Europe.

Access the full publication at:

www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4168

Please cite this chapter as:

Cedefop (2019). VET in France. In: Cedefop (2019). Spotlight on VET – 2018 compilation:
vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office, pp. 34-35.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/009>

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