



## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM VET IN FRANCE SYSTEM IN FRANCE

Education and lifelong training are a priority for the Member States of the European Union. The European Council of Lisbon of March 2000 stated that Europe must acquire "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge in the world economy." France has evolved its system of training and professional certification with this European perspective.

Professional graduates of national education, classified into five levels, validate skills and knowledge that can be acquired in three ways.

**Initial vocational training:** follows the general training and prepares young people to work from skilled work to an engineering job.

**Continuing vocational training:** it applies to all categories of adults: employees, job seekers, officials, freelance and entrepreneurs. It allows them to strengthen their competences or to acquire a level of qualification.

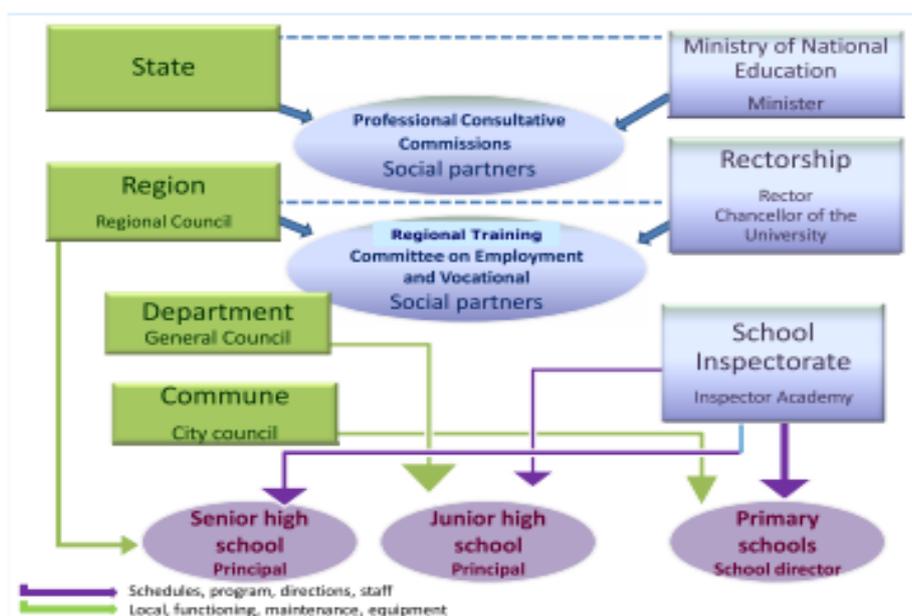
**The validation of acquired experience (VAE):** allows the obtainment of a certification by the recognition of skills and knowledge acquired in the exercise of activities as employed persons or not.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> L'Éducation nationale et la formation professionnelle en France – Les dossiers de l'enseignement scolaire 2010.

Vocational training in France falls under shared responsibility between the State, regions and professional circles.

### Institutional Framework for IVET and organigram



VET in Europe – Country Report, CEDEFOP REFERNET, 2011

### THE STATE:

Initial and continuing vocational training departments are mainly those in charge of National Education, higher education and employment.

For its part, the Ministry of National Education is responsible for initial vocational training in secondary education. In this framework, it has several missions that have been entrusted to it by law:

National Education is involved in the lifelong learning of adults through public schools that can come together and pool their resources to offer a diversified training for adults.

Regarding the Education system in general, the centralized State has kept responsibility over the content of 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.<sup>2</sup>

## **THE REGIONS**

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

Along with the Regions, the State jointly funds certain projects intended for unemployed people and the employees.<sup>3</sup>

The twenty-six regions of France are territorial authorities led by elected representatives. They have jurisdiction for planning and ensuring the consistency of professional education and training. In this context, they define their policies on the basis of their economic and social priorities, in consultation with the State and the social partners.

They thus establish the regional development of professional education and training plan contracts which set, in the medium-term and their region, a coherent programme of development of the training sectors for young people and adults.

## **THE PROFESSIONAL CENTERS:**

They are systematically associated with the implementation of vocational training. Thus,

- They contribute to the development of graduates,
- They participate in the examination juries
- They welcome and train young people in business,
- They participate in the financing of technological and initial professional training by the payment of a tax called 'tax of learning '.

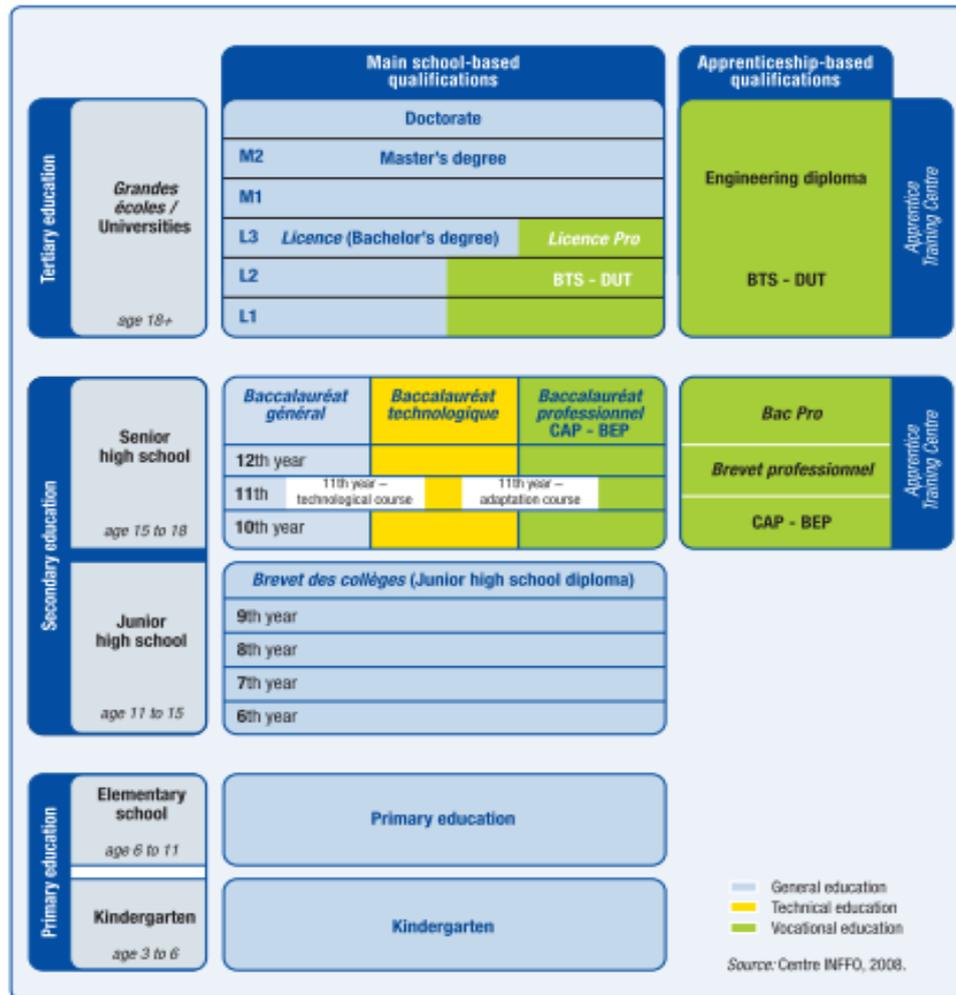
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<sup>2</sup> VET in Europe – Country Report, CEDEFOP REFERNET, 2011

<sup>3</sup> VET in Europe – Country Report, CEDEFOP REFERNET, 2011

## THE STRUCTURES OF THE IVET SYSTEM:

### The French education system



**Bac Pro** Baccalauréat professionnel  
**CAP** Certificate of professional aptitude  
**BEP** Vocational education certificate  
**BTS** Advanced technical diploma  
**DUT** Tertiary technical diploma

**Baccalauréat général**  
**Baccalauréat technique**  
**Baccalauréat professionnel**  
**Brevet professionnel**  
**Licence Pro**

Senior high school diploma – vocational  
 Senior high school diploma – general  
 Senior high school diploma – technical  
 Professional certificate  
 Tertiary vocational diploma

### Initial Vocational training (IVET)

**IVET in schools:** students are steered either towards a general and technical high school to spend three year working for a general or technical diploma or towards a vocational high school to study for a certificate of professional aptitude (CAP) or a vocational education certificate (BEP over two years), or over three years for a secondary vocational diploma (Bac Pro).

**Tertiary Education:** provides students with a choice of general, technological and vocational courses in Universities and Grandes Ecoles, which are centres of educational excellence.

**The apprenticeship:** prepares trainees for all the secondary-level certificates (CAP; BEP; Bac Pro, etc.) for tertiary level qualifications as well as for vocational qualifications registered

with the National Vocational Certification Register (vocational qualifications issued on behalf of the State, certificates of training organizations or chambers of commerce or trade) and certificates created by specific vocational sectors (certificates of professional qualification – CQP). The apprentice has the status of an employee. Training takes place both within the enterprises and in an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation des apprentis –CFA*).<sup>4</sup>

The vocational path offers education linked to businesses and their professions. It enables vocational competencies to be acquired as well as knowledge and expertise in a vocational field.

Studies for vocational examinations can all be undertaken in vocational high schools (lycée professionnel - LP), or through training centres.

The different diplomas are provided by different bodies and institutions:

1- Diplomas issued by the Ministry of National Education or other related ministries at National level,

2-Diplomas issued by Universities at local level.

3- Certificates issued by professional branches at national level<sup>5</sup>

In France, professional diplomas have a national value. They are classified by level, the level V (the lowest level of qualification) to level I (the highest level of qualification)

### 1.1 The French classification of diplomas

| FRENCH CLASSIFICATION | LEVEL OF TRAINING                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ISCED EQUIVALENT CLASSIFICATION<br><i>International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) created by UNESCO</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LEVEL 5               | second stage short vocational diploma (such as the CAP – vocational aptitude certificate)                                                                                                                                                   | 3c                                                                                                                     |
| LEVEL 4               | baccalauréat or vocational certificate (BP) or Mention Complémentaire (MC - additional diploma)<br><i>The access to the training is offered to people already holders of a first diploma of the professional or technological training.</i> | 3B                                                                                                                     |
| LEVEL 3               | baccalauréat + 2 years type of diploma (such as BTS (higher vocational certificate) or DUT (university technological diploma))                                                                                                              | 5B                                                                                                                     |
| LEVEL 2               | bachelor's degree type diploma (such as licence professionnelle - vocational degree)                                                                                                                                                        | 6                                                                                                                      |
| LEVEL 1               | master's type degree (such as an engineering diploma)                                                                                                                                                                                       | 6                                                                                                                      |

<sup>4</sup> Spotlight on VET in France, CEDEFOP, [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.education.gouv.fr/>

The diplomas awarded by the Ministry of National Education lie at V and IV of the French classification levels. They are registered in the national Repertory of professional certifications. There are 450 paths which correspond to different jobs.

### **TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS 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.

The terminology applicable to the French context is:

- 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 trainer. There are several usual expressions to denominate trainers “casual trainers, Speakers, presenters which can correspond to a secondary or unique activity”.
- The apprentice master is an employee directly responsible for training a young apprentice within the company. In relation with the CFA (Centre de Formation d’Apprentis - Apprenticeship Training Centre), the apprentice master’s mission is to contribute to the acquisition of the apprentice’s skills corresponding to the qualification and to the Diploma.
- The tutor is an employee responsible for training a new employee, especially those who are beneficiaries of a special work contract within the company. It is not mandatory for the tutor to accompany the employees in a period of professionalization. However, it is sometimes useful and necessary. Grants of OPCA<sup>6</sup> (*organisme paritaire collecteur agréé*) are planned for companies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> It is an associative joint management structure that collects the financial contributions of the companies falling within its scope in the context of the financing of continuing vocational training of employees in private law firms.

<sup>7</sup> VET in Europe – Country Report, CEDEFOP REFERNET, 2011