

FRENCH TEACHER TRAINING, NQF AND VALIDATION

1. Introduction

Under its 'Europe 2020' jobs and growth strategy, the European Union has set five ambitious objectives – on employment, research and innovation, climate change and energy, education and social inclusion and poverty reduction – to be reached by the end of the decade.

Among other ideas, participating countries should actively encourage vocational education and training (VET) providers to collaborate with innovative enterprises, design centres, the cultural sector and higher education institutions in forming 'knowledge partnerships'. To promote excellence, quality and relevance to the labour market of both initial vocational education and training (I-VET) and continuing vocational education and training (C-VET), I-VET should be made an attractive learning option. In parallel, initial and continuing training for teachers and trainers should continue to be improved.

Initial and continuing training schemes for vocational path teachers in France vary considerably, according to whether they are for teachers at national education vocational lycées, trainers at CFAs or in-company apprenticeship mentors. The rules are clearly defined for vocational lycées teacher, who have to pass a competition to take up the role and have access to continuing training schemes to update their knowledge or even learn about the world of business.

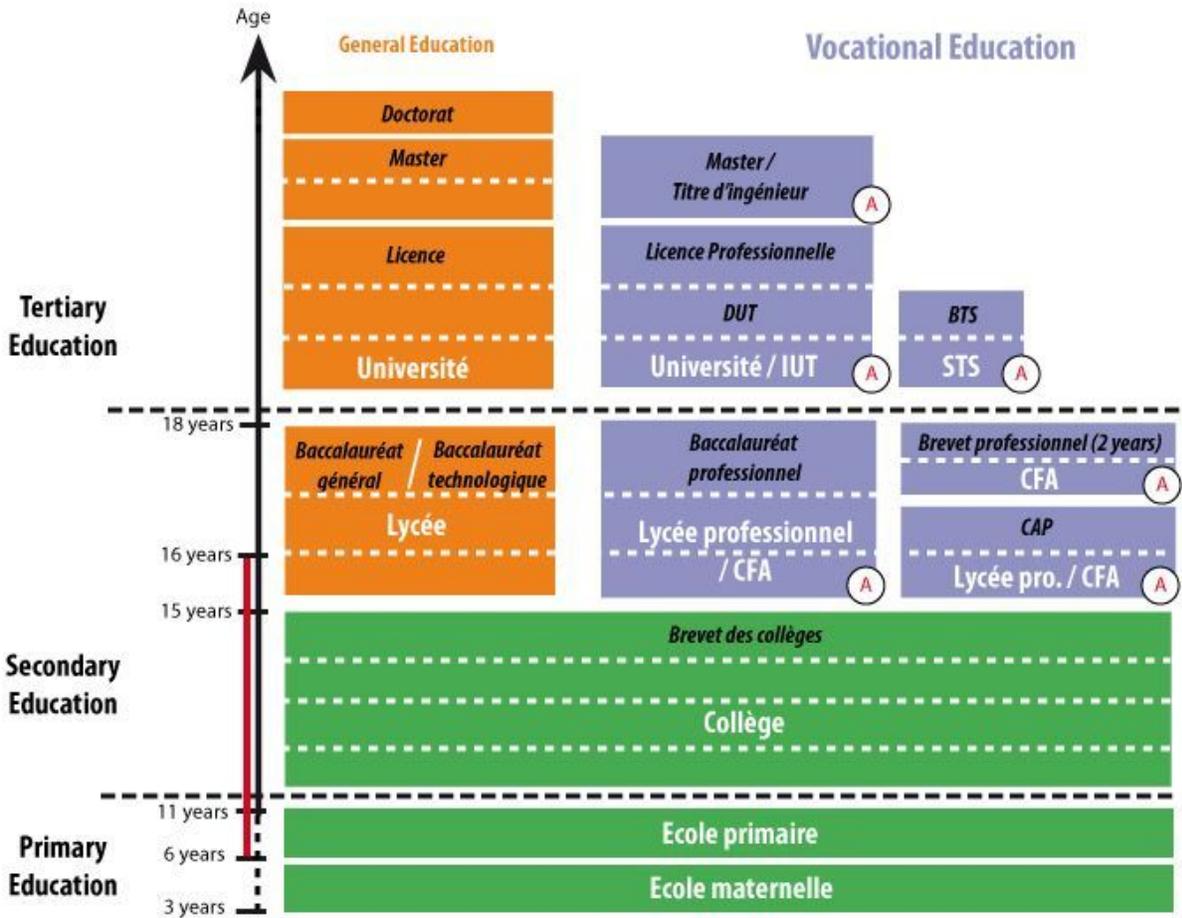
The rules for CFAs trainers or apprenticeship mentors, on the other hand, are more varied and differ between one structure or vocational sector and another. Professional experience and qualification conditions are, however, required under current regulations to take on the role.

In the French training system, initial training covers the school path and the apprenticeship path, both of which are split into three broad levels, but only two are vocational:

a) Upper secondary education;

(b) and higher education.

French Education System



Key:

Compulsory Education

Basic Education

Vocational Education

Apprenticeship-based qualifications

General Education

1.1. School-based path

Upper secondary education is provided for three years (pupils of 15 to 18 years old) at schools for that purpose (lycées). It comprises three training paths: general, technological and vocational. That's why there are three categories of secondary school teachers for the paths (upper secondary teacher, technological paths teacher and another which will be discussed in this article, lycée professionnel teacher). Lessons are given in lycées and, at lycées professionnels (vocational) in particular, for vocational purposes. Vocational lycées set students up for a profession in conditions close to those of the workplace and prepares them for the vocational Baccalaureate, a three-year course.

1.2. Apprenticeship path Apprenticeship offers a training path based on sandwich teaching, and is designed to provide 16 to 25-year-olds with general, theoretical and practical training, with a goal of obtaining a vocational certification. During the apprenticeship contract, the young person has apprentice status, i.e. he/she is both a salaried employee and a pupil in a CFA (centre de formation d'apprentis: apprentice training centre). Training leads to a vocational or technological education certification. The study addresses vocational path teachers and trainers in initial training, and it focuses on the training of teachers at lycées professionnels and trainers and tutors who are involved in the apprenticeship contract. The training of teachers is subject to specific rules and is at the heart of both recent and future reforms to the French initial training system.

2. Teaching and training professionals in school-based settings Initial and continuing training of teachers is managed and financed by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, either directly or through the national education administrative units (académies). The ministry sets the recruitment rules, teacher training programmes and granting of funds for the entire country.

2.1. Initial training of teachers

A specific category of secondary education teacher works in a vocational lyceum (lycée professionnel): vocational lycée teachers. They train pupils taking the vocational path and teach in their respective discipline. A national competition (entrance examinations) has been set up for those wishing to become a vocational lyceum teacher: the CAPLP (concours d'accès au corps des professeurs de lycée professionnel: competition to become a vocational lycée teacher). There is an external competition, which requires various qualification-related conditions to be met, and an internal competition for existing teaching staff (i.e. teachers of general or technical disciplines) or civil servants (requirements according to the status, seniority etc.).

To take part in the external competition, candidates must demonstrate:

- (a) either a level of qualification in the subject to be taught: general subjects (modern languages-humanities, mathematics and so on), 'technical' subjects (economics, management, and so on), or vocational subjects (woodwork, floristry, and so on);
- (b) or, for 'theoretical' general subject teachers, a qualification specific to preparing for teaching professions, in the subject to be taught. The level generally expected is 'Master's' level;
- (c) and a number of years of professional practice (five or seven years) in the relevant profession. Successful candidates are appointed as 'trainee vocational lyceum teachers'

and are assigned to an académie (a term actually used to refer to a specific geographical area).

Under the académie, they carry out a part-time traineeship for one year in which they teach at an education establishment. During the school year, they also receive support (courses taught) and undertake training periods in teaching profession and education Colleges (Écoles supérieures du professorat et de l'éducation). At the end of the traineeship, the period is evaluated by a jury, whose members are chosen from members of inspection bodies and secondary school and higher

2.2. CVET for teachers

Secondary school teachers in general as well as vocational lyceum teachers may benefit from continuing training schemes. Schemes are not obligatory; rather, teachers may apply for training. Every year the Ministry of Education prepares a National Training Plan (PNF: plan national de formation), which sets out guidelines, the priorities and the ongoing training schemes for continuing training of state education staff. It is implemented by the Directorate General for School Education (Direction générale de l'enseignement scolaire), the Directorate for Digital Technology in Education (Direction du numérique pour l'éducation) and the National College for Education Management, Higher Education and Research (École supérieure de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche).

Available training provision includes:

- (a) information days, assistance with reforms and education policy;
- (b) vocational training of main players (teachers, trainers, executive managers, schools inspectorate, etc.) and training of resource or contact persons;
- (c) events involving the Ministry of National Education. National events enable major educational and teaching issues to be addressed. It is envisaged that ESPEs (see Section 1.1) will participate more and more actively in the continuing training of secondary school teachers.

2.3. Cooperation and partnerships between the world of education and the world of work in support to teachers and trainers' CPD France has a Centre for Studies and Research on Partnerships with Businesses and Professions (18) (Cerpep: Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur les Partenariats avec les Entreprises et les Professions) which offers continuing training in cooperation with businesses and other organisations. Training may take the form of immersion placements for teachers and other education staff. The structure provides, among others:

- (a) short immersion placements in a business, public organisation, foundation or association for one to five days in France or elsewhere in Europe;
- (b) 'Themed days' with partners from the business community;
- (c) 'tailor-made placements', which teachers themselves find and negotiate with an organisation in line with their courses. Above all, the placements enable teachers to inform their pupils about professions and jobs and to adapt their teaching methods to developments in the business world. It should be noted that the decision to participate in Cerpep training lies with the académie and the relevant management staff. The main sources of funding

come from the State. Furthermore, teachers may decide to organise a Mini-enterprise programme in their class for the pupils' benefit. Mini-enterprises enable secondary school students to start on technological and vocational paths to creating a business. They develop a product or service, with a view to marketing it. Depending on the académie, a PAF training scheme may be used for teachers planning a mini-enterprise to learn about suitable tools and methods.

3. Apprentice tutors and trainers in companies (workbased settings) With regard to apprenticeships, trainers involved in theoretical in-class training are 'teachers at apprentice training centres', and in-company tutors are called 'apprenticeship mentors'.

Box 2: Governance of apprenticeships in France

In France, apprenticeships are managed by the ministries of education and employment, by the Regions which have full jurisdiction in the area, and by social partners. However, large networks are essential in the management and development of apprenticeships, particularly for the vocational training of CFA trainers and in-company apprenticeship mentors. Networks include the consular chambers (Chambres consulaires: Chambres de commerce, d'industrie et de services, d'agriculture ou des métiers), the Building and Public Works Apprenticeships Consultation and Coordination Committee (Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics – CCCA-BTP network), the automotive services branch, the rural training centres (Maisons familiales rurales – MFR).

3.1. Training of trainers in apprenticeship centres In France, theoretical training of apprentices takes place in Apprentice Training Centres (CFAs: Centres de formation d'apprentis), which: (a) provide young people who have received an apprenticeship contract with general technological and practical training to supplement and link to in-company training, with a view to developing a wider set of social competences but also knowledge of their rights; (b) ensure coherence between the training that they provide and the training provided at the company, above all by coordinating cooperation between trainers and apprenticeship mentors (see Section 2.2). The CFA provides general, technical, theoretical and practical teaching.

3.2. Training of apprenticeship mentors An apprenticeship mentor (maître d'apprentissage) must be appointed for apprenticeship contract. That person is responsible for training the apprentice, takes on the role of in-company tutor and is tasked with contributing to the acquisition by the apprentice of skills in the company for the certification or, where relevant, diploma followed, in conjunction with the CFA. The apprenticeship mentor may be the head of a company or a salaried employee. Regulations apply to the appointment of the apprenticeship mentor. That person must have the vocational skills required to guarantee a high level of training of young people (23).

Conclusion

The current trend is to foster as much cooperation and as many partnerships between the business and education worlds as possible. To do that, the merits of training through apprenticeships need to be demonstrated and partnerships between schools and businesses need to be formed through, for example, the mini-enterprise or ingénieurs pour l'école schemes.

The trend is also evident in the creation of professions and qualifications campuses, which bring together – in one place or as part of a network – vocational training stakeholders around one economic sector: vocational and multi-purpose lycées, apprentice training centres, training bodies, higher education establishments (including engineering schools), research laboratories and businesses.

Digital technology is increasingly integrated into training programmes for young people, and teachers will more and more often be equipped to use and keep on top of that technology. The 'digital technology plan' was unveiled in 2015, and a call for projects enabled secondary schools to be selected to try out from the start of the 2015 academic year education and apprenticeship innovations resulting from digital technology. Finally, a recent investigation report underlined the 'inertia of teachers CPD', and prescribed a 'massive effort within the framework of a multiannual plan'. The report makes a number of recommendations along the same lines as the Riga conclusions.

Training in teaching 'digitally and using digital technology' is a national priority, which has resulted in a pro-active policy to produce resources which bring digital technology into play, in addition to resources for training. A 'digital technology plan' is also being prepared at national level using various measures in that area (16). At regional level, académies training plans (PAF: plans académiques de formation) are devised to provide support as close as possible to all staff. PAF development is based on collection and analysis of training needs in accordance with the plans of each académie and staff expectations.

National training priorities are also reflected in the plans according to the requirements of each académie. The PAF enables staff to adapt to new requirements in their profession and update their knowledge throughout their career. Once the PAF is developed, teachers can register for informational or training sessions, and school principals can also offer training to their teachers. Under the PAF, initiatives have been set up such as the creation of the 'M@gistère' platform in 2013. It is an interactive continuing training scheme designed for teachers which adds to the existing training range. Teachers may apply for open training courses as part of the PAF, which are also run and financed by the State.

FRANCE European inventory on NQF 2018

Introduction and context Participation in education and training in France is above EU averages and EU targets, with universal early childhood education and care, a declining percentage of students who leave education early (8.9% in 2017), and relatively high rates of tertiary education attainment and adult participation in lifelong learning (44.3% and 18.7%, respectively, in 2017).

As the French qualification system has developed considerably over recent decades, and more closely aligned the NQF to the European qualifications framework (EQF), different proposals to revise the five level structure (in use until 2019) were put forward. Revision has been a lengthy process, as qualification levels were linked to wider collective bargaining agreements in the country. The 2018 law for the freedom to choose one's professional future and subsequent legislation strengthened the legal basis of the NQF and defined a new eightlevel structure and level descriptors in three categories, similar to those of the EQF: complexity of knowledge, skills and know-how, and degree of responsibility and autonomy. The five-level structure in use until 2019 was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in October 2010.

A new eight-level structure was recently adopted through Decree no. 14 of 8 January 2019 on the national framework of vocational and professional qualificatins, more closely aligned to the EQF. Levels are defined using learning outcomes in three categories: complexity of knowledge associated with carrying out the corresponding

(a) professional activity; level of skills and know-how;

(b) level of responsibility and autonomy.

(c) The first level of the new framework covers basic competences resulting from an agreement between social partners and the government; it is not linked to qualifications included in the RNCP. The newly introduced level 2 covers simple activities and limited autonomy. Levels 3 to 8 cover qualifications previously included at the five levels of the RNCP. The previous level I was dissociated into the new levels 7 and 8, distinguishing between master and doctoral qualifications.

According to the 2019 decree on the national framework of vocational and professional qualifications, reclassification of level I qualifications to the new levels 7 and 8 should be completed by January 2020.

Level descriptors in the French national qualifications framework

Levels	Level descriptors
8	Level 8 attests the ability to identify and solve complex and new problems involving a variety of fields, using the most advanced knowledge, skills and know-how, to design and pilot research and innovation projects and processes. The national doctoral degree is classified at this level of the national framework
7	Level 7 attests the ability to develop and implement alternative strategies for carrying out the professional activity in complex professional contexts, as well as to assess the risks and consequences of one's activity. Master degrees are classified at this level of the national framework.

6	Level 6 attests the ability to analyse and solve unforeseen complex problems in a specific field, to formalise skills and know-how and methods and to build upon them. Bachelor degrees (licence) are classified at this level of the national framework.
5	Level 5 attests the ability to master skills and know-how in a field of activity, to develop solutions to new problems, to analyse and interpret information using concepts, to transmit skills, know-how and methods.
4	Level 4 attests the ability to carry out activities that require using a wide range of aptitudes, adapting existing solutions to solve specific problems, organising one's work autonomously in generally predictable but potentially changing contexts, and to participate in the evaluation of activities. The national Baccalaureate diploma is classified at this level of the national framework
3	Level 3 attests the ability to carry out activities and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information in a known context, as well as the ability to adapt the means of execution and one's behaviour to the circumstances.
2	Level 2 attests the ability to carry out simple activities and solve common problems using simple rules and tools by using vocational skills and know-how in a structured context. The associated vocational/professional activity is carried out with a limited level of autonomy.
1	Level 1 of the national framework for vocational and professional qualifications corresponds to the mastery of basic knowledge.

Source: Decree No 14 of 8 January 2019 on the national framework of vocational and professional qualifications [unofficial translation].

State of play of validation in France

In France, the procedure known as Validation of experience (Validation des acquis de l'expérience - VAE) can lead to the award of whole or parts of a qualification – with a vocational and professional orientation and purpose (finalité professionnelle) – based on the knowledge and skills acquired through prior experience and learning in a variety of contexts. Qualifications which can be obtained via the VAE procedure are registered in the national qualification directory (RNCP) which covers levels 3 to 8 of the EQF2. RNCP covers all vocationally or professionally oriented qualifications, including all higher education qualifications with a vocational and professional orientation and purpose (Cedefop, 2015).

In addition to vocational qualifications awarded by Ministries, sectoral vocational qualifications recognised by social partners such as Certificats de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP) and listed in the RNCP can also be awarded through VAE. France can be considered as a leading country in terms of validation. VAE has now been in place for 15 years. It is an integrated system, connected to the national qualification framework. The procedure is defined by law and decrees, ensuring consistency across sectors. Qualifications awarded through VAE have exactly the same value as those awarded through participation in formal VET. VAE is an individual right (which is closely connected to the individual right to continuous vocational training); in order to qualify, individuals must have at least three years of experience in a certain field relevant to the field of the qualification they want to obtain.

The validation procedure includes all stages of validation (identification/document, assessment, certification by jury). In terms of institutional design, VAE was positioned at the crossroads of training and employment, although in terms of the funding it receives, funding is earmarked for continuing vocational training. It has developed from a national perspective, a key milestone being the adoption of legislation in 2002, defining the legal framework for validation of prior experience. It is an important component of vocational training and labour market policies.

Nowadays, there are around 1 300 qualifications accessible via VAE (not including higher education qualifications). Looking at the qualifications awarded by Ministries (ministères certificateurs), since the beginning of the implementation of VAE, a total number of circa 307 400. The notion of competence was introduced in French VET in the 1970s and in general education in the 1980s. It is now explicitly referred to in curriculum documents in all sub-systems of education and training (Cedefop, 2016). The learning outcomes approach was strengthened by the 2002 Law on social modernisation and subsequent decrees that set up the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (validation des acquis de l'expérience, VAE), and its emphasis on validation and certification of competences, based on learning outcomes, for awarding any kind of qualification.

The learning outcomes descriptions form the basis on which all qualifications are approved for registration into the RNCP. Initial vocational qualifications are defined in terms of skills, knowledge and competences, but different forms of VET provision differ in how learning outcomes are assessed.

The Validation in education and training The French validation system is well-developed and based on a legal framework. VAE candidates can obtain a whole qualification (certification), based on the knowledge and skills acquired through prior experience and learning in a variety of contexts. In cases when candidates validate “parts” of a qualification (“partial” validation), the

candidate has 5 years to acquire further experience (e.g. through training, traineeships) before re-submitting an application.⁶ In concrete terms, partial validation means that the qualification awarding body delivers a document taking stock of the learning units validated by the candidate. It can take the form of a booklet comprising competence certificates or specialisation certificates (which represent units constituting the whole qualification). Individuals who obtained partial validation through a VAE procedure, can now use their personal training account (created by the Law of 5 March 2014) to obtain the missing competences through training.

Qualifications awarded through VAE have exactly the same value as those awarded through participation in formal education and training. VAE processes include the four stages of validation: identification, documentation, assessment and certification.

The process includes a first step (called “Livret 1”) which consists of an initial review of the eligibility of applications (based on legal requirements) and it gathers evidence of at least three years of experience in a field related to the qualification targeted. Once the “Livret 1” is declared admissible, the documentation phase can start: the candidate will elaborate a portfolio (“Livret 2”) to demonstrate that he/she possesses the necessary competencies required for the targeted qualification.

Quality assurance Quality assurance systems / procedures The 2002 legislation on VAE and decree sets some general criteria on the procedure, including on the functioning and composition of VAE juries. In relation to the provision of support to VAE applicants, a number of methodological tools have been developed by State services in order to outline a set of key principles for the provision of support (after the first part of the application – i.e. for those applications considered eligible).

The main objective is to ensure consistent level of the quality of support provided. In addition, a number of regional quality charters for the support of VAE candidates have been signed by the State and the regional authorities. They focus on various aspects such as providing suitable conditions to receive candidates, ensuring the transparency of the procedures, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the procedure, providing quality support services with reasonable waiting times consistent with the needs of the candidates, ensuring the professional standards of practitioners, and developing cooperation and information exchange between institutions.

The quality approach results in the implementation of satisfaction surveys and the monitoring of candidates’ pathways. VAE quality assurance systems/procedures (regarding the organisation of the procedure and the characteristics of validation practitioners) are the responsibility of each awarding body awarding (at the Ministry/national level or at the provider level). However, the laws and regulations on the control and quality of vocational continuing education and training apply largely to VAE.

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