



Structures of Education,
Initial Training
and Adult Education
Systems in Europe

FRANCE

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org/>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.gr/>)

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INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterized by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) jointly published *Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union* for the first time in 1990. This book was updated in 1995 and then again in 1999/2000. Given the number of countries it now covers¹ and the amount of data available, this most recent update has been placed for consultation on the EURYDICE Network website (<http://www.eurydice.org>), instead of being distributed in printed paper form. In this way, it may be accessed by a maximum number of readers and updated on a more regular basis.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels, as well as brief accounts of their higher education and systems for initial and in-service teacher training, and of the status of teachers. EURYDICE and CEDEFOP have also used this latest update to add a chapter on adult education, which is an important topic in relation to the development of lifelong learning in Europe.

As in the previous edition, the information is structured with respect to a common table of contents to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasized.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational), the initial vocational training of young people and higher education. Here also, the way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational training is the subject of a chapter in its own right, as it is generally provided outside the ordinary education system, whether as part of schemes for apprenticeship, the special training of young people or vocational integration. This is followed by a chapter on higher education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment.

As indicated above, this latest updating also provides for the first time a general description of the way formal systems of general education and vocational training for adults are organized. The legislative framework and financing of this kind of education are also covered.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios,

¹ The European countries taking part in the Community Programme in Education, Socrates.

attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialization.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system with explanatory notes. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardized so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

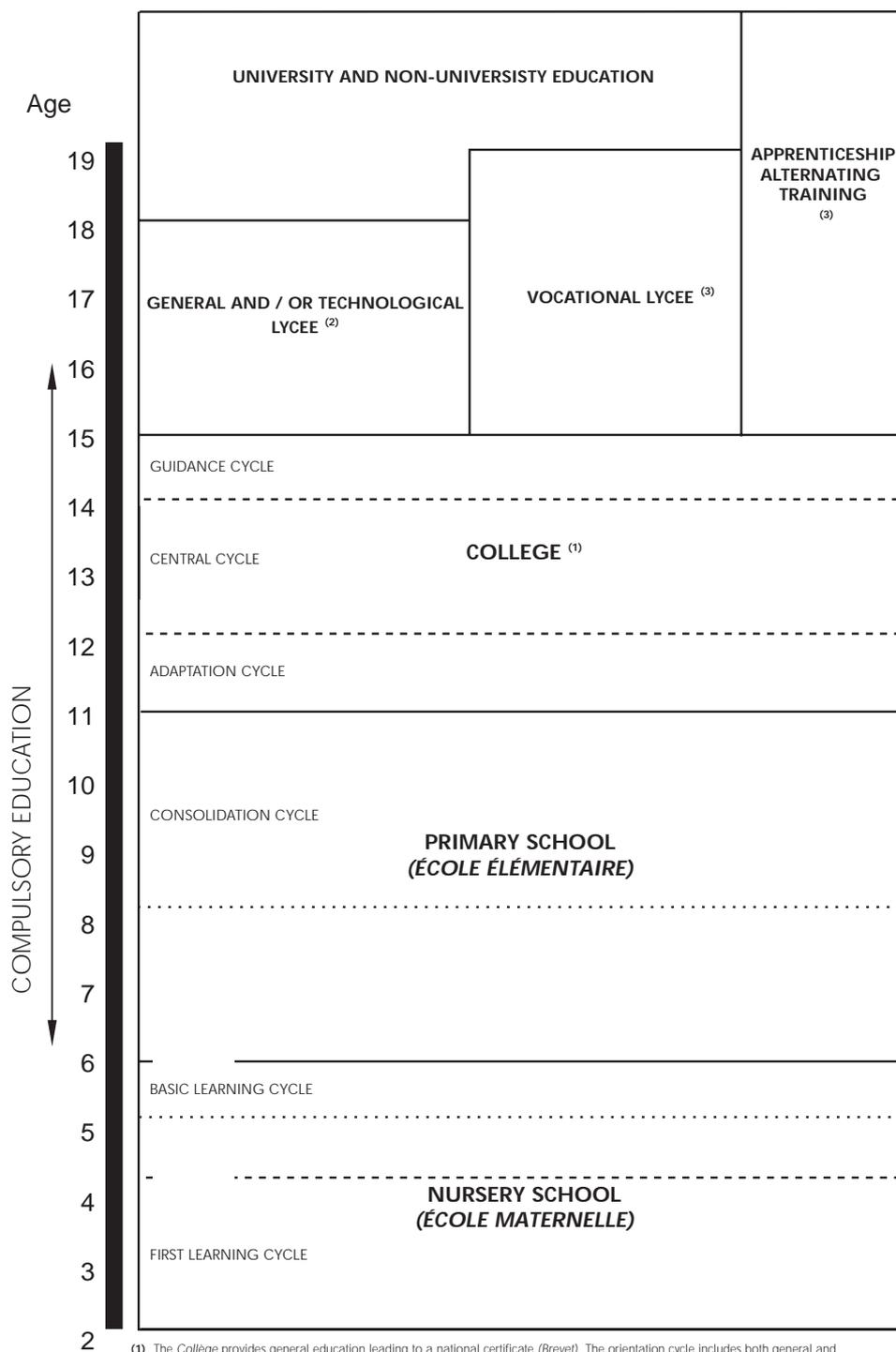
The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational training and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the documentary information network of CEDEFOP (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation – ETF (as regards the ten countries of central and eastern Europe). We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project, both in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels and at CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

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FRANCE



- (1) The *Collège* provides general education leading to a national certificate (*Brevet*). The orientation cycle includes both general and technological education.
- (2) The general and/or technological *Lycée* provides upper secondary education leading to higher education or employment. Pupils prepare for the general *Baccalauréat*, which usually leads to higher education, the technological *Baccalauréat* (B.Tn), which mainly leads to higher education, or the technical certificate (*brevet de technicien*, BT), which generally leads to employment. The preparatory classes for the *grandes écoles* (*classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles*, CPGE) and the higher technical sections (*sections de techniciens supérieurs*, STS) in *Lycées* provide post-*Baccalauréat* training.
- (3) The vocational *Lycée* is an institution of secondary education providing young people with general technological and vocational training. It leads after two years to the vocational aptitude certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*, CAP) or the vocational studies certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles*, BEP), and, after two additional years, to the vocational *Baccalauréat*.
- (4) These courses can be entered between the age of 16 and 25. Apprenticeship training lasts two years. Apprenticeship training: qualification contracts last six months minimum, 24 months maximum; adaptation contracts last six months minimum; and guidance contracts last from three to six months.

----- division in the level / type of education
 alternative beginning or end of level / type of education

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

France is a Republic and its Constitution, adopted in 1958, gives the President of the Republic, who is elected directly by the people, very important powers. He appoints the Prime Minister, who is responsible to him and to Parliament.

According to the first results of the 1999 census, France has a population of 60 million, which is increasing at the rate of just over 0.38% each year. Demographic growth in rural areas (+0.51%) is stronger than in urban areas (+0.29%). Population density is 95 inhabitants per square kilometre. 11.2% of the working age population, or around 3 million people, are currently unemployed. Foreigners account for 2.85 million inhabitants and a further 1.33 million have recently become French by naturalization.

Metropolitan France is currently divided into 22 regions, each of which contains from 2 to 8 *départements*. There are 96 metropolitan and five overseas *départements*. The official language of the country and of the education system is French.

1.2 Basis of the education system: principles and legislation

In France, public education, which caters for more than 80% of pupils, is secular. In the name of freedom of education, private education also exists; this is mainly composed of Catholic establishments which have a contract with the State.

The Framework Law on education n° 89-486 of 10 July 1989 establishes education as the top national priority and sets as its objective "to educate an entire age group to at least the level of the vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) or

vocational studies certificate (BEP) and 80% of the group to *Baccalauréat* level within ten years".

The Five-year Law n° 93-1313 concerning work, employment and vocational training recognizes the particular responsibility of the national education service to assure integration into working life, and establishes the principle that "every young person must be given the opportunity to take up vocational training before he or she leaves the education system, regardless of the level of education he or she has completed".

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organization and administration of the education and training system

The Government is responsible for the definition and implementation of education policy, within the general framework fixed by the legislature which, in accordance with the Constitution, fixes the "general principles" applying to the education system.

The Minister for National Education is responsible for education policy. He is assisted by a deputy minister for vocational training. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for agricultural education; the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity plays an important role in vocational training; and the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Culture and Communication contribute to the organization of educational activities for young people.

Traditionally, the French education system has been extremely centralized. Since its decision in 1982 to transfer to the local authorities certain powers and responsibilities which had previously been exercised by the State, France has begun the important process of decentralization which has profoundly altered the distribution of powers

between the public administrations of the State and those of the local authorities. At the same time, the State continues to guarantee the smooth operation of public services and cohesion within the education system.

The decentralization laws of 1982 and 1983 have significantly increased the role of the regions, *départements* and communes.

Primary schools are organized and administered by the communes; *Collèges* (lower secondary schools) by the *départements*; and *Lycées* (upper secondary schools) by the regions.

Vocational training outside of the education system is the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity and the regions. The regional councils organize annual apprenticeship programmes.

Universities are public education institutions which enjoy administrative, financial and academic autonomy. There are numerous other public or private higher education institutions attached to various ministries.

Central administration

The central administration of the Ministry of National Education includes the general inspectorates [*inspections générales*], the cabinet office, the office of the senior defence official, ten major directorates, as well as a delegation, which are all responsible, under the authority of the Ministry, for implementing the government's education policy.

The ministry's directorates are broken down into specific fields of competence in the school education sector. There is no body to coordinate the policy of the various directorates. Each has development, forward planning and regulation tasks. Three directorates, in addition to the delegation for international affairs and cooperation (DRIC), have duties that span a number of sectors in the State education system. They are the legal affairs directorate (DAJ), the communication directorate (DICOM) and the planning and development directorate (DPD).

The State defines educational guidelines and curricula and oversees the recruitment, training and administration of staff; it establishes statutes and operational rules for the institutions and provides them with the necessary teaching and administrative posts. The Minister for National Education determines the dates of school holidays in each of the three zones in metropolitan France. The school year is established on the basis of 316 half-days of work during the year.

Regional authorities

The regions now have the status of territorial authorities. They are administered by an elected Regional Council and have general responsibility for economic, social, sanitary, cultural, and scientific development and town and country planning. The regions are responsible for building and maintaining *Lycées* (upper secondary schools) and for specialized institutions, and they have important powers in the area of vocational training. In cooperation with the *départements*, they must develop an overview of quantitative and qualitative training needs, i.e. of medium-term needs for school facilities at each level and in each type of education.

The *départements* are both territorial authorities represented by an elected assembly – the general council – and administrative districts of the State. They are responsible for school transport and the maintenance and construction of lower secondary establishments (*Collèges*). The *départements* are divided into cantons.

For administrative purposes, nursery and primary schools are placed under the direct control of the communes, which establish them and administer their budgets. Decisions affecting these schools are therefore made by local government bodies. However, inasmuch as the State is responsible for new posts and the employment of teachers, the decision to create a new school or class cannot take effect without the approval of the representative of the State: the prefect of the *département*. Power is thus in reality divided between the State and the local authorities.

Institutional level

Collèges, general or technological *Lycées*, and vocational *Lycées* are local public schools with legal responsibility and financial autonomy. The State representative (prefect of the *département* for *Collèges*, prefect of the region for *Lycées*) establishes schools by decree at the suggestion, depending on the case, of the *département*, the region, or, in certain cases, the commune or group of interested communes.

Institutions include the following bodies:

- the Board of Governors (*Conseil d'administration*), made up of representatives of the local authorities, the administration and staff of the institution, and parents and pupils;
- the Permanent Committee (*Commission permanente*) and the Disciplinary Council (*Conseil de discipline*);
- the Class Council (*Conseil de classe*), which meets at least once each term;
- teaching teams within a cycle whose role is to improve coordination between teachers in developing and implementing the school plan and ensure the continuity and assessment of pupils' work. In each class, the principal teacher ensures coordination between pupils and the other teachers.

The amended decree No. 85-924 of 30 August 1985 recognizes the autonomy of *Collèges* and *Lycées* in teaching and educational matters. This autonomy applies to the general organization of the institution and is exercised by developing a school plan according to the procedures set out in the framework law for education of 10 July 1989 and in the ministerial circular of 17 May 1990. This plan must be discussed within the school and then adopted by the board of governors. The plan defines the specific methods by which national objectives and curricula are to be implemented, taking particular account of the characteristics of the local school population and the resources of the socio-cultural and economic environment.

The powers and responsibilities of head teachers are based primarily on their legal and administrative status (which are different at primary and secondary level). At primary level, head teachers, called "*directeurs*" or "*directrices*", are teachers appointed by the Schools Inspector to carry out this function. At secondary level, the head teacher, called "*principal*" in *Collèges* and "*proviseur*" in *Lycées*, is an employee of the Ministry. Head teachers are recruited by competitive examination and enjoy a special status in accordance with decree No. 88-343 of 11 April 1988.

The law of 16 January 1984 grants administrative, financial, teaching and academic autonomy to universities.

According to the law of 1984, universities form the following statutory bodies: an Administrative Council (*Conseil d'administration*), an Academic Council (*Conseil scientifique*) and a Council of

Studies and University Life (*conseil des études et de la vie universitaire*). These bodies include representatives of teachers, researchers, students, and administrative and technical staff, as well as people from outside the university. The president of the university is elected by all members of the three statutory bodies.

He or she directs the university, presides over the statutory bodies, and supervises revenue and expenditure. The president has authority over the entire staff, appoints boards of examiners, and is responsible for maintaining order.

In the spirit of the law of 26 January 1984, since 1989 the Ministry of Higher Education has entered into a new relationship with higher education institutions. A policy characterized by the negotiation of four-year contracts between the State and the institutions has been substituted for the traditional annual grants of resources and facilities for teaching by the central administration. This contractual policy is designed both to give new and real meaning to the autonomy of the universities and to give the State the means to exercise its responsibility for promoting education and ensuring its coherence. Each institution defines a development plan designed to meet both national goals and local training needs. This plan, which deals with all the institution's activities, is presented to the responsible services in the Ministry and then negotiated with them. These negotiations lead to the signing of a contract obliging the State to grant specific resources (in the form of teaching posts, operational credits, etc.) to the institution for a period of four years.

1.4 Inspection/supervision/guidance

General inspectorate

In addition to evaluating and stimulating the education system, the general inspectorate provides advice and information to the Minister for National Education. The general inspectorate is made up of general inspectors of national education and general inspectors of administration.

The general inspectorate of national education participates in the supervision of inspection and administrative staff and of teaching and guidance staff. The inspectorate takes part in

their training and recruitment (sitting on the examining boards for competitive examinations), the supervision of their activities and the evaluation of the education system as a whole. This evaluation covers school institutions, types of education and training, the content of education, curricula, teaching methods, techniques employed and school results. In its annual report on the state of education, the general inspectorate of national education also makes available information on innovative practices, especially in teaching.

In the context of its responsibilities, the general inspectorate of administration provides advice and makes proposals to the Minister for National Education. The inspectorate is charged with examining and assessing the structures of the school network, whether they meet education needs, and equipment plans; the employment of staff; the physical organization and operation of schools; and the administration of funds allocated by the Ministry.

Alongside the general inspectorate of education, the general inspectorate of libraries is responsible for university libraries and for institutions attached to the Ministry of Culture: public information libraries, and *département* and municipal libraries.

Regional and *département* inspectorates

Under the authority of the *recteur* (head of the administrative unit or district, called *académie*) or the *académie* inspector and in cooperation with the competent general inspectors, the regional teaching inspectors are charged with the "marking" and the appraisal of secondary level teachers of their subject area. The *département* inspectors are responsible for the inspection of primary level institutions and teachers.

Evaluation of higher education

The Law of 26 January 1984 created a National Evaluation Committee (*Comité national d'évaluation* - CNE) for higher education. This committee constitutes an independent administrative authority which sets its own projects and enjoys financial autonomy.

The national evaluation committee examines and assesses all the activities of universities, colleges, and institutions under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education. It can also evaluate institutions under the responsibility of other ministries.

The committee examines institutions and not individuals. It assesses the quality of research and teaching, teacher training, continuing training, the administration of staff and services, the academic environment, the admission and supervision of students, local integration, and national and international contacts. To accomplish these tasks, the committee has established a series of operational indicators. Each year, the national evaluation committee submits a report on its activities and on the state of higher education and research to the President of the Republic.

1.5 Financing

The State covers the salaries of teaching, administrative and guidance staff. However, the local authorities are now responsible for investment and operational expenditure: the regions for upper secondary education institutions - *Lycées*, and regional institutions for special education (*enseignement adapté*) (EREA); the *départements* for lower secondary schools (*Collèges*); and the communes for nursery and primary schools. The regions also contribute to the financing of universities, in particular for major investments, together with the State.

Financing of the type of vocational training known as apprenticeship aimed at young people between the ages of 16 and 25, combining in-company training and training at a centre, is covered by an apprenticeship levy, paid by companies, by the State and by the general councils.

In the public sector, education and training are free in first and second level institutions.

Pupils do not pay course fees, unlike students of higher education.

Schools books are free at the *école* and *Collège*, but have to be paid for at the *Lycée* (upper secondary education).

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The Minister for National Education is assisted by several advisory bodies whose role is to provide information, formulate proposals or give advice.

The principal advisory bodies are:

- The Higher Council for Education (*Conseil supérieur de l'éducation* - CSE), with 95 members, representing staff in public education (48 members); users - parents, pupils and students (19 members); and territorial authorities, associations for out-of-school activities, and educational interest groups (28 members). This Council provides advice on all educational issues (such as objectives and operation, regulations, etc.).
- The National Curriculum Council (*Conseil national des programmes* - CNP). Created by the framework law of July 1989, the council "advises and submits proposals (to the competent ministers) on the general conception of education, important objectives to be reached, the adaptation of curricula and subject areas to achieve these objectives, and their adjustment to developments in knowledge".

Joint committees comprise an equal number of representatives from the administration and staff. They include Joint Technical Committees (*Comités techniques paritaires* - CTP), National Joint Administrative Committees (*Commissions administratives paritaires nationales* - CAPN), and vocational advisory committees.

In the field of higher education, there is the National Council for Higher Education and Research (*Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche* - CNESER), which comprises 61 members, representing staff (29), students (11) and the main national educational, cultural, scientific, economic and

social interest groups (21). This provides advice to the Minister on the main orientations for higher education: draft reforms, types of education, distribution of financing between institutions, etc.

There are eight further national public institutions providing education-related services under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of National Education and/or the Ministry of Higher Education and Research: the National Institute for Educational Research (INRP), the National Centre for Educational Documentation (CNDP), the National Centre for Distance Education (CNED), the National Centre for University and School Life (CNOUS), the National Office for Information on Studies and Professions (ONISEP), the Centre for Studies and Research on Qualifications (CEREQ), the International Centre for Educational Studies (CIEP), and the Union of Groupings of Public Purchases (UGAP).

1.7 Private schools

The majority of private education institutions are denominational - mainly Catholic - and have signed a contract with the State, which then provides them with significant financial support, including the cost of teachers' salaries and of their initial and in-service training. Institutions under contract must adhere to the timetables and curricula applied in public education and are subject to State supervision.

At the beginning of the 1998/1999 school year, private schools were educating 13.8% of all primary pupils (pre-primary and primary) and 21% of second level pupils. In this sector, families must pay school fees which vary from school to school.

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

France has a long tradition of providing pre-school education, and for this reason 99.9% of children aged three attend school. The attendance rate for two-year-olds reached 35.2% in 1998/1999.

Decree n° 90-788 of 6 September 1990 concerning the organization and operation of nursery and primary schools stipulates that the general objective of nursery education is to develop the children's full potential in order to permit them to shape their own personality and to give them the best possible chance to succeed in school and life by preparing them for further learning.

Pre-school education is optional and is available to children between the ages of two and five. Children who have reached two by the first day of the school year can be admitted to nursery schools (*écoles maternelles*) and infant classes (*classes enfantines*) if space is available. An effort is made to give priority to nursery school places in socially disadvantaged areas. At age three, every child should be able to attend a nursery school or an infant class at the request of his/her family.

In the absence of a nursery school or an infant class, children aged five, for whom parents request school admission, are admitted to the infant section in a primary school (*école élémentaire*) and enter the basic learning cycle.

The services of a specialized person recruited by the communal authorities are available to all nursery classes. To compensate for the effect of nursery school closures due to the decline in the number of children, especially in rural or mountainous areas, there are sometimes intercommunal nursery schools which serve children from several communes, or part-time classes and peripatetic classes (*classes ambulantes*) in areas with a very low population density.

2.1 Organization

The children are generally divided by age into three sections: "lower", "middle" and "upper".

This division is flexible in order to take into account the different learning rhythms and maturity of each child and the skills he or she has acquired. The teaching team, in consultation with parents, can choose to place a child in the section which best suits his or her needs, even if it does not precisely correspond to the child's age. The three sections correspond to the first learning cycle, while the upper section, along with the first two years of primary school, corresponds to the basic learning cycle. Multi-year cycles with objectives to be attained over a period longer than a single school year have been implemented in response to the desire to adapt schools better to children's needs.

Children have 26 hours of lessons per week.

There are no regulations concerning the size of groups or classes. The Schools Inspector defines each year the average number of pupils per class for his district and may also define the maximum number of pupils per class in line with the criteria of his *Académie*.

Attendance at public nursery schools is free of charge. In private nursery schools, parents pay school fees. The municipal authorities determine the school districts for public schools.

2.2 Curriculum/assessment

The main educational activities contribute to the children's general development and prepare them for primary school. They cover physical, scientific, and technical activities and activities promoting communication and oral and written expression. Games play an important role in nursery school, but this does not mean that rigour and effort are excluded.

The national education inspector (IEN) responsible for the district supervises the administrative and educational operation of the institutions. The School Council (*Conseil d'école*), which meets at least once each term, votes on the school's internal regulations and establishes the plan for the school week.

The organization of teaching into cycles makes it easier for the team of teachers to adapt teaching activities to the learning rhythm and progress of each child. The provisions put in place in each cycle take into account the particular difficulties and learning rhythm of each child. The teacher or the team is responsible for regularly assessing the achievement of each pupil and for recommending whether he/she should move up to primary school or be kept back within pre-school education.

2.3 Teachers

As nursery school constitutes a part of the education system, teachers in nursery schools receive the same training as primary school teachers. After three years of post-secondary education (usually at university) leading to a diploma, they spend one or two years (the first year is optional) at a university teacher training institute (*Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres* - IUFM). On completion of the second year of the IUFM, successful students are designated "school teachers" (*professeurs des écoles*). As officials of the public education system or as contractors in a private school under contract, nursery school teachers have the same rights, responsibilities and duties as teachers in primary schools (their careers follow the same paths, they are required to spend the same amount of time at school: 316 half-days, and they have the same right to in-service training).

2.4 Statistics

	Public	Private	Total public + private
Pupils			
Nursery schools	1.738.554	24.575	1.763.129
Infant classes or sections in nursery or primary schools	353.311	276.615	629.926

School year 1998/1999

3. Compulsory education and training (basic school)

School attendance is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. This requirement includes both the primary school (*école élémentaire*) and the *Collège*. On average, pupils leaving the *Collège* (which lasts four years, unless they have repeated a year) are 15 years of age. In theory, pupils must therefore still attend school full-time for at least one more year to satisfy the compulsory schooling requirement, either in a general or technological *Lycée* or in a vocational *Lycée*.

3A Primary education (*Enseignement élémentaire*)

Primary education is governed by the Framework Law for Education of 10 July 1989. Decree n° 90-788 of 6 September 1990 defines its organization and operation.

Primary school provides pupils with the basic elements and tools of knowledge: oral and written expression, reading and mathematics. It allows pupils to make use of and develop their intelligence, sensitivity and manual, physical and artistic abilities. School permits pupils to extend their awareness of time, space, the objects of the modern world and their own body. It permits the gradual acquisition of methodological skills and provides pupils with a solid preparation for further schooling at a *Collège*.

The organization of primary education presents particular problems in sparsely populated zones such as rural and mountainous areas. Schools have therefore been restructured in these areas (pupils from several communes have been grouped together or the different levels of education have been redistributed and regrouped).

Attendance at primary school is free of charge and is compulsory for all children from the age of six. Primary education lasts five years or up to the age of 11. As a rule, parents are required to

enrol their children in the school area in which they live, but exceptions can be granted allowing them to send their children to another school of their choice.

3A.1 Organization

Primary school includes five classes divided into two cycles: the basic learning cycle which begins in the upper section of nursery school and continues in the first two years of primary school; and the consolidation cycle which covers the final three years (CE2, CM1 and CM2) before admission to the *Collège*.

The basic unit of organization is the group/class. To make it easier for all children to succeed, this structure can vary: one teacher can follow a group of pupils throughout an entire cycle; classes can cover several courses; and the teachers' services can be decompartmentalized or specialized.

Since 1 January 1992, there have been 26 hours of lessons per week. Schools usually close on Wednesdays and on Saturday afternoons as well as on Sundays.

Sports and artistic and cultural activities are frequently offered in addition to the 26 hours of teaching. These extracurricular activities are organized by local organizations or associations.

In most schools, a cafeteria is organized by the local authorities or an association. A supervised or directed study service, usually provided by teachers, is also available for children whose parents work.

3A.2 Curriculum

National curricula and an official text establish the skills to be acquired in the course of each cycle. The overall timetable is flexible within the

compulsory subject areas set by the curriculum and within the optional courses such as foreign languages; the latter have been introduced in certain schools on an experimental basis since 1989.

Basic Learning Cycle Compulsory subject areas

Mathematics	5h
French	9h*
French, history, geography and civics	4h
Artistic, physical and sport education	6h
Directed studies	2h
Total	26h

* One hour of modern languages may be taken in this timetable during the last year of the (CE1).

Consolidation cycle

French and modern languages	9h*
Mathematics	5h30
History, geography, civics, science and technology	4h
Artistic, physical and sports education	5h30
Directed studies	2h
Total	26 h

* Modern languages may be taught within this framework for up to one-and-a-half hours.

Since public schools in France are secular, religion is not taught - except in the Upper-Rhine, Lower Rhine and *Moselle départements*, which have retained a special status due to their annexation by Germany from 1871 to 1918.

The curricula and instructions for primary school were supplemented in January 1991 by a document entitled "Cycles in Primary Education". This document sets out the broad lines of education policy for primary schools and the skills which pupils should acquire in the course of each cycle.

There are no prescribed teaching methods or materials. Teachers in each school agree on the particular materials they wish to use from the range available from private publishers. Teaching materials are usually published for use nationwide. Local or regional associations and documentation centres in the regions or *départements* sometimes produce teaching materials as a local supplement to those published for national use.

3A.3 Assessment/certification/orientation

The Teachers' Council of each cycle promotes pupils within the cycle on the recommendation of their teacher. Parents must be informed regularly of their child's progress.

A national test has been organized at the beginning of each school year since 1989 to assess the reading, writing and mathematical skills of all pupils entering the consolidation cycle (and in the 6th class in *Collèges*). The primary goal of this test is to provide teachers with a tool to gauge their pupils' progress in these three basic areas. This assessment should assist teachers in choosing the teaching activities most suited to the pupils.

To adapt to the learning rhythms of each child, the amount of time spent in each cycle can be extended or reduced by one year. Each child's situation is assessed by the Teachers' Council of the cycle, in some cases at the parents' request. A written proposal is sent to parents, who can accept it or challenge it by appealing to a higher authority (which then takes the final decision).

Each child has a report book (*livret scolaire*), which is shown regularly to parents and constitutes a method of communication between teacher and family. This report book indicates the results of periodic assessment and provides information on the skills acquired by the pupil. It informs parents of proposals by the Teachers' Council of the cycle concerning the child's promotion to a higher class or cycle and of the final decisions taken.

Children who complete normal school attendance or have difficulties that are not covered by special education are promoted automatically from primary school to the 1st class of secondary school. As is the case in primary school, parents are expected (unless an exception is made) to enrol their children in an institution in their own school area.

3A.4 Teachers

Teachers are assigned to particular classes. One teacher is responsible for each class, although the teachers concerned can agree that

for certain subject areas pupils are grouped by subject area.

First level (pre-school and primary) teachers are recruited on the basis of the same academic competitive examination and receive identical initial training. At the end of this training, new teachers are assigned to the pre-school or the primary level on the basis partly of their preference and partly of the availability of posts in the *département*.

Since 1992, first level teachers (*professeurs des écoles*) have been recruited from among holders of a diploma confirming completion of at least three years of post-secondary education. Candidates are admitted to a university teacher-training institute (IUFM) on the basis of an examination of their dossier, an interview or in some cases a test.

The IUFM are higher education institutions which have replaced the previous training structures for teachers in the first and second levels (*écoles normales d'instituteurs, centres pédagogiques régionaux, écoles normales nationales d'apprentissage*). At the end of the first year (optional) of theoretical and practical training at an IUFM, candidates for the first level take the competitive recruitment examination. Successful students become trainee teachers and are remunerated for their work. They then complete a second year of training, at the end of which they are appointed to positions as schoolteachers.

Circular n° 26 of 14 November 1994 defines the national framework for the content and certification of training organized by the IUFM. The structure of this training is based on the link between theoretical and practical training throughout the programme.

The qualification received at the end of the second year is based on the work accomplished during the eight-week period of teaching practice, the subjects studied at the IUFM, and a thesis dealing with a practical aspect of education. It grants teachers official status and gives them the right to a teaching position.

Qualified first level teachers may devote 36 weeks to in-service training during their career, but this training is not compulsory.

3A.5 Statistics

	Public	Private
Pupils	3,324,774*	572,430
Teachers**	282,506 (1)	41,727 (2)
Schools	34,433	5,429

* 3,369,307 including special education

** Pre-primary and primary

(1) 302,751 including specialized teaching, as at 1 January 1998

(2) (42,947) including specialized teaching, as at 1 January 1998
1998/1999

3B Compulsory secondary education

Compulsory secondary education begins in the *Collège*, the only institution admitting all pupils for the first four years of secondary education.

Collèges have the status of local public institutions with legal responsibility and financial autonomy. School life is governed by internal regulations voted on annually by the Board of Governors and brought to the attention of all, especially the parents. The head teacher, called "principal", performs administrative and teaching duties.

Collèges serve the dual objective of preparing all pupils for social integration and for school success, which means that each institution must organize assistance for pupils experiencing difficulties.

Collèges are institutions of lower secondary education that take pupils at the end of primary schooling, at the latest in their twelfth year. The educational cycle lasts four years, corresponding to the 6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd classes.

This comprehensive type of lower secondary school for all pupils, known as the "*Collège unique*", was created by the law of 11 July 1975.

Attendance at *Collèges* in the public sector is free.

3B.1 Organization

The teaching in *Collèges* is divided into three cycles:

- The adaptation cycle, in the 6th class, facilitates the transition from primary school to secondary school. It consolidates what has been learned in primary school and initiates pupils into the subject areas and methods used in secondary education.
- The central cycle, in the 5th and 4th classes, enables pupils to consolidate and broaden their knowledge and skills. The curriculum remains common to all pupils but optional courses are offered to them.

The guidance cycle, in the 3rd class, completes the knowledge of pupils and prepares them for their transition to the *Lycée*.

Certain *Collèges* offer specific training where the curricula are the same as for other classes, but the teaching is organized in a different manner:

- classes with specially arranged timetables (music or dance option) that allow pupils to receive specialized teaching in parallel at the conservatoire of the region or in a music school controlled by the State;
- European or international sections with additional teaching of a modern foreign language and teaching of certain subject areas in this language.

Each *Collège* organizes the school week in its own way. Subject areas should be distributed evenly with teaching spread over five (sometimes six) mornings and two to four afternoons.

No teaching is provided on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

Class hours usually include 55 minutes of teaching and a five-minute break between classes. Pupils are admitted to the school ten minutes before the beginning of classes. Two facilities provide supervision outside class hours: supervised study, which allows pupils to work or read under the guidance of supervisory staff (*surveillants d'externat*) or qualified teaching staff (*maitres d'internat*), and documentation and information centres (CDI).

The CDI are directed by a documentalist, who makes educational materials available to pupils and teachers and provides technical assistance, such as audiovisual and copy services. Pupils can carry out documentary research in the CDI,

which allows them gradually to become more independent.

3B.2 Curriculum

	Adaptation cycle	Central cycle	Guidance cycle	
	6th class	5th and 4th classes	3rd class with the Modern Language 2 option	3rd class with the Technology option
COMPULSORY COMMON EDUCATION				
French	6 h	from 4 h to 5 h 30	4 h 30	4 h 30
Mathematics	4 h	from 3 h 30 to 4 h 30	4 h	4 h
First modern foreign language	4 h	from 3 h to 4 h	3 h	3 h
History-geography-civics	3 h	from 3 h to 4 h	3 h 30	3 h
Life and earth sciences	1 h 30	from 1 h 30 to 2 h	1 h 30	1 h 30
Physics and chemistry	-	from 1 h 30 to 2 h	2 h	1 h 30
Artistic education (plastic arts, music)	2 h	from 2 h to 3 h	2 h	2 h
Technology	1 h 30	from 1 h 30 to 2 h	2 h	
Physical education and sports	4 h	3 h	3 h	3 h
OPTIONAL EDUCATION (Compulsory)				
Second modern language (*)	-	3h (4th)	3 h	
Technology				5 h
OPTIONAL EDUCATION (Optional)				
Latin	-	2h (5th)/3h (4th)	3 h	
Greek	-		3 h	
Technology (**)	-	3 h (4th)		
Regional language (***)	-	3 h (4th)	3 h	
Second modern language (*)				3 h
Total	26 h			

(*) Second modern language or regional language

(**) Teaching in groups with fewer staff

(***) This option is offered to pupils who choose a second modern foreign language under the heading of compulsory optional education.

In 6th class, in addition to this teaching timetable, at least two hours of directed studies are provided each week for all pupils. These provide an ideal opportunity to support individual work and to teach secondary school working methods.

3B.3 Assessment and qualifications

During their years in a *Collège*, pupils are assessed in ways that will determine their future orientation.

Families are informed of the work done by their children by means of:

- a term report containing the results of and comments on pupil's work in each subject area, general comments, and advice from the head teacher;
- a book (carnet) for marks and correspondence which provides a link between parents and teachers. This includes a class timetable, pages reserved for correspondence (such as requests for appointments and meeting dates), and sometimes a summary of marks received;
- contacts and meetings with class teachers and especially with the principal teacher and guidance counsellor;
- regular parent-teacher meetings.

There are currently no regulations on the marking of pupils attending *Collèges*. In practice, pupils' results first take the form of a series of marks noted in the report submitted each term to parents by the school management. These marks concern class work or personal work, the weekly amount of which is determined by the Teachers' Council. Marks in each subject area are accompanied by detailed comments by the teacher on the work and progress achieved by the pupil.

Finally, the pupil's results in the 4th and 3rd classes are noted on a school report card which is taken into account for the award of the national certificate (*diplôme national du brevet*). This is a general education certificate and does not determine the pupil's future orientation. The certificate is awarded on the basis of marks achieved in the examination at the end of the 3rd class and of the results during the 4th and 3rd classes.

As part of the general plan announced in May 1999 entitled "*Le Collège des années 2000*" [Lower secondary schooling beyond the year 2000], measures were adopted to take greater account of the diversity of the school population and to help pupils in difficulty achieve success. This involved the creation, in the 6th and 5th classes, of recovery hours for small groups of pupils, directed studies, and the development of "new applied technologies" groups aimed at

enabling pupils in difficulty to more easily achieve the objectives of the 4th class by encouraging the use of technology and new technologies.

Other measures have been continued, including support mechanisms in the 4th class, in the form of partial grouping of pupils for some classes or special classes with few pupils, 3rd integration classes, with few pupils, which link *Collège* training and in-company training.

Pupils who, at the end of the primary cycle, have severe and persistent difficulties, are, at the proposal of a special education commission, channelled into sections *d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté* (SEGPA). The SEGPA teach these pupils, throughout their life at the *Collège*, adequate knowledge and autonomy to enable them to study for a vocational aptitude certificate.

Guidance is an educational activity, the purpose of which is to assist each pupil throughout his or her school career to make reasoned educational and vocational choices. Guidance is one of the school's primary functions.

The Framework Law on Education of 10 July 1989 states in article 8 that "the right to guidance counselling and information concerning courses and occupations is part of the right to education".

Decree n° 90-484 of 14 June 1990 defines the principles and forms of guidance for pupils.

The 3rd class and the final year of *Collège* constitute the key period in guidance. Two options are possible:

- the 2nd general or technological class which leads to a general or technological *Baccalauréat*;
- the 2nd vocational class, the first year of preparation for a vocational studies certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles*) or to the vocational aptitude certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*). After obtaining this first vocational qualification, students can prepare for a vocational or technological baccalauréat.

The Class Council proposes an option based on the wishes expressed by the pupil and his or her family. The proposal is submitted to the family which can accept it or appeal to a committee.

3B.4 Teachers

As for teachers at primary level, candidates who wish to teach at secondary level must have acquired at least a Licence (university degree obtained after a 3-year course) or another diploma reflecting at least three years of post-secondary study in one of the Member States of the European Union or four years in another country. After recruitment, on the basis of a dossier or interview, future teachers must indicate when they enter a university teacher-training institute (IUFM) that they wish to teach at secondary level, as this will require more extensive study of the subject they wish to teach. At the end of the first year at an IUFM, candidates for teaching positions at secondary level sit a national competitive examination leading to one of the following certificates:

- CAPES (the certificate of aptitude for teaching at secondary level), organized by subject area (with the exception of physical education and sport);
- CAPEPS (the certificate of aptitude for teaching physical education and sport);
- CAPET (the certificate of aptitude for teaching technical education);
- CAPLP2 (the certificate of aptitude for teaching in a vocational *Lycée*), organized by subject area in general and vocational education;
- *agrégation*, also organized by subject area, for candidates holding a *maîtrise* (Master's degree obtained after 4 years' study), an equivalent diploma, or one of the certificates of aptitude for teaching mentioned above.

Students who pass these competitive examinations become trainee teachers

(*professeurs-stagiaires*) for one year and are paid as such.

The Minister for National Education announces the formal appointment of candidates passed by the academic boards of examiners. As public sector teachers are civil servants, they belong to one of the three groups of teachers with a career path marked by 11 stages. There are three teaching bodies: *professeurs des écoles*, *professeurs certifiés*, *professeurs agrégés*. They all have a credit of 36 weeks for in-service teacher training.

Like teachers in the public sector, teachers in the private sector under contract to the State are usually recruited from among holders of a Licence or other diploma awarded after at least three years of post-secondary study.

3B.5 Statistics

Pupils	Public	Private
	2,511,716	657,041

Institutions	Public	Private
	4,947	1,794

Teachers (1)	Public	Private
	352,713	67,194

(1) Tenured teachers, from the whole of second level, public and private sectors. The number without tenure totals 14,367 in the public sector and 25,611 in the private sector under contract. The reference year is 1997/1998.

4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

4A General and technological schools

Post-secondary education is dispensed in *Lycées*: general and technological *Lycées* or vocational *Lycées*.

General or technological *Lycées* are coeducational secondary schools which prepare pupils in three years (2nd, 1st and terminal classes) for the following certificates: the general *Baccalauréat*, the technological *Baccalauréat*, and the technical certificate (*brevet de technicien*). The general or technological *baccalauréat* is a national school-leaving

certificate that gives access to higher education. To obtain them it is necessary to pass anonymous exams, which are identical for everyone and administered at the end of the terminal class.

Preparatory classes for *grandes écoles* (CPGA) and higher technical sections (STS) established within *Lycées* offer post-*Baccalauréat* training.

Collège leavers usually attend *Lycées* in their own school districts, unless their family opts for private education, or the specialization chosen (for example, a foreign language not included at the local school, a European section, etc.) involves attending an institution further away.

Pupils coming from a private institution under contract will be admitted to public secondary education on the basis of the option proposed by the private institution concerned. Pupils may also transfer from a public institution to a private institution under contract. Private institutions under contract are obliged to respect measures taken by the public institution which affect the education and orientation of the pupils.

This type of education is free, but families must pay for supplies and schoolbooks.

4A.1 Organization

The financial and administrative organization, the decision-making and consultation structures, and the provisions concerning the organization of the school day are the same as in *Collèges* (see above, 3.B 1).

4A.2 Curriculum

2nd class

The 2nd class is the cycle in which pupils choose the type of *baccalauréat* they wish to work towards. The 1999 reform of *Lycées* confirms this mission and at the same time introduces new provisions to allow:

- more individual support for pupils,
- a broader education for pupils by acquiring a greater understanding of the world and their role as citizens, through the development of communication skills and introducing them to cultural and artistic life.

Teaching in the 2nd class includes courses common to all pupils, two specific option courses chosen by the pupil and the possibility of one optional course. Specific option courses provide pupils with the possibility of studying certain subject areas in more depth without making an irreversible choice. Moreover, the desire to provide pupils with support more appropriate to their needs and their diversity has led to the creation of a mechanism to provide both teaching support for all pupils and additional support for those in most need. This support must be included in the school development plan and involves the active participation of the entire educational community.

Individual support is given to 2nd class pupils experiencing difficulties that have not been improved through modular teaching, especially in French and mathematics. Pupils are given individual support in small groups (maximum of eight pupils). These groups are reorganized each term by the teaching team.

Teaching timetable

Common subjects:	
French	3.5 h
Mathematics	2 h
Physics - chemistry	2 h + (1.5 h)*
Life and earth sciences	0.5 h + (1.5 h)*
Modern language (1)	2 h
History - geography	3 h
Physical education and sports	2 h
Civic, juridical and social education	0.5 h

* the time in brackets represents teaching dispensed in the form of a half-class.

In addition, pupils follow 3.5 hours of compulsory education per week in the form of modules - group work in addition to the normal timetable in the following subject areas: French (0.5 h), Mathematics (1.5 h), History - Geography (0.5 h), Modern Language (1 h). This new type of teaching introduced by the 1991 reform is designed to allow teachers to address the heterogeneity of their pupils by using diversified teaching activities and reorganizing pupils in groups smaller than the class itself.

Pupils may also attend an optional course and an artistic expression workshop. These workshops cover 72 hours spread over the year as part of a project led and/or designed by a teacher (or a voluntary teaching team). Their creation is a priority in institutions where there is no artistic training to facilitate access to the arts and culture.

There are also specific 2nd classes in preparation for a specific qualification. For example, the section leading to the *Baccalauréat* F 11 Music and the sections leading to certain technical certificates (*brevets de technicien*), such as printing, mirror-glass production, clothing, the hotel trade, graphics industries and music.

The timetables established by the decree of 18 March 1999 range between 27 and 31.5 hours per week, depending on the options selected, to which can be added 2.5 to 3 hours of optional courses.

1st and Terminal Classes

The curricula and subject areas of the terminal cycle vary depending on the type of course. Within each type, the terminal cycle includes:

- compulsory courses that form a core curriculum for all pupils taking the same type of course;
- optional courses that are compulsory for the 1st class;
- so-called "speciality" courses that are compulsory for the terminal class, which pupils are allowed to choose, so as to enable them, within each type of course, to influence their learning to some degree in line with their future study plans;
- courses in the form of an option giving pupils the possibility of broadening their general education;
- individual supervised work based on the dominant subject areas of each type of course and forming part of their compulsory education. This work is carried out under the educational supervision of the teachers;
- artistic expression workshops.

This reform comes into force at the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year in 1st classes and at the beginning of the 2001/2002 school year for terminal classes.

At the end of the 2nd general or technological class, pupils have a choice between:

- the general route, studying over two years (1st class then terminal class) towards a general *Baccalauréat* in one of the following three areas: L (literary), ES (economic and social), and S (scientific). Access to the selected type of course is not governed by following any particular option in the 2nd class. However, to be admitted into the terminal class for a given type of course, pupils must have studied the same type in their 1st class.
- the technological route, which leads to preparation for either a technological *Baccalauréat* in one of the following five types:

STT (*sciences et technologies tertiaires*), STI (*sciences et technologies industrielles*), STL (*sciences et technologies de laboratoire*), SMS (*sciences médico-sociales*), EPS (*éducation physique et sportive*), or a specific technological *Baccalauréat* in the fields of catering, the applied arts or music and dance.

- preparation for the *brevet de technicien*, which delivers a qualification as a technician specialising in a given field. After having obtained the *brevet de technicien*, pupils can:

- either enter working life and occupy jobs corresponding to their speciality;
- or continue with their studies, mainly in higher technical sections related to their speciality, or in IUT.

Some technical certificates can be obtained immediately after the 3rd class by attending a specific 2nd class (*seconde spécifique*). Others can be obtained after a 2nd class for pupils who have followed a specific option (*seconde de détermination*).

Agricultural *Lycées* offer agricultural technical certificates (*brevet de technicien agricole* - BTA) after a specific 2nd class. These certificates qualify pupils to become agricultural technicians.

The curricula for 1st class and terminal class vary considerably depending on the type of course chosen, but they generally contain a common course, a specific option course and an optional course. As in the 2nd class, a civic, legal and social education course will be introduced at the beginning of the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 school years. A new working concept has been introduced for compulsory courses, i.e. supervised individual work. It is based on the dominant subject areas in each course type and implemented under the educational supervision of the teachers. Artistic expression workshops have also been offered to pupils in the terminal cycle (1st class and terminal class) as from the start of the 1999/2000 school year.

The Ministry of National Education establishes curricula which teachers are required to respect for these levels, as it does for all other levels of education. Teachers are free to choose their teaching methods and materials.

4A.3 Assessment/certification/ orientation

Pupils are required to do independent and written work at home and in class. The Teachers' Council determines the importance of and adjusts the length of these assignments. In class, pupils take timed tests. Families are informed of their children's results by means of:

- a term report containing the results of and comments on pupil's work in each subject area, general comments, and advice from the head teacher;
- a book (carnet) for marks and correspondence which provides a link between parents and teachers;
- contacts and meetings with class teachers;
- parent-teacher meetings.

At the beginning of the 2nd general and technological class, all pupils are assessed in the basic subject areas: French, Mathematics, History-Geography, Modern Language 1 (English or German). This assessment is used to identify pupils in difficulty, leading to the creation of individualized support groups and the definition of a working plan appropriate to the needs of each pupil concerned by this mechanism.

The 2nd class plays an important role in the pupil's orientation. In the second term, pupils and their parents make a provisional statement on their preferences with regard to future courses. The guidance counsellor and the principal teacher can help them with this. During the third term, the family expresses in writing its choices concerning the types of courses the pupil would take in the 1st class, ranked in order of preference. The head teacher is responsible for implementation and the information programme.

On the basis of these statements and of the pupils' school results and other assessments, the Class Council drafts proposals concerning which types of courses the pupil will attend in the 1st class. The final decision falls to the head teacher of the institution, following an interview with the family in the event of a disagreement. If the dispute persists concerning the request and the decision taken, the family can appeal under the same conditions as in a *Collège*.

Studies completed in *Lycées* of general and/or technological education lead to a general or technological *Baccalauréat* examination.

The *Baccalauréat*

The *Baccalauréat* is the first university qualification. It gives access to higher education. It is organized to reflect the types of courses offered in the 1st class and includes both compulsory and optional examinations.

The examinations relate to the official curricula of the terminal classes in *Lycées*. Only one examination session is organized each year on a date set by the Minister for National Education. The Minister appoints a *recteur* to select the examination subjects.

An examination session is organized under the same conditions in September for candidates who were unable, for reasons beyond their control, to sit the examination at the end of the previous school year.

Pupils who do not pass the *Baccalauréat* examination but have on average received marks equivalent to at least 8/20 can obtain a secondary school leaving certificate (*certificat de fin d'études secondaires*). This certificate, awarded by the *recteur*, states that the pupil has completed secondary education in its entirety, but it does not entitle the pupil to enter higher education.

4A.4 Teachers

(see above, 3B.4)

4A.5 Statistics

Pupils	Public	Private
	1,170,800	306,500

Institutions	Public	Private
	1,448	1,121

(For the number of teachers, see above, 3B.5)
School year 1998/1999

4B Vocational training in full-time vocational schools (*Lycées*)

The vocational *Lycées* prepare for national vocational examinations at level V such as the vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) and the vocational studies certificate (BEP), as well as those at level IV such as the vocational *Baccalauréat*. These certificates attest both to a

recognized level of vocational competence and to know-how and the general educational level of holders. The definition of these diplomas also implies the participation of the various professional sectors represented on the professional consultative commissions.

Vocational diplomas offer the option of validation by module in order to facilitate access to the qualification by candidates with a wide range of profiles.

A debate is currently under way with a view to overhauling vocational education by developing new procedures for integrated vocational education.

The first changes will be introduced at the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year. The aim of this reform is to create better links between vocational training and general education, as well as between the teaching methods employed in the *Lycées* and teaching practices used in companies.

4B.1 Organization

The financial and administrative organization, decision-making and consultation structures are the same as for *Collèges* and the general and technological *Lycées* (see above, 3B.1).

4B.2 Curriculum

The vocational *Lycées* study for two years towards the vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) and the vocational studies certificate (BEP), and then a further two years for the vocational *Baccalauréat*.

These certificates qualify the holder to carry out a trade.

Preparation for the CAP involves:

- General education (14.5 to 16 hours per week, depending on the CAP): French, mathematics, history and geography, economics, civics, a modern foreign language, art education, home and social economics, and physical education. Education is intended to provide pupils with basic general knowledge focused on the modern world, but it is also adapted to vocational needs.

- Technological and vocational education (12 to 17 hours per week depending on the CAP). This takes the form of theoretical courses, practical exercises, and on-the-job training in workshops and offices, and provides the vocational knowledge and skills required for the occupation concerned.
- Varying periods of on-the-job training.

Preparation for the BEP involves:

- General education (14 to 22 hours). Most of the general education subject areas taught in *Collèges* continue to be taught in vocational *Lycées*. They are oriented more directly towards vocational needs. General education is important for success in vocational examinations and enables pupils to continue their studies in preparation for a vocational or technological *Baccalauréat*.
- Technological education (16 to 20 hours). This differs according to the specialization chosen, but always includes a common curriculum for several specializations that are similar or belong to the same vocational sector, and specialized or specific training linked directly to the exercise of the occupation concerned.

Both the theoretical and the practical timetables are heavier than in the *Collège* (33 to 36 hours, depending on the specialization), but the distribution of hours is different and there is less work to be done at home.

- Periods of on-the-job training. Since the beginning of the 1992/93 school year, periods of on-the-job training leading to an examination are being introduced gradually into the preparation of the different BEP. Priority is being given to the construction sector, the hotel trade, and graphics industries.

Pupils holding a BEP can either enter working life or continue their studies in preparation for a vocational or technological *Baccalauréat*, which requires two further years of schooling (1st and terminal classes). In the case of the technological *Baccalauréat*, holders of a BEP can improve their chances of success in technological studies at *Baccalauréat* level and beyond by following an "adapted" 1st class (*première d'adaptation*) beforehand.

Unlike the technological *Baccalauréat*, the vocational *Baccalauréat* is primarily a vocational integration certificate leading directly to the exercise of an occupation, although it also entitles holders to enter university studies. It

leads to a training qualification for a specific trade and is open to candidates holding a BEP (or a CAP prepared over two years after the 3rd class) corresponding to the vocational *Baccalauréat* concerned.

The vocational *Baccalauréats* were created in close collaboration with employers and take into account specific vocational requirements in order to lead directly to employment. They differ from technological *Baccalauréats*, inasmuch as they are targeted on specific occupations, whereas the technological *Baccalauréats* are much broader in scope (electronics, mechanics, etc).

Preparation for the vocational *Baccalauréat* lasts for two years: 1st vocational and terminal vocational. The 30 hours of lessons per week are distributed as follows:

- Vocational, technological, and scientific education (16 to 18 hours) ;
- General education:
 - French, with an emphasis on expression and awareness of the world (3 to 4 hours);
 - a modern foreign language (2 to 3 hours);
 - knowledge of the contemporary world through history, geography, and civics (2 hours);
 - physical education and sport (2 hours);
 - art (2 hours).

In addition, 3 to 6 hours are set aside for individual projects.

- On-the-job training, the distinguishing feature of which is the length of time spent on the job: 16 to 20 weeks over two years.

4B.3 Assessment/certification/ orientation

The principles for the assessment and guidance of pupils are the same as in the general and technological *Lycées* (see above, 4A.3).

4B.4 Teachers

Vocational *Lycée* teachers are generally *professeurs de Lycée professionnel* (PLP) recruited by competition, or sometimes, for general subjects, certified teachers (see above, 4A.4).

4B.5 Statistics

Pupils	Public	Private
	553,132	155,131

Institutions	Public	Private
	1,097	645

(see above, 3B.5)

School year 1998/1999

5. INITIAL/VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Minister for National Education is traditionally responsible for initial vocational training, that is, for pupils and students not in employment.

The Five-year Law of 20 December 1993 on work, employment and vocational training recognizes that the national education service has particular responsibility for the vocational

integration of young people; article 54 stipulates that "every young person must be offered vocational training before leaving the education system whatever level of education he or she has completed".

This responsibility primarily concerns career guidance for young people. In the school environment, guidance is provided through the

mediation of the National Office for Information on Studies and Occupations (*Office national d'Information sur les Enseignements et les Professions*, ONISEP) and Centres for Information and Guidance (*Centres d'information et d'orientation*, CIO). Although CIO operate primarily in the school environment, these centres are open to all groups. In this way, CIO counsel job seekers and provide various services: assistance, information, documentation and individual meetings with a guidance counsellor. They have developed a system of self-documentation for occupations and training programmes.

In addition, since 1986 the Ministry of National Education has been developing its own system for the integration of young people (DIJEN) leaving the education system before receiving a *Baccalauréat*. It was designed to care for and guide young people, and to encourage them to renew contact with the school system.

Guidance provided for young people outside the school environment is one of the major developments of the 1980s. Since 1982, permanent centres for information and guidance (PAIO) have been open to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to provide information concerning available training programmes. Local agencies (*missions locales*) are also available to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who have left school without an employment or apprenticeship contract. They deal with a wide range of problems including vocational integration, accommodation and health. The network, under the guidance of the *Délégation interministérielle à l'Insertion professionnelle et sociale des Jeunes en Difficulté* of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, now includes 624 organizations: 331 local units and 293 permanent centres for information and guidance (PAIO) with 3,000 contact points throughout the country and 6,000 employees who dealt with 1,300,000 young people last year.

There is also the CIDJ (*Centre d'information et de documentation jeunesse*), its 31 regional centres (CRIJ) and more than 1,400 offices or units forming a Youth Information network that supports and informs young people in all aspects of daily life.

5.1 Organization

The Five-year Law of 20 December 1993 introduces regional plans for the development of vocational training for young people, covering all training preparing young people for employment: initial training (school and apprenticeship), integration contracts and continuing vocational training. These plans will be drawn up after consultation with the *Académie* Councils of the national education service, and then approved by the Regional Councils after consultation with the educational authorities concerned: the annual agreements defining, for the State and the region, the planning and financing of training will be co-signed by the educational authorities concerned.

Implemented as a measure to combat unemployment, training for "initial integration into working life" includes apprenticeship and training measures for young people between the ages of 16 and 25. Apprenticeship, defined in the law of 1971, is a special route in initial vocational training, while training measures for young people between the ages of 16 and 25, developed since 1983 at the initiative of the social partners, are based on the general system of continuing training.

The apprenticeship contract is a particular type of contract available to any young person between 16 and 25 years of age. It lasts from one to three years. During the contract period, the apprentice receives a salary which varies according to his/her age and progress; the apprentice is covered by employment legislation. Employers must be recognized as apprenticeship masters by the Prefect of the *département*; this procedure was simplified as of 1994.

Training takes place at the same time in the enterprise and in the CFA. Employers are required to provide apprentices with practical training and to enrol them in a CFA providing instruction corresponding to the training called for in the contract.

These measures for 16- to 25-year-olds are based on three types of integration contracts: guidance contracts qualification contracts and adaptation contracts.

Guidance contracts (*contrats d'orientation*) are offered to people aged up to 22 years who do not hold a technical or vocational education certificate and who have not completed secondary general education.

This contract should lead to integration into working life by means of vocational guidance gained through in-company work experience. The contract, which can be extended to young people up to the age of 25 having great difficulty getting into employment and who hold a diploma certifying the end of the 2nd cycle of secondary education but not a vocational education certificate. It lasts for a maximum of 9 months and is not renewable. It includes vocational guidance actions such as pre-training modules and on- or off-the-job training linked to an enterprise. The acquisition of skills is assessed in agreement with the trainee. Trainees under contract are paid by various means.

Qualification contracts (*contrats de qualification*) are offered to young people under the age of 26 who wish to complete their initial training with a vocational training course. This contract, which is concluded with an approved firm, lasts between 6 and 24 months. Employers undertake to provide the young people with employment and vocational training leading to a qualification or certificate. At least 25% of the total time of the contract must be used for general, vocational or technological training provided during working time. While under contract, the young person receives a salary and is protected by all legislation applying to employees.

Adaptation contracts (*contrats d'adaptation à l'emploi*) are employment contracts between a firm and a young unemployed person under the age of 26 and may be of limited or unlimited duration. As the name indicates, these contracts are designed to provide training allowing the trainee to adapt to a specific kind of employment. These contracts are a form of alternating training, linking general, vocational and technological training and the acquisition of vocational skills during working time. Under this contract, 200 hours of training must be provided. While under contract, the young person receives a salary and is protected by all legislation applying to employees.

These contracts may be reorganized within the framework of a draft law presented in the autumn of 1994. Regardless of the type of contract, the employer must appoint a tutor from among the employees to assist trainees on a voluntary basis. Each tutor supervises the activities of a maximum of three trainees and liaises between the young people and the training organization. Tutors are trained for this activity.

In addition to the contracts described above, the following are available:

- Solidarity employment contracts (*contrats emploi solidarité*, CES). These were created in 1990 for anyone encountering difficulties with insertion and with a qualification equivalent to a vocational *Baccalauréat* or a technical certificate having difficulty finding employment. This type of contract enables trainees to work half time under a part-time employment contract. It is not a measure leading to a qualification and can only be concluded for up to three periods of 3 to 12 months. Trainees work for 20 hours a week and receive pay equivalent to the index-linked minimum wage (SMIC). During the contract, training can be organized for the young person during his or her free time, but such training is unpaid.
- “Youth-employment” contracts created in 1997, aimed at young people under 26 in response to emerging unsatisfied demand for socially useful jobs in various fields of activity. Some of these contracts may require a period of training.

Since 1 July 1994, responsibility for qualifying training for young people has been transferred from the State to the regions. On 1 January 1999, all of the responsibilities for pre-qualification activities and assistance, information and guidance were also transferred.

5.2 Initial/vocational training schools

The vocational *Lycées* and the agricultural vocational *Lycées*, allow young people to continue their general education and to benefit from vocational training leading to a first qualification certificate (see above, 4.B 2).

Preparation for these certificates, which always includes a period of in-company training, can be organized along the lines of an apprenticeship, which is a form of alternating initial vocational training subject to an employment contract. It combines the acquisition of know-how in a firm with theoretical education in an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation d'apprentis* - CFA) and leads to a certificate of vocational or technological education or another recognized certificate.

The CFA are institutions created by agreement between the managing body and the State or the region. They must offer a minimum of 400 hours of training per year on average and at least 1,500 hours if they are preparing trainees for a vocational *Baccalauréat* or higher technical certificate (*brevet de technicien supérieur*). In this latter case, the CFA may delegate some of the theoretical training to an educational institution and some of the practical technological training to an enterprise. The CFA are supervised by the Ministry of National Education.

5.3 Financing

Apprenticeships are financed from two sources: an apprenticeship levy equivalent to 0.5% of the gross annual salary costs of enterprises (the liberal and agricultural professions are exempted from this requirement) and the regional apprenticeship fund. The latter is funded by State transfers and by the regional council's own resources.

In the case of "alternating integration contracts", companies with fewer than 10 employees have to pay a contribution of 0.10% of their annual payroll costs for "alternating training", whilst other companies can either pay or use a contribution of 0.30% or 0.40% of their annual payroll cost.

Solidarity employment contracts and youth employment contracts are financed by the State, with the participation of local authorities, if they so desire.

5.4 Trainers

The profession and employment conditions of trainers vary widely. The recent development of specific trade training certificates illustrates the move towards the professionalization of training staff.

The tutor (the apprentice's supervisor) may be the head of a company or an employee. This person must have a certificate at least equivalent to that for which the apprentice is training and have at least three years of professional experience. Any person without a proper certificate must have at least five years of

professional experience and a minimum level of qualification.

One or more companies may be involved in the contract in order to allow the apprentice to learn technology and equipment not used by the tutor.

The 1993 law establishes the title of qualified master of apprenticeship, which is awarded to tutors who are able to prove that they have five years of professional experience, two years of experience as a tutor and the required teaching and supervision skills. Courses are generally provided by Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Trade organizations.

5.5 Statistics

For vocational *Lycées*, see above, 4B.5

Apprenticeship 1997/1998

In France, there are almost 1090 apprentice training centres; of these, about 900 lead to diplomas awarded by the Ministry of National Education and 190 to diplomas recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture.

CFA are managed by private organizations (around 52.2% of apprentices), chambers of occupations (around 27.4%), chambers of commerce and industry (around 10.4%), public education institutions (around 6.5%) or local and regional authorities (around 2.6%), etc.

Apprentices	
Ministry of National Education	307.150
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	24.862

Distribution by type of certificate (Ministry of National Education)

CAP and other level V diplomas	184.122
BEP	41.994
Vocational certificate and other level IV diplomas	28.860
Vocational <i>Baccalauréat</i>	21.247
BTS	17.225
Other higher education certificates	13.702

Source: Ministry of National Education
66% of level V apprentices prepare for their exams in technical and vocational fields.

Alternating training programmes

Année	CO	CA	CQ	TOTAL
1998	5.6003	60.308	116.194	181.102
1997	3.056	56.307	101.163	160.526
1996	2.095	44.909	96.604	143.608
1995	3.100	55.201	99.861	158.162
1994	6.500	61.094	114.048	181.624
1993	4.377	54.455	96.898	155.730

- CO: guidance contract (*contrat d'orientation*)
 CA: adaptation contract (*contrat d'adaptation*)
 CQ: qualification contract (*contrat de qualification*)

Source: Ministry of Employment and Solidarity

6. Higher education

The law of 26 January 1984, called the Savary Law, defines higher education as a public service including all post-secondary education attached to the different ministerial departments.

The tasks of higher education include:

- providing initial and continuing education;
- conducting scientific and technological research and using the results;
- spreading culture and disseminating scientific and technical information;
- promoting international cooperation.

This law defines the basic principles applying to higher education courses under the responsibility of the Ministry responsible for Higher Education, and establishes the principles governing the organization and operation of higher education institutions, including universities, colleges and institutes outside universities, teacher training colleges (*écoles normales supérieures*), French colleges abroad and the "*grandes écoles*".

Higher education is characterized by a great variety of institutions. Organization and admission procedures vary according to the type of institution and the purpose of the education provided.

Higher education institutions include:

- universities, which are public institutions admitting (in principal without selection procedures except in the fields of medicine and pharmacy) all applicants who hold a *Baccalauréat* (or other qualification judged to be equivalent) and wish to enrol for short

(two years after the *Baccalauréat*) or long (three or more years after the *Baccalauréat*) courses of study. Universities cater for a large number of students and provide a wide variety of study programmes, including basic and practical education. Students who will be permitted to continue their education are gradually selected in the course of succeeding cycles of study;

- public or private colleges and institutes, which provide higher vocational education under the supervision of various ministries.
 - short courses take the form of: technological, commercial, or paramedical training, etc.
 - long courses (three or more years after the *Baccalauréat*): advanced training in political science, engineering, commerce and management, veterinary science, notarial skills, architecture, telecommunications and art.

6A Non-university higher education

The law of 12 July 1875 established the principle of the freedom of higher education making it possible to create private higher education institutions through a legal declaration of establishment. These very diverse

institutions have highly selective entrance procedures in common. A *Baccalauréat* is required but is not enough to secure a place.

There are:

- engineering colleges (*écoles d'ingénieurs*);
- the *grandes écoles* of commerce and management;
 - *École des hautes études commerciales* (HEC);
 - *École supérieure des sciences économiques et commerciales* (ESSEC);
 - *École supérieure de commerce de Paris* (Sup de Co);
 - *École supérieure de commerce de Lyon*;
 - *Écoles supérieures de commerce et d'administration des entreprises* (ESCAE), of which there are 18;
 - *Écoles or Instituts supérieurs de sciences commerciales*, of which there are 17;
- "Catholic colleges", private institutions recognized by the Ministry responsible for Higher Education, which provide both university and college courses. Students attending these institutions take examinations before university examination boards. The five Catholic colleges are located in Paris, Lille, Lyon, Angers, Toulouse.
- All private institutions can request State recognition, which is a quality label. The Minister for Higher Education grants recognition by decree. Recognized institutions are subject to inspection.

6A.1 Admission requirements

These institutions select students from among applicants holding a *Baccalauréat* on the basis of a competitive examination or the assessment of dossiers by a board of examiners. Subject to the conditions established by decree n° 86-906 of 23 August 1985, applicants can also be admitted to the various levels of post-*Baccalauréat* training in an institution attached to the Ministry responsible for Higher Education - a university, institute or public college - on the basis of an assessment of past studies, work experience or personal skills.

6A.2 Fees/financial support for students

Recognition by the Ministry responsible for Higher Education entitles teaching institutions to receive State subsidies or the possibility for their pupils to receive public education grants.

The registration fees for public institutions of higher education are determined each year by ministerial decree. Fees are not high in public institutions under the Minister responsible for Higher Education.

Students are eligible for financial assistance. Higher education grants are provided on the basis of social criteria and the universities' own criteria (for the preparation of the DEA, the DESS, the *agrégation* or certain civil service recruitment examinations) and interest-free loans are also available to be reimbursed no later than ten years after completion of studies.

6A.3 Academic year

The duration of the academic year generally overlaps with that of the school year. However, each institution is responsible for organizing its own courses during the year.

6A.4 Curriculum/assessment/qualification

In the public sector, there are:

- A short higher education course within the general and technological *Lycées*: the higher technicians sections (STS), which dispense training over two years, leading to a higher technical certificate (BTS). These studies differ from those in IUT, providing greater specialization for very specific jobs. Admission to an STS is based on the applicant's dossier.
- Nine political science *colleges* (*instituts d'études politiques* - IEP). The one in Paris ("*Sciences-po*") accepts candidates holding a *Baccalauréat* to the first year after a very rigorous selection examination. Holders of a certificate equivalent to at least a licence can be admitted to the second year after an

interview. IEP award a certificate after three years of study. They also offer their graduates advanced courses lasting one to two years within the framework of third cycle studies.

- *Colleges* of natural science (*grandes écoles scientifiques*) under the Ministry responsible for Higher Education (such as the *Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures*, *Ecole Centrale de Lyon*, *Ecole nationale supérieure des Arts et Industries textiles*, and *Ecole nationale supérieure d'Arts et Métiers*). Students are admitted on the basis of a highly selective competitive entrance examination. Students can prepare for the entrance examination in a two-year course following the *Baccalauréat* in the scientific preparatory classes in *Lycées*, in the first cycle of university or, sometimes, in the colleges themselves. After admission, studies take between two and five years depending on the college. The colleges award an engineering degree approved by the committee on diplomas and certificates (commission des titres) attached to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.
- Four teacher training colleges (*écoles normales supérieures* - ENS) in Paris, Fontenay/Saint-Cloud, Lyons, and Cachan. These schools set similarly high admission requirements. A highly selective competitive entrance examination prepared in scientific preparatory classes for two years following the *Baccalauréat* (particularly in "advanced mathematics" and then "special mathematic" classes) or in literary preparatory classes ("advanced literature" and "first-higher" classes). These lead to national university certificates and to the competitive examination for the recruitment of teachers (*certificat d'aptitude au professorat de l'enseignement secondaire/CAPES* and *agrégation*).
- Certain higher education colleges attached to other ministries, in particular:
 - The *École nationale d'administration* (ENA) which is under the responsibility of the Prime Minister and trains civil servants destined to occupy senior administrative posts.
 - Military training institutions attached to the Ministry of Defence, including schools for the army, navy and air force. Admission to the most prestigious colleges (including the *école polytechnique*, the *école spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr*, the *école navale*, and the *école de l'air de Salon-de-*

Provence) is on the basis of competitive examinations at the end of the scientific preparatory classes.

- Mining colleges under the Ministry of Industry accept students on the basis of a competitive examination or of the applicant's qualifications (depending on the case: *Baccalauréat* + 1 year, *Baccalauréat* + 2 years or *Baccalauréat* + 4 years). These colleges award an engineering degree at the end of three or four years.
- The *école nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* under the Ministry of Development, doyen of the *grandes écoles*, recruits students by competitive examination at the end of the scientific preparatory classes or on the basis of qualifications. The college awards an engineering degree at the end of three or four years.
- Institutions of advanced agricultural training under the Ministry of Agriculture.
- National colleges of veterinary medicine under the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Art colleges under the Ministry of Culture.
- Architecture colleges under the Ministry of Culture.

The Minister responsible for Higher Education can, by decree, grant institutions that have been recognized by the State for at least five years the right to award official certificates (*'revêtus du visa officiel'* in current jargon). The criteria for awarding this right are the same as for recognition, but include additional requirements concerning the level and quality of education.

6A.5 Teachers

Each institution is responsible for the recruitment, working conditions and in-service training of teachers in non-university higher education institutions. In public institutions, the appointment of the head and teaching staff is subject to the approval of the minister (or the *recteur d'académie* in the case of the minister).

6B University education

The law of 26 January 1984 on higher education defines universities as public institutions with a scientific, cultural, and vocational character. They have administrative, financial, teaching and academic autonomy.

Universities are multi-disciplinary: each is made up of education and research units focused on a particular subject area but sharing common objectives. Universities can also include institutes and colleges created by decree, and departments, laboratories, and research centres created by the administrative council of the university. Each university body defines its own statutes and structures.

6B.1 Admission requirements

To enrol at a university, applicants must hold a *Baccalauréat* or certificate judged equivalent or must have the national diploma providing access to university studies (*diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires* - DAEU). The latter is awarded by universities qualified to do so at the end of a one-year course corresponding to at least 225 hours of education.

6B.2 Fees/financial support for students

The registration fees for public institutions of higher education are determined each year by ministerial decree. Fees are not high in public institutions under the Minister for Higher Education.

Students are eligible for financial assistance; there are higher education grants provided on the basis of social criteria, grants provided on the basis of universities' own criteria (for the preparation of the DEA, the DESS, the *agrégation* or certain civil service recruitment examinations) and interest-free loans to be reimbursed not later than ten years after completion of studies.

6B.3 Academic year

The start and end of the university year are laid down in a 1959 decree as 1 October and 30 June respectively. However, the universities have real autonomy in the organization of their teaching activities. Generally universities select holiday dates to coincide as far as possible with the school holidays established by the Minister for National Education.

6B.4 Curriculum/assessment/qualification

Long university courses are organized in three successive cycles, each of which leads to national qualifications.

The first cycle is an extension of education leading up to the *Baccalauréat* and prepares students to continue studies in the second cycle or in a vocational integration programme. It lasts two years and leads to a certificate of general university studies (*diplôme d'études universitaires générales* - DEUG), or to scientific and technical university certificate (DEUST) allowing direct entry into the world of work.

Curricula are organized in the form of modules (coherent groups of courses) for which credits are awarded to make it easier to change orientation, to interrupt and renew studies, and to study part-time. Students are required to study at least one modern foreign language in all programmes.

There are also university institutes of technology (*institut universitaire de technologie* - IUT) attached to universities. Two years of study lead to a university technology certificate (*diplôme universitaire de technologie* - DUT), which entitles the holder to take on a managerial position in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Access to an IUT is subject to selective admission.

In the case of programmes in the health fields (medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and human biology), students are selected on the basis of performance at the end of the first year. The number of students to be admitted to the second year is determined each year by a joint decree of the Ministry responsible for Higher Education and the Ministry of Health.

The second cycle is a consolidation cycle of advanced general, scientific and technical

education leading to the exercise of professional responsibilities. This cycle lasts two to three years. There are several types of education:

- basic, professional, and/or specialized education leading to the degrees of licence (DEUG + 1 year) and *maitrise* (licence + 1 year);
- professional education leading to a scientific or technical *maitrise* in two years (DEUG + 2 years) or to a *maitrise* in computer methodology applied to management (DEUG + 2 years);
- 3-year study courses leading to an engineering degree (*maitrise* + 1 year, or DEUG + 3 years);
- study courses at university institutes of professional education (IUP), which accept students who have completed a first year of higher education (first year of DEUG or of a preparatory class for the *grandes écoles*). Three-year university and professional courses lead to a *maitrise* (*Baccalauréat* + 4 years);
- study courses at university teacher training institutes (IUFM), which accept students who have completed three years of post-secondary education. University and professional training courses last two years and provide access to the teaching professions.

To facilitate the occupational integration of holders of a higher education certificate, a new national degree (DEUG + 1) was created (decree of 17 November 1999), the vocational licence. Awarded by the universities alone or jointly with other public higher education bodies, it came into force at the beginning of the 2000/2001 university year. The one-year course leads to a vocational licence and is designed in close partnership with the business world. It is comprised of theoretical education, targeted practical training, learning methods and tools, periods of in-company training and the writing of a thesis. Vocational licence teaching is dispensed in the form of initial training and in-service training. To ensure that it corresponds with the different student profiles, a variety of training paths may be set up. A period of training abroad, under an agreement, may be offered.

In addition to national degrees recognized by the Ministry responsible for Higher Education, universities can offer certificates on their own authority (certificates of the university or institution).

The third cycle offers highly specialized education and training in research. Students are

selected from among applicants holding a *maitrise*, an engineering degree, or a certificate judged equivalent.

There are two types of education:

- professional education of one year, with a compulsory period of in-company training, leading to a certificate of advanced specialized studies (*diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées* - DESS);
- training in (and through) research, leading at the end of the first year to an advanced studies certificate (*diplôme d'études approfondies* - DEA) and then to the preparation over three or four years of a doctorate (defence of a thesis or presentation of a collection of work).

Since the beginning of the 1999/2000 school year the grade of *maitrise* has been created (Decree 99-747 of 30 August 1999). It is granted to any holder of a certificate or national diploma equivalent to *Baccalauréat* +5 (DESS, DEA, engineer or equivalent level certificates) without dispensing with the existing diplomas. The creation of the grade of *maitrise* between the licence (bac+3) and the *doctorat* (bac+8) is intended to give a more unified image of French post-graduate training and to facilitate equivalence with foreign certificates, as well as student mobility.

Those who have obtained a doctorate may apply for a certificate recognizing their ability to conduct advanced original research and to train young researchers. The ultimate purpose of this certificate is to entitle the holder to become a university professor.

In addition, master engineers and student engineers in their final year of engineering college can prepare a technological research certificate (*diplôme de recherche technologique* - DRT), a third cycle certificate awarded at the end of a study programme in innovation through technological research in the industrial or tertiary sectors.

Training in the health fields is also organized in three cycles.

- eight and a half years to obtain the State degree of doctor in general medicine;
- 10 to 11 years (depending on the specialisation) for the State degree of doctor in specialised medicine;
- six years for a degree of doctor in dental surgery;
- six years for the degree of doctor in pharmacy;
- nine or ten years for the degree of doctor in specialised pharmacy.

Assessment

Procedures for assessing students are fixed by the universities themselves. Qualifications are almost always awarded on the basis of written and oral examinations. Universities usually also organize a continuous assessment of the knowledge acquired by students which allows them to take into account their performance throughout the year.

6B.5 Teachers

There are both tenured and untenured teachers, whose recruitment is generally temporary.

Tenured teachers fall into two main groups: university professors and lecturers. University professors, who generally must hold a licence to conduct research, are recruited by competition, either nationally or by the institution itself (in which latter case the applicants must first be registered on a qualification list drawn up by the national council of universities). Lecturers, recruited only on the basis of an open competition by the institution, must also be registered in advance on a short list drawn up by the national council of universities.

There are several categories of untenured teachers, recruited directly by the institutions.

6B.6 Statistics

General distribution of university students by cycle and by subject area in 1998/1999

	First cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle	Total
Law – political sciences	93.117	61.315	29.407	183.839
Economic - management sciences	36.631	43.436	21.852	101.919
AES	30.927	19.939	386	51.252
Letters – language sciences - arts	68.073	46.104	11.287	125.464
Languages	82.427	55.637	6.223	144.287
Human and social sciences	104.185	97.638	3.0924	232.747
Materials sciences and structures	68.533	35.001	12.738	116.272
Technology–engineering sciences	12.437	53.015	15.607	81.059
Natural and life sciences	44.960	32.287	15.134	92.381
STAPS	25.077	13.078	614	38.769
Medicine-odontology	38.663	25.037	50.962	114.662
Pharmacy	11.463	5.134	10.560	27.157
IUT	114.587			114.587
Grand total metropolitan France + DOM	731.080	487.621	205.694	1.424.395

7. ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education has several strands. Firstly, there is further training, chiefly of a vocational nature, which is dispensed to workers within a clearly defined legal framework. In addition there are all the other forms of study open to adults. It is difficult to distinguish, in many training activities, between the occupational and leisure aspects. Out of the budget that a company is obliged to devote to training, it may call upon a public organization (GRETA) or a private organization to organize vocational training or general education.

7.1 Legislative framework

The law of 9 July 1971 recognizes the right of all workers to individual training leave, which they may use to follow a training course of their choice and which creates an obligation for employers to participate in the financing of continuing vocational training. Employees' in-service training does not have to be directly linked to their job; it may be vocational or cultural. In the 1980s, the State grouped together various in-service training formulas by target group: young people were given training credits and adult job seekers were provided with occupational integration and training measures. The law of 31 December 1991 introduced several innovations: higher financial participation from enterprises, the creation of two new occupational integration formulas for young people (guidance contract and local guidance contract), legal recognition of personal and vocational skills assessment, which employees may obtain through special leave or as part of a training plan, and regulation of training outside working hours as part of a training plan.

The Five-year Law of 20 December 1993 concerning labour, employment and vocational training, together with several measures of the New Contract for Schools (1994) proposed setting up a proper system of lifelong learning where continuing adult training is

complemented by evening classes. Responsibility for organizing continuing vocational training was transferred to the Regional Councils. This transfer of powers came into effect on 1 July 1994 for training measures aimed at awarding a qualification.

Training for employees is provided either at their initiative, as part of their statutory right to training leave, or at the initiative of the employer, as part of a training plan.

Under certain circumstances, training can be followed partially outside of working hours (co-investment), which means that for a portion of the training the employee in question is not remunerated. The law of 13 June 1998 on the 35-hour week creates a new type of co-investment.

7.2 Administration

In France, adult education is provided by various authorities and organizations that are frequently in competition with each other or work together in the field:

- ministries
- local and regional authorities
- enterprises and the organizations collecting their contributions
- consular chambers (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Trade Councils, Chambers of Agriculture) and private training centres.

However, even though there is no centralising or coordinating body, the Ministry for National Education and the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity are responsible for continuing training. Note also that the Ministry of Agriculture has vocational training and further education centres for adults (CFPPA), generally attached to an agricultural vocational *Lycée*.

The Ministry for National Education traditionally plays an important role in continuing training measures, particularly in further vocational education. At central administration level, the sub-directorate for vocational training under the schools directorate (DESCO) and the employment mission under the higher education

directorates (DES) supervise, regulate and support the development of adult continuing training for secondary and higher education institutions respectively.

The Ministry of Employment and Solidarity implements the continuing vocational training policy. For this purpose, it has the *Délégation générale à l'Emploi et à la Formation professionnelle* (DGEFP), created in 1997. The Ministry supervises the *Agence nationale pour l'Emploi* (ANPE), the *Association nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes* (AFPA) and the INFFO centre and supervises the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Qualifications (CEREO) jointly with the Ministry for National Education.

The National Employment Agency, *Agence nationale pour l'Emploi* (ANPE), created in 1967, implements vocational training measures aimed at job seekers or employees changing careers, in addition to its task of placing job seekers. It manages public employment support funds that contain a training element. The ANPE has 25 regional delegations and 103 departmental delegations.

Various social partners and professional organizations are involved in vocational training. In addition to the bodies set up by the public authorities on which they sit (the *Conseil national de la Formation professionnelle, de la Promotion sociale et de l'Emploi* - FPPSE – the standing committee resulting therefrom and FPPSE fund management board, *Conseil de Gestion du Fonds*) the social partners have created regulatory and administrative bodies for vocational training.

The role of these various bodies is to promote the vocational training and employment policy within their respective spheres (at national level, regional level or financial and business administration level).

The main bodies are:

- the joint committee for vocational training, CPNFP (*comité paritaire national pour la formation professionnelle*);
- the national joint commission for employment, CPNE (*commission paritaire nationale de l'emploi*);
- the regional interprofessional joint commission for employment, COPIRE (*commission paritaire interprofessionnelle régionale de l'emploi*);
- the accredited joint fund-collection body, OPCA (*organisme paritaire collecteur agréé*);

- the association for the management of alternating training funds, AGEFAL (*association pour la gestion des fonds des formations en alternance*);
- the joint committee for matters relating to personal training leave, COPACIF (*comité paritaire pour les questions liées au congé individuel de formation*).

7.3 Funding

Funding for continuing vocational training in France is provided by business and industry, the State, the regional authorities and households. In 1997, business and industry contributed 49.8%; the State 38.3%; the regional authorities 10.9%; and households 1.0%.

The law of July 1971 obliges companies with more than 10 employees to devote a certain percentage of their annual payroll cost to such training. This contribution rose from 0.8% in 1971 to 1.2% in 1987 and 1.5% in 1993. In reality, employers' contributions rose from 3.26% in 1992, to 3.29% in 1993 and 1994, 3.26% in 1995 and 3.25% in 1996. The market breakdown shows that this represents 4% for public and para-public contributors, 28% for private non-profit contributors, 43% for profit-making private contributors and 25% for private contributors.

The leading public funding body is the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, which contributes to financing training measures for job-seekers. The Ministry of National Education provides a large proportion of continuing training but only contributes a small amount (4.3%) of its funding.

Funding for State training comes mainly from the *Fonds de la Formation professionnelle et de la Promotion sociale* (FFPPS). The *Fonds national pour l'Emploi* (FNE) also makes a substantial contribution, and at a more modest level the *Fonds d'Action sociale* (FAS) and the *Association pour la Gestion du Fonds pour l'Insertion des Personnes handicapées* (AGEFIPH). These funds are sometimes topped up by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Regional authority public funding for vocational training is mainly linked to contracts concluded with the regional councils.

The State and industry sector bear most of the expense for financing vocational/continuing training. The contribution of the regions grew

significantly between 1983 and 1997, now making it the third largest fund provider. Their contribution has risen from 5.2% in 1983 to 10.9% under the current structure for financing continuing training. State funding was first transferred to the regions with the 1983 laws on decentralization, followed by the five-year law on employment and vocational training of 20 December 1993. The latter law gradually transferred qualification and pre-qualification training for young people under the age of 26 from the State to the regional councils.

7.4 Organization

The different types of training may be provided by public education institutions, centres subsidised by the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, by training institutions under the responsibility of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Trade Councils or Chambers of Agriculture, by registered private organizations or by local authorities. The law also allows enterprises to organize training for their employees as they see fit, including the recruitment of their own training staff or by contracting out to a training organization or obtaining funding through an approved joint body.

The great majority of public education institutions come under the responsibility of the Ministry for National Education. In accordance with the law of 10 July 1989, *Collèges* and *Lycées* under the State education system organize themselves into groups of institutions (GRETA) to carry out their adult training mandate. There are currently 305 GRETA, bringing together 5,900 training institutions with a combined training staff of 43,000 with varying employment conditions.

In 1968, the framework law on higher education introduced for the first time continuing training as a fundamental task of the universities, later ratified by the law of 1984. Within each university there is an "in-service training department" which implements and formulates the different training measures in collaboration with its various components (UFR, IUT, IUP, "non-personalized" schools and colleges). Special arrangements are often made for adult students: timetables arranged to suit employees, accreditation of prior skills, etc.

The national arts and crafts academy, *Conservatoire national des Arts et Métiers* (CNAM) is a major player in the world of continuing training. The training it provides, leading to higher education certificates, takes place mainly in the evening and on Saturday.

In addition, a number of certificates can be prepared in the training centres of the "*grandes écoles*" which have authorization to issue them by this means.

The *Association nationale pour la Formation professionnelle des Adultes* (AFPA) (national association for adult vocational training), which comes under supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, is a public body for vocational qualification training. It responds to the demand for vocational training and work skills training from employees, business and industry, job-seekers and regional authorities. It carries out assessment and guidance, audits and educational engineering in enterprises or regional authorities, as well as a variety of training activities. Its 262 training centres are assisted by seven teaching and technical support centres.

The task of the *Centre pour le Développement de l'Information sur la Formation permanente* (INFFO Centre) is to make information systems available to training staff (training law, documentation, telematic services, Internet site, publications).

The regions and communes participate in adult education, either directly by promoting initiatives, or indirectly by financing existing organizations and associations. They work extensively to assist certain sensitive target groups such as immigrants, young unemployed people, the long-term unemployed and the illiterate. Under the five-year law on labour, employment and vocational training of 20 December 1993, the regions are responsible for organizing continuing vocational training activities for young people under the age of 26 to enable them to obtain a qualification.

Companies with more than nine employees play an active and important role in adult training, not only through their legal obligation to devote 1.5% of their payroll cost to training (mainly vocational), but also through their works councils. They finance many cultural, sporting and continuing and personal development activities.

Any employee who has worked for five years, at least 12 months of which was in the company, is entitled to leave for skills assessment. This allows workers to analyse their vocational and personal skills, as well as their aptitudes and

motivation, in order to define a career plan and, where appropriate, a training plan.

Many associations, based on a Christian, labour and social rationale, have made it their objective to develop community education in various forms. The information is too fragmented to draw up even a brief report on their activities. Their training centres, apart from privately established ones which are not officially listed, include those of the main trade unions and political parties, as well as those of the Trade Councils, Chambers of Agriculture and Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which are financed by their members to provide them with vocational training.

Distance training is traditionally provided by the *Centre national d'Enseignement à Distance* (CNED), a national public institution under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education. Created in 1939, the CNED, which provides a wide range of training courses, today has more than 400,000 enrolments, 80% of them for adults: almost 200,000 people follow higher level training and 36,000 are enrolled for continuing vocational training. These figures reflect major growth in its activities. The CNED uses written material, as well as audio and videocassettes. On-line networks provide access to bibliographic databases, assessment tests and dialogue with the trainer for certain types of training. As a complement to distance training, the CNED offers group tutorials and practical assignments of variable duration.

There are also university distance teaching centres (CTU) in certain universities that offer distance training courses in various forms: written materials, cassettes, television and radio. A formal enrolment with the university is required.

The qualifications required at the outset depend largely on the level of training selected. The type of certificates that can be issued upon completion of a period of training fall within the general framework of French law on the recognition of qualifications:

- official certificate or diploma,
- accredited certificate or diploma,
- recognition of the qualification under a collective agreement,
- the inclusion of the qualification in a list drawn up by the national joint commissions for employment, *Commissions paritaires nationales de l'Emploi* (CPNE): the vocational qualification certificate (CQP).

Diplomas governed by the Ministry for National Education are recognized by law. Certificates and diplomas governed by other ministries are

subject to the accreditation procedure. A further method for recognizing vocational qualifications is through certificates issued by the trade branches. The CPNEs are organized into commissions at branch level and define the procedure and criteria for creating vocational qualification certificates.

Another example is the accreditation of prior skills. This process accredits the skills of a person who has worked in a job for five years and is granted by an examining board of teachers and competent persons in the activities concerned. Its purpose is to exempt applicants from some of the examinations for the diploma they wish to obtain.

The central government asks training organizations to set up modular training systems to allow trainees to follow only the courses they need. Furthermore, different methods may be used to respond to the needs of adult students. These may include traditional face-to-face teaching, as well as computer-assisted and distance training.

7.5 Statistics

Number of continuing training providers	40,362
Total number of training hours	800 million
Total number of trainees	10.750 (millions)
Number of employed trainees	7.275 (millions)
Number of job-seeking trainees	1.490 (millions)
Number of individual trainees	0.625 (millions)
Number of other trainees (e.g. civil servants, managerial)	1.360 (millions)

Access to training for employed trainees

Men	Women
37%	34.5%

Managerial staff

Technicians and first-line supervisors	54.8%
Engineers and managers	50.4%

Source: Ministry of Employment and Solidarity 1997.