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FRANCE

KEY COMPETENCES
IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
FRANCE

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The thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) systems provided in 'VET in Europe' reports. The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

Thematic perspectives provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. They are available at:
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Introduction

Making education and initial vocational training (IVET) an attractive education and training solution, in particular by ensuring that the key competences are included in IVET programmes and through the development of appropriate assessment methods, is among the 2011-20 objectives of the Bruges Communiqué (2010) [1] and Riga conclusions (2015) [2], and part of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Key competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are appropriate to a particular context. They are those that are needed by any individual for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social integration and employment. The recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 18 December 2006 [3] defines eight key competences:

(a) communication in the mother tongue;
(b) communication in foreign languages;
(c) competences in maths, science and technology;
(d) digital competence;
(e) learning to learn;
(f) social and civic competences;
(g) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
(h) cultural awareness and expression.

In France, since 2013, school system has been reformed to improve initial education and to foster the acquisition of key competences by pupils [4]. The reform act foresees that school education promotes the development of the child, allows him to acquire a culture, prepares him for the world of work and for the exercise of his responsibilities as an individual and citizen. It develops the knowledge, competences and culture required for the exercise of citizenship in the contemporary society of information and communication. It promotes the sense of initiative.' Thus, compulsory schooling [5] must guarantee to each pupil the means necessary for acquiring 'a common base of

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[1] ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf

[2] www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/news-and-press/news/european-ministers-endorse-riga-conclusions-vet

[3] eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962&from=EN

[4] Act of 8 July 2013 – guidance and planning for the restructuring of the French school system: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027677984

[5] See VET in France report(2014), Refernet France, Centre Inffo, 2014 http://www.centre-inffo.fr/refernet/IMG/pdf/VET_in_Europe_Country_report_2014.pdf

knowledge, competences and culture', to which all the lessons taught during schooling must contribute. The elements of this common base and the provisions for its gradual acquisition are defined by the government.

Since 2005, seven main (key) competences are used for the whole educational system at national level ([6]):

(a) mastery of the French language;
(b) skills in a modern foreign language;
(c) the main elements of mathematics and a scientific and technological culture;
(d) mastery of the usual information and communication techniques;
(e) humanist culture;
(f) social and civic competences;
(g) autonomy and initiative.

From 2016/17, these main (key) competences will be replaced by the so called 'common base of knowledge, competences and culture' ([7]) accompanied by measures fostering the acquisition of basic skills ([8]).

The common base of knowledge, competences and culture corresponds to the five following educational areas:

(a) languages for thinking and communicating;
(b) methods and tools for learning;
(c) education for the individual and the citizen;
(d) natural systems and technical systems;
(e) representations of the world and human activity.

These competences should be acquired in compulsory education, i.e. from age six to 16. The 'personal competences book' (updated for 2016/17) certifies their acquisition. The 2013 survey showed that upon completing compulsory education around 20% of learners have not mastered French and mathematics (Annex I).

After having followed basic knowledge courses up to age 16, learners can pursue general education or VET, including apprenticeships. VET programmes consist of vocational and general (e.g. French, history, geography and civic education,

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([6]) Decree No 2006-830 of 11 July 2006
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000818367&categorieLien=id

([7]) Decree No 2015-372 of 31 March 2015:
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/decret/2015/3/31/MENE1506516D/jo

([8]) cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/DP_rentree/70/0/Rentree2015-Dossier-de-presse_456700.pdf

mathematics, a modern foreign language, etc.) courses. The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally.

Regions (responsible for managing apprenticeships) also facilitate the acquisition of key competences in VET through measures for acquiring the 'common base of knowledge and competences ([9]).

1. Key competence: communication in the mother tongue

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	Learning of French
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	Act of 8 July 2013 – guidance and planning for the restructuring of the French school system and its measures – set up a framework for the renewal of all curricula and of the teachers training system regarding learning/teaching French as a mother tongue.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	Learners acquire key competence through the modules of VET curricula, including French (syllabus that focuses on verbal and written communication in the mother tongue). The 'apprentice basic competence approach' is used by the National agency for combating illiteracy (ANLCI) helps apprentices to improve their skills and facilitates the task of trainers to deal with learners' underperformance in French. In 2012, the agency has signed a partnership agreement with a large apprentice training centres' network to combat illiteracy and lack of other key competences of apprentices ([a]).
• training VET teachers trainers • (the same applies to all the key competences)	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([b]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences ([c]). One of the criteria for this assessment is the proper use of the French language.

([9]) Act No 2014-288 of 5 March 2014:
http://legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000028683576&categorieLien=id

• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The compulsory French language test for vocational qualifications at the national level ([d]).
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/ learning methods)	No
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	The improvement in the reading competence of VET learners was assessed in 2014 through results of reading tests on the Defence and Citizenship Day (*Journée défense et citoyenneté* – JDC) ([e]). The CEDRE programme also exists to assess students but specific data for VET learners are not available.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	The share of young people at about age 17 with reading difficulties decreased from 10.6% in 2009 to 9.6% in 2014 (see Annex 2). Their share decreases as the level of their studies increases: from 42.4% of those with lower secondary education or less, to 12.9% of graduates of a vocational baccalaureate, to 3.5% of those who have at least upper secondary general or vocational (technological) education diploma (see Annex 3).

([a]) www.ccca-btp.fr/tl_files/actualites/Communique%20de%20presse%20-%20Convention%20CCCA-BTP%20et%20ANLCI.pdf

([b]) See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France

([c]) For more information about this set of competences, see: Official gazette No. 13 of 26 March 2015
http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/13/03/7/encart6379_fiche11_404037.pdf

([d]) Order of 13 April 2010
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=F37EFFDB02C4EAD4F1BB9064E389F504.tpdila17v_1?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000030766446&dateTexte=20151124&categorieLien=id#LEGITEXT000030766446

([e]) http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/2016/75/6/depp-ni-2016-14-JDC-2015_577756.pdf

Example of an educational programme focusing on the acquisition of the key competence

(see Annex 4)

2. Key competence: communication in foreign languages

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	English, Spanish, etc.
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	

• national/regional policy document(s)	Act of 8 July 2013 – guidance and planning for the restructuring of the French school system and its attendant measures – set up a framework for the renewal of all curricula and of the teachers training system regarding foreign languages.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	From 2016/17, a national academic map of modern languages ([a]) will encourage the formation of a coherent and diversified language policy and to ensure the continuity of the learning of modern foreign and regional languages from primary to upper secondary education, including VET. It will diversify the offer of languages. One foreign language is compulsory in upper secondary VET. Since 2009, a second modern language is mandatory for the services sector.
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([b]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During the traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences related to their field of teaching.
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	National foreign language tests are compulsory for learners in VET. They must pass a test (written and oral) in a foreign language to obtain vocational qualification. Exams for the second foreign language are optional.
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	National education website ([c]) and national portal dedicated to modern languages ([d]) include online support resources for teaching the foreign languages.
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	In 2011, France took part in the first phase of the European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC) by the European Commission. The survey assessed the language competences of pupils at the end of compulsory education (see Annex 5), and offered a global picture of language competences by level at the entrance in upper secondary school.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	The European Survey on Language Competences (2011) results show that the level of competence of French students (including VET) in English and Spanish do not reach the requirements formulated in the curricula. Overall, they are lower than those of their foreign counterparts.

(a)   Circular No 2015-173 of 20.10.2015:
http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=94580
(b)   See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France
(c)   http://eduscol.education.fr/pid31432/enseigner-les-langues-vivantes.html
(d)   http://eduscol.education.fr/langues-vivantes/?feuilleCSS=firefox

3.   Key competence: competences in mathematics, science and technology

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	The 'mathematics strategy' (2014) (a) is designed to help improving learners' (including VET) level in maths. It includes 10 key measures in three focus areas: mathematics curricula attuned with the modern world, teachers who are better trained and given better support to ensure the success of their students and giving mathematics a new image. Examples of measures are: • the creation of a national portal dedicated to mathematics (b); • strengthened initial and continuous training of teachers; • an emphasis on the fun aspect of mathematics.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	The acquisition of the competence is provided through the general mandatory syllabi for VET programmes, mainly managed by the Education Ministry.
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions (c). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences related to their field of teaching, as teaching mathematics, science or technology.
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The assessment is defined at the national level, as for all the general subjects of the vocational qualifications.
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes

How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	National statistical data compiled from assessment tests (see Annex 6), in particular the CEDRE programme.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	In 2008-14, the share of students with low level in mathematics increased sharply (see Annex 6) ([d]), making the learning of mathematics a key issue in the context of the recent reforms to the French education system and programmes ([e]).

([a]) cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/12_decembre/30/2/dp-l-ecole-change-avec-vous-strategie-mathematiques_373302.pdf

([b]) http://eduscol.education.fr/maths

([c]) See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France

([d]) See also: Information memo No. 13 Defence and citizenship day 2013 http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/2014/06/4/DEPP_NI_2014_13_JDC_2013_maths_317064.pdf

([e]) See also the Report on the achievements of pupils in the area of numeracy and arithmetic at the end of primary school, CNESCO 2015 http://www.cnesco.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Acquis-des-%C3%A9l%C3%A8ves.pdf

4. Key competence: digital competence

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	Computing
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	Stemming from a wide national consultation on digital technology in schools in 2015, a 'digital plan for education' was launched. It will be deployed in two phases: • an initial phase in 2015/16 involving pilot schools and an exceptional training plan to establish a common digital culture within the national education system and allow digital technology to be integrated into teaching; • a deployment phase in 2016-18 coinciding with the reform of the lower secondary schools ([a]).
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	No

• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([b]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences related to their field of teaching, as teaching computing.
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The assessment of digital competence is defined at the national level for all general subjects in VET. Moreover, since 2001, the Ministry responsible for the national education issues to VET learners the Computing and Internet Certificate (B2i). This certificate certifies the level acquired by students in mastering multimedia tools and the internet ([c]).
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	The national assessment of on-screen reading (LSE) is designed to assess the reading competences of students on a digital medium at the end of compulsory schooling (in a broad sense including access to, understanding and use of information). The reference survey has been conducted in 2014 with 8 000 pupils from 321 providers.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	The LSE study shows in particular that nearly six out of 10 students master the organisation of a digital document and navigation on a website. However, 4 students out of ten struggle to understand writing on a digital medium, either because of a lack of expertise, or because of difficulty in remembering or being attentive ([d]).

([a])   The digital plan: a gradual deployment – Press Kit 2015
        http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/DP_rentree/28/5/2015_rentreescolaire_fiche_11_456285.pdf

([b])   See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France

([c])   Order of 24 July 2013
        http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027811513&dateTexte=&oldAction=dernierJO&categorieLien=id

([d])   Information memo, No 43, November 2015 http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/2015/67/5/depp-ni-2015-43-lecture-support-numerique-fin-college_502675.pdf

5. Key competence: learning to learn

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	Methods and tools for learning

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes

How is it promoted?	
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	The basics of methods and tools for learning are given during compulsory education up to sixteen years. The second area of the new common knowledge, competences and culture base is also in line with the 'methods and tools for learning'. In vocational path, teachers promote key competences through practical training courses. Learners alternate study and work periods or internships in a professional environment.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	No
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([a]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. Among the competences assessed at the end of their traineeship, some are specifically related to the ability of setting up and conducting learning and pedagogical support situations ([b]).
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	No
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No

The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes

How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	Assessment is performed through a cross-cutting approach through the tests related to the other key competences, which allows learning difficulties to be identified in addition to the mastery of the competences themselves.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No

Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	No data

(a)   See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France
(b)   For more information about this set of competences, see: Official gazette No. 13 of 26 March 2015
       http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/13/03/7/encart6379_fiche11_404037.pdf

Example of an educational curriculum focusing on the acquisition of the 'learning to learn' key competence

'Personalised support' in general, technological and vocational upper secondary schools is available nationally since 2010 ([10]). It allows students to develop their key competences and to strengthen the working methods, for example through methodological workshops. Each school has autonomy to implement the 'personalised support', with an average duration of two hours per week. For this purpose, examples of modules (e.g. 'managing stress for improved learning', 'learning to argue' and 'developing one's memory') are available on the national portal of educational professionals ([11]).

In addition, to help the students construct their training project and, if necessary, make changes along the way, the school implements for all interested, a personalised support in the form of tutoring ([12]). Volunteer teachers are paid for working over-time ([13]).

6.   Key competence: interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	History, geography and moral and civic education; Prevention-health-environment (*Prévention-santé-environnement* – PSE)
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	

([10])   Circular No 2010-013 of 29 January 2010:
         http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid50471/mene1002847c.html

([11])   http://eduscol.education.fr/cid55003/accompagner-le-lyceen-methodologie.html

([12])   Circular No 2010-011 of 29 January 2010:
         http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid50476/mene1002844c.html

([13])   Decree No 2010-1065 of 8 September 2010:
         http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000022799119&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id

• national/regional policy document(s)	A 'citizen programme' is in place since 2015/16 ([a]). It lasts from primary until the end of upper secondary education, including VET. It is built around moral and civic teaching, media and information education, and teaches learners about judgement, argument and debate. The programme is assessed at the end of compulsory schooling (age 16) while learners continue in this programme also in upper secondary school.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	The moral and civic education curriculum implemented since 2015 at upper secondary education is available for VET learners, including apprentices. Topics that may be included in the curriculum are 'the individual and the rule of law', 'equality and discrimination', 'exercising the citizenship in France and EU' and 'pluralism of beliefs and secularism'. 'Prevention-Health-Environment' topic addresses health, consumption, professional integration and the professional environment issues, for example managing a budget or looking for a job. It was specifically implemented in VET curricula since 2009.
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([b]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences ([c]) related to their field of teaching, for the ones who teach some academic topics.
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The assessment of history, geography and moral and civic education; as well as prevention-health-environment digital competence, are defined at the national level.
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No

The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	The CEDRE programme provides a national monitoring framework for the skills related to the main academic topics, among them history & geography, and moral & civic education. The methodology provides some data related to one specific topic every six years.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No

• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	In 2006-12, the performance of pupils at the end of compulsory schooling in history-geography and civic education significantly deteriorated. A fall of 11 points in the average score of students have been observed, which is significant regarding the scale score used based on an average result of 250 points. The proportion of students with civic and social competences increased from 15% in 2006 to 21% in 2012 ([d]).

[a] Circular No. 2015-085 of 3 June 2015
http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=89301
[b] See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France
[c] For more information about this set of competences, see: *Official gazette* No 13 of 26 March 2015
http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/13/03/7/encart6379_fiche11_404037.pdf
[d] Information memo – DEPP – No 13.11 – June 2013
http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/2013/06/8/DEPP_NI_2013_11_CEDRE_acquis_eleves_troisieme_histoire_geographie_education_civique_2012_258068.pdf

7.   Key competence: entrepreneurship

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	No specific national strategy exists for entrepreneurship education. Depending the curricula, entrepreneurship education is integrated as a cross-curricular objective; it exists on its own as a specific topic only for tertiary education.
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	Aid for creating and taking over businesses open to young people is defined by regulations.
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	Two courses cover this competence in the vocational baccalaureate: economics-law and economics-management
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions ([a]). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences including some competences related to the entrepreneurship ([b]).
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	A national 'Youth Initiatives' exam is organised every year by the Ministry of National Education to reward the best enterprise creation projects ([c]).
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No

The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	Yes
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	The Agency For the Creation of Enterprises (APCE) publishes the study on enterprise creation by youngers below 30 years of age ([d]). The study shows that 34% among the upper secondary students (including VET) and university students wish to create their own enterprise.
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	5% of entrepreneurs are under age 30. Since 2006, the number of new enterprises by young people has almost tripled ([e]).

([a]) See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France.
([b]) For more information about this set of competences, see: *Official gazette* No 13 of 26 March 2015.
  http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/13/03/7/encart6379_fiche11_404037.pdf
([c]) Circular No 2007-100 of 27 April 2007: http://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/2007/19/MENE0701056C.htm
([d]) http://media.afecreation.fr/file/44/8/2015-03_fiche-thematique-jeunes.78107.78448.pdf
([e]) The creation of enterprises by young people under the age of 30 – APCE, 2015:
  http://media.apce.com/file/44/8/2015-03_fiche-thematique-jeunes.78107.78448.pdf

8. Key competence: cultural expression

The title(s) in the national context (if different)	Applied arts and artistic cultures
The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	No
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	An 'artistic and cultural educational programme' is implemented throughout schooling for all educational pathways, including VET. It promotes equal access to art and culture for all young people and is based on three areas of action: meetings with artists and works, individual and collective practices in different artistic fields and knowledge which enable the acquisition of cultural benchmarks as well as developing a faculty of judgement and a critical sense ([a]). A 'cultural contact person' is designated in each upper secondary school, including VET. This person is a volunteer teacher whose mission is to ensure the coherence, quality and follow-up of the implementation of the cultural component of the school project. The teacher receives

	an allowance for this role. Each upper secondary VET school is autonomous to develop local partnerships about artistic and cultural activities.
• training VET teachers trainers	Teacher training is subject to specific provisions (^{b}). To become a teacher in upper secondary VET candidates should pass a national exam. Successful candidates are appointed as VET trainee teachers and undergo a part-time 1-year traineeship in schools. During their traineeship, they learn teaching strategies for coping with problems and situations where students are facing difficulties in understanding. At the end of their traineeship, the trainee teachers are assessed against a set of benchmark competences (^{c}). One of the criteria for this assessment is the proper ability to teach applied arts and artistic culture.
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The assessment related to arts and cultural courses is defined at the national level.
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	Goncourt prize for upper secondary school students (*Prix Goncourt des lycéens*) awards each year one novel chosen by the students from upper secondary school, between a dozen of new books selected by the Goncourt Academy.
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	No
How is it monitored?	
• through international or national statistical data	No
• survey(s)	No
• benchmark(s)	No
• other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	No data

(^{a})   Order of 1 July 2015: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000030852198
(^{b})   See ReferNet article – Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET 2015, France.
(^{c})   For more information about this set of competences, see: *Official gazette* No 13 of 26 March 2015: http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/13/03/7/encart6379_fiche11_404037.pdf

Conclusions

Promoting the acquisition of key competences in VET is an important and complex issue in France.

Indeed, as the statistics and studies show, some of the pupils who complete their compulsory schooling and enter vocational training have not acquired certain basic competences or have a low level of competences. VET enables learning an occupation, while at the same time allowing students to continue acquiring key competences. Training programmes for vocational qualifications include teaching of general subjects ensuring continuity with the general education, and many curricula are

implemented in a cross-cutting way to promote the acquisition of key competences beyond the teaching curricula.

The 2013 survey on language skills ([14]) shows that key competences are important for working life. While only 13% of employees have poor writing skills, the figure increases to 21% for unemployed and 37% for inactive people. Poor mastery of the written word multiplies the probability of being inactive rather than active by 1.7 ([15]). Illiteracy may also prolong job-seeking. Around third of unemployed literacy issues have been looking for a job for over two years. Continuing training is also affected, since illiterate adults on the labour market receive less training than others. Only 34% of people with poor mastery of writing or reading report having been on one or more training courses in the past five years against 59% of literate adults.

This information highlights the importance of the creation of the 'knowledge and vocational competences base' in France in 2014 ([16]). The base comprises key competence training for employees and job seekers, useful for working, social, civic and cultural life.
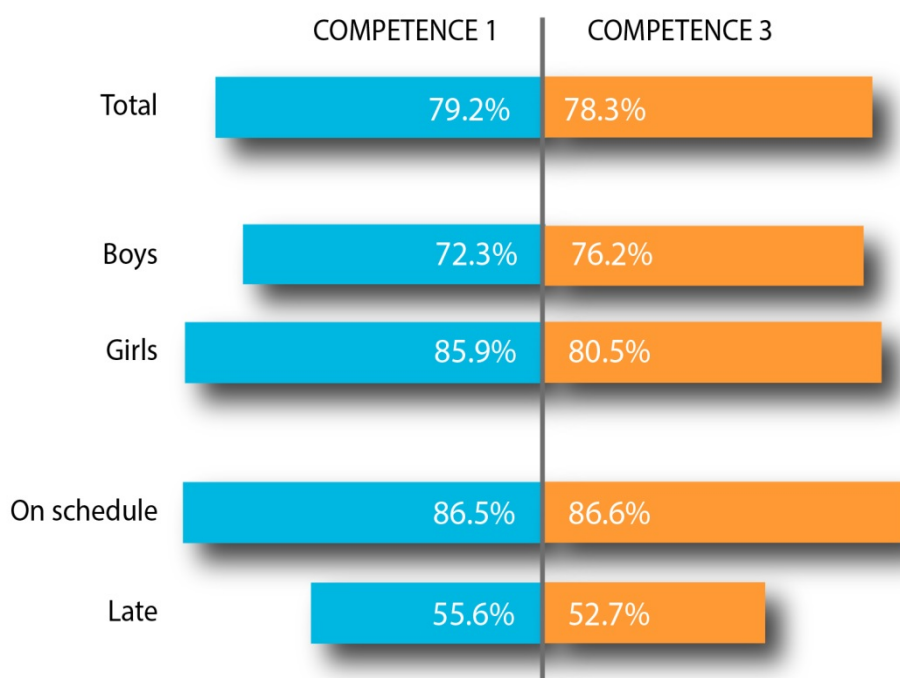

([14]) Insufficient mastery of basic knowledge: an obstacle for integrating on the labour market? *Dares Analyses*, July 2013, No 045: http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2013-045.pdf

([15]) This refers to an odd ratio: all other factors being equal, one person with poor mastery of the written word has got a risk 1.7 times higher of being inactive.

([16]) Decree No 2015-172 of 13 February 2015: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/decret/2015/2/13/ETSD1431206D/jo

ANNEX 1.
Proportion of students mastering competences 1 (French) and 3 (mathematics and a scientific and technological culture) at the end of compulsory schooling at age 16 in 2013

	COMPETENCE 1	COMPETENCE 3
Total	79.2%	78.3%
Boys	72.3%	76.2%
Girls	85.9%	80.5%
On schedule	86.5%	86.6%
Late	55.6%	52.7%

Legend: 'late' refers to students whose age is higher than expected for their class level.

Source: MENESR-DEPP, assessments of competences 1 and 3 of the base by year 10 students, May 2013.

Field: year 10 students, Metropolitan France plus overseas departments, public and private under contract.

In: *L'état de l'École 2015*. Costs, activities, statistical results – annual publications – Number 25, October 2015: http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/etat25/43/0/depp-etat-ecole-2015-maitrise-competences-socle_484430.pdf

ANNEX 2.
The reading competences of young people in 2009-14 (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total						
Good readers	79.8	79.6	80.3	81.0	81.8	81.8
Poor readers	9.6	9.6	9.4	9.2	8.6	8.6
With reading difficulties	10.6	10.8	10.4	9.9	9.6	9.6
including with serious difficulties	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.1	4.1
Boys						
Good readers	78.0	77.9	78.9	79.9	80.9	80.9
Poor readers	9.4	9.5	9.0	8.7	8.1	8.0
With reading difficulties	12.6	12.6	12.1	11.5	11.1	11.0
including with serious difficulties	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.0	4.6	4.5
Girls						
Good readers	81.7	81.5	81.7	82.1	82.7	82.6
Poor readers	9.7	9.8	9.7	9.6	9.2	9.2
With reading difficulties	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.3	8.1	8.2
including with serious difficulties	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.7

NB: because of rounding, the totals of the columns may not add up to exactly 100%.
The survey covers young people from 16 to 25 years, with an average age of 17.

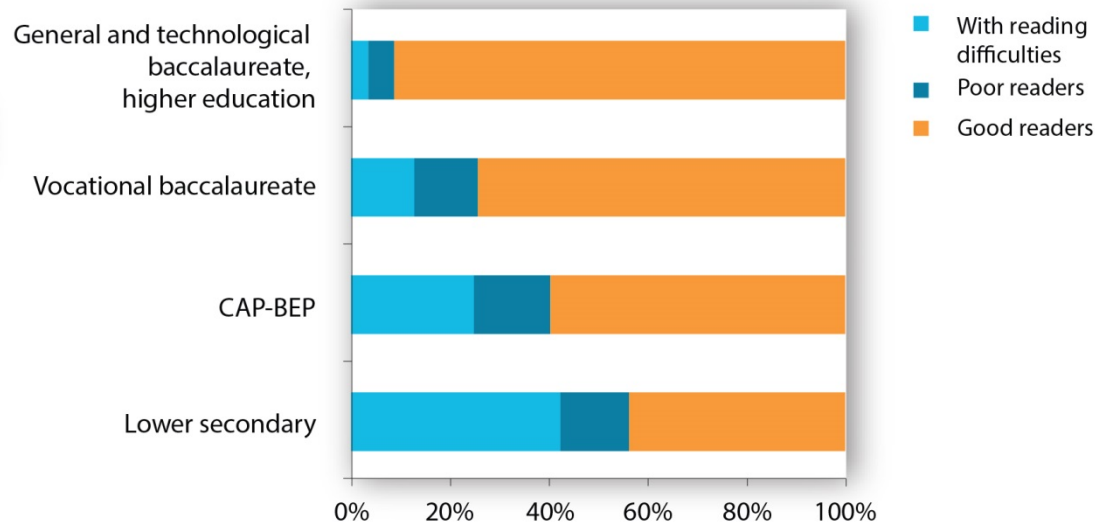Field: Metropolitan France + Overseas departments including Mayotte since 2009

Sources: Ministry of Defence-DSN; MENESR-DEPP.

In: L'état de l'École 2015. Costs, activities, statistical results - annual publications - Number 25, October 2015:
http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/etat25/42/4/depp-etat-ecole-2015-competences-lecture-jeunes-JDC_484424.pdf

ANNEX 3.
The reading competences of young people (%)

ANNEX 4.
Sample learning outcomes for the first year of preparatory training for the vocational baccalaureate

Construction of information
- Do the media tell the truth?
- How to ensure that information is well based?
- Can one live without getting information?

Let's talk about tastes and fashions
- Tastes differ from one generation to the other. Are those of today "better" than those of previous generations?
- How can one share one's likes within a process of dialogue and respect?
- How does knowledge of a work and its reception help form one's tastes and/or make one more open to what others like?

Characters' stories
- Are the literary heroes of yesterday the heroes of today?
- How does the history of the character studied, his adventures and his development help the reader to construct his/her own personality?
- Are the values that embody the character studied those of the author or those of an era?

Abilities	Knowledge	Attitudes
Distinguish information, comment, take a position. **Question the context of the production of information, identify the sources.** **Report verbally on a current event presented through various media.** **Write a press article, taking into account the constraints of a journalistic genre.** **Decode the visual effects in the staging of the information.**	*Literary field*: Period: immediate contemporary and the development of new media. *Journalistic field*: News story, reportage, brief. *Linguistic field*: Terms: objectivity/subjectivity. Information and media terms. Active, passive, impersonal sentence. Replacement words and textual consistency. Speaking, values of pronouns, tenses and verbal modes. *History of the arts*: Theme: "Arts, information, communications"	Take an interest in the news, read the press, watch a news bulletin, use the internet and multimedia. Be an active reader and detached from the information. Adapt, in the approach to the text and the image, one's attitude to the media used and the purpose of the reading.

Source: French language teaching programme for the preparatory classes for the vocational baccalaureate – Annex (order of 10 February 2009) http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/special_2/24/5/francais_44245.pdf

ANNEX 5.
Foreign language skills of pupils at the end of compulsory schooling. First results of the European Survey on Language Competences 2011.

Distribution of students by level of the Common European framework of reference for languages (CEFRL) in English
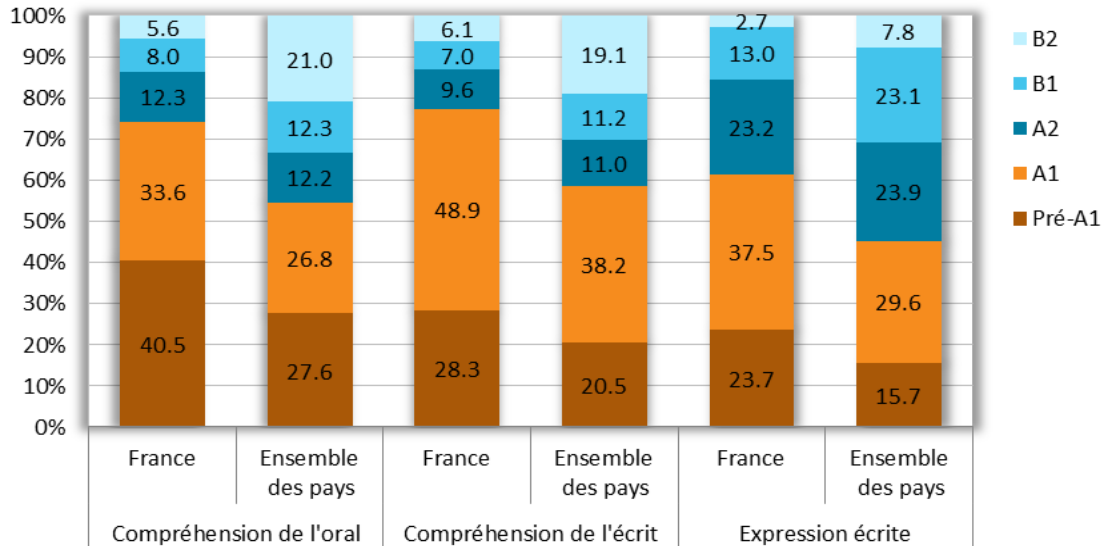
Six levels of performance: beginner learners (A1 and A2), independent users (B1 and B2), experienced learners (C1 and C2):

- percentage of French young people who have mastered at least level A2 (beginner pupils) in understanding speaking for English = 26%;
- percentage of French young people who have mastered at least level A2 (beginner pupils) in understanding writing for English = 22.8 %;
- percentage of French young people who have mastered at least level A2 (beginner pupils) in written production for English = 38.8 %.
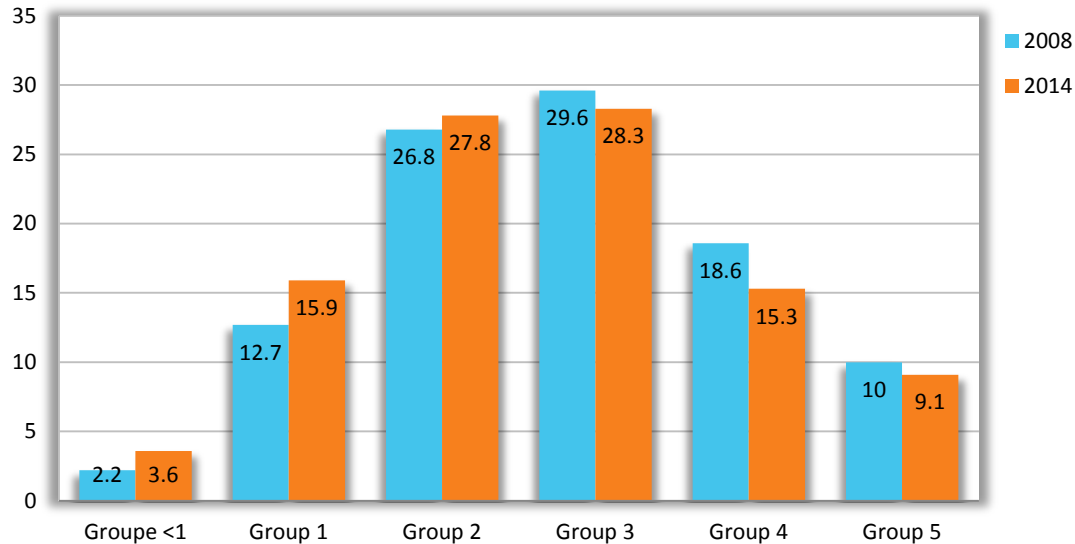
Methodology: the survey involved 49 562 pupils from 16 European countries or administrative entities.

Source: MEN-DEPP/SurveyLang

ANNEX 6.
Competences in mathematics at the end of compulsory schooling

Changes in the average score in mathematics and distribution of students by group level in 2008 and in 2014

A representative sample of pupils at the end of compulsory schooling took an assessment test in mathematics in 2008, and then another sample took the same type of test in 2014. The groups are formed according to the pupils' results. Therefore, group < 1 corresponds to very low level pupils among these pupils, in 2008 (blue) and in 2014 (red). By contrast, the part made up of higher scores corresponds to group 5.

This allows you to observe that the percentage of students in the low level groups in mathematics increased between 2008 and 2014, and that conversely, the percentage of pupils in the good and very good level groups has declined.

Reading: in 2014, 28.3% of pupils were in the level 3 group against 29.6% in 2008.

NB: because of rounding, the totals of the percentages may not add up to exactly 100.

Field: Metropolitan France, public and private under contract.

Source: L'état de l'École 2015. Costs, activities, statistical results - annual publications - Number 25, October 2015: http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/etat25/42/6/depp-etat-ecole-2015-cedre-competences-mathematiques-fin-college_484426.pdf

ANNEX 7.
Example of an educational curriculum focusing on the acquisition of the 'sense of entrepreneurship and initiative'

Many measures foster the acquisition of this competence in VET. For example, the 'Future programme' ([17]) is designed to enable every pupil to understand the economic world and the world of work, to be aware of the diversity of professions and training, to develop one's sense of commitment and initiative and develop one's educational and vocational project. It operates throughout a pupil's schooling. Contributions by partners from economic, social and professional circles allow the acquisition of this knowledge and these competences to be consolidated, in particular by:

- discovery activities (visits to companies, forums, talks and discussions);
- immersion activities in a professional environment (class in a company, internships);
- assisted projects (*mini-enterprises*, reporting on professions).

Thus, teachers may decide to set up a '*Mini-enterprise*' programme in their class and to organise it with the pupils. Mini-enterprises enable secondary school students of the technological and vocational sections to find out about creating a business. They develop a product or service, with a view to marketing it.

The 'campus of professions and qualifications' ([18]) is another example of a programme promoting the sense of enterprise and initiative. It brings together vocational training stakeholders: *vocational and general & vocational upper secondary schools*, apprentice training centres, training providers, higher education institutions, including engineering schools, research laboratories and businesses. This allows students to study within a network linked to their professional sector, and to work on concrete projects. For example, the 'Auvergne aeronautics campus' has a technical training platform dedicated to aircraft maintenance. This centre is located on an airport site ([19]).

([17]) Order of 1 July 2015:
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000030852189

([18]) Innovation in VET, Refernet France 2014: http://www.centre-inffo.fr/refernet/IMG/pdf/Innovation_in_VET.pdf

([19]) http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/07_-_juillet/95/1/CMQ2015_auvergne_aeronautique_447951.pdf

ANNEX 8.
Glossary

Agence nationale de lutte contre l'illettrisme (ANLCI) – National Agency for Combating Illiteracy: Public Interest Group tasked with promoting at the national, regional and local levels, all activities that contribute to measuring, preventing and combating illiteracy and promoting access by all to reading, writing and basic competences.

Agence Pour la Création d'Entreprises (APCE) – Agency For the Creation of Enterprises: Association created in 1979 at the initiative of the public authorities, the Agency For the Creation of Enterprises has worked since then assisting people with projects for creating a company or taking over an existing one as well as professional support personnel and local and public authorities. It now receives particular support from the State. It carries out a general interest mission which meets a national desire: to promote a sense of entrepreneurship and contribute to making France a great country for entrepreneurs who wish to develop their businesses there. The APCE analyses business creation and publishes studies, statistics and reports of national and regional economic trends.

Baccalauréat professionnel – Vocational baccalaureate: National diploma that certifies that its holders are able to practise a highly qualified occupation. The vocational baccalaureate is award for a vocational specialism. Holders of it are able to enter the world of work or continue their studies.

Comité de concertation et de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment et des travaux publics (CCCA-BTP) – Building and Public Works Apprenticeships Consultation and Coordination Committee: A group responsible for setting up and coordinating initial vocational training policy through apprenticeships for the building and public works sector.

Mini-enterprises (Mini-entreprises): initiate secondary school students in the technological and vocational sections in creating a business. These enterprises bring together young volunteers. They are supervised by a teacher and a professional adviser and develop a marketable product or a service.

Goncourt prize for upper secondary school students (Prix Goncourt des lycéens): Organised by the Ministry of National Education, this enables students to read and study the selection of novels of a literary prize. It concerns classes of upper secondary school students studying general, scientific or technical programmes. Classes are selected according to the reasons given by their teachers

CEDRE programme: The cycle of disciplinary assessments carried out on samples (CEDRE), begun in 2003, measures the competences of pupils at the end of primary school and at the end of lower secondary school. It covers most disciplinary fields covered in the programmes: mastery of the language (primary), general and language competences (lower secondary), modern foreign languages, history and geography

and civic education, experimental sciences, mathematics. Presentation of the results allows students' performances to be gauged according to levels. Renewed at regular intervals, these assessments are used to monitor the evolution of the 'level of the pupils' over time.