

**FRANCE**

**Summary**

**Country Report on the Vocational Education and  
Training system, REFERNET Cedefop**

**and**

**Summary report on Vocational Education and  
Training (VET) for learners with Special  
Educational Needs (SEN)**



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# 1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

## 1.1 Overview IVET system

### 1.1.1 IVET at lower secondary level

The Collège [Lower secondary high school] is attended by all children after primary school no later than the age of 12, apart from:

- children with severe handicap which does not allow them to be educated in an ordinary school. Those children attend specialist establishments, called *établissements régionaux d'enseignement adapté* [Special general and Professional Education Institutes], managed by the Ministry of National Education or the Ministry of Health;
- children who met with serious learning difficulties after primary school.

Those children attend *sections d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté* - SEGPA [Special General and Professional Education Institutes] within the *collège* structure.

This level does not lead to a vocational qualification. There is no professional education at the lower secondary level.

### 1.1.2 IVET at the upper secondary education (school-based and alternance)

Pupils at 15 years-old (or more if they repeated a year) join either a general education and technological high school (*lycée d'enseignement général et technologique*) to obtain a general or technical education (in three years); or a vocational high school (*lycée professionnel*) to obtain a *certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* -CAP) or a technical school certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles* - BEP) in two years, and then in some cases, a vocational high school diploma (*baccalauréat professionnelle*) after two additional years.

	VOCATIONAL PROGRAM	GENERAL & PRE VOCATIONAL PROGRAM
FRANCE	56%	44%
EU 25	46%	54%

Vocational programmes include vocational secondary schools and apprenticeship that train students to a professional qualification, and technological education geared toward higher professional education.

### 1.1.3 Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship offers alternating training provided by both a company and an apprentice training centre (*centre de formation d'apprentis*, CFA) for students from 16-25 year-old. Considered to be a form of basic education, it prepares for all professional qualifications. The apprenticeship contract is a contract of employment of a particular type which is governed by the *Code du Travail* [labour code].

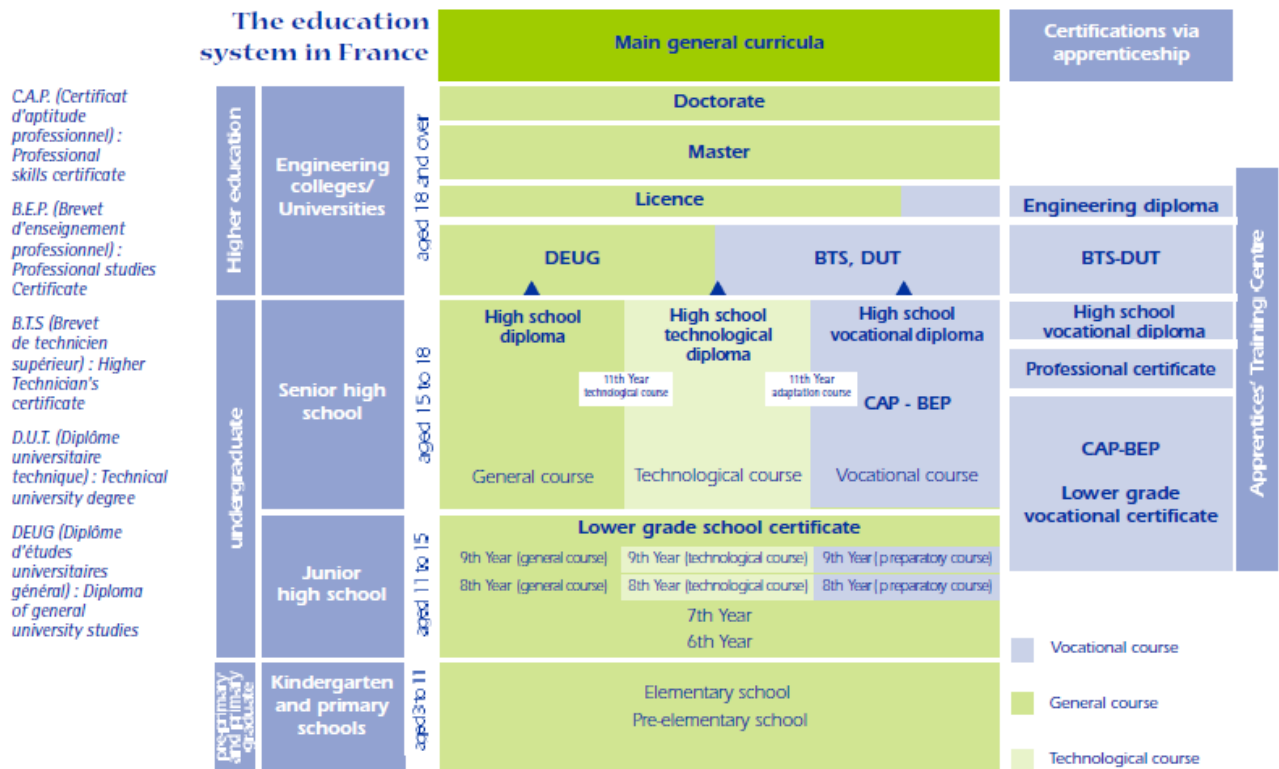
### 1.1.4 Training

Training takes places both within the company (75% of the total time) and at a *Centre de Formation des Apprentis*, CFA [Apprenticeship Training Centre] 25 % of the total time.

### 1.1.5 Other youth programmes and alternative pathways

From October 2004, the "professionalisation contract" tailored to facilitate the integration of young people aged 16 to 25, without or with inadequate qualifications on the labour market. The aim is to help them to get a job.

## 1.2 Diagram of the education and training system



## 1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

Fighting unemployment and lacking of qualification in young people had promoted many measures designed to better suit initial training offers to the needs of the companies.

Agreement with social partners (national inter professional agreement on December 5th, 2003) in implementation of the contract of professionalization intended not only for the young people but also for the adults job-seekers, and which contains a sandwich course and/or a support program to enable them to gain work experience while studying.

The apprenticeship system was modernised in 1987, and makes it possible for young people to sign a series of several contracts and thereby obtain a diploma above the professional certificate of capacity level (Level 2). The number of students has decreased from 2001 and the government has tried to boost it (17% increment from 2002 to 2007) through hiring subsidies (law of programming for the social cohesion on January 18th, 2005).

The “Law relative to the liberties and to the local responsibilities” of August 13th, 2004 strengthens the role of the regional councils on defining and implement the regional policies related to apprenticeship and vocational training.

The “Law of programming for the social cohesion” on January 18th, 2005 set up a strengthened vocational preparation programme addressed to the needs of young people between 16 and 25 facing different difficulties and often with no qualifications.

## 1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for making educational policy, governing vocational training in schools and through apprenticeship. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is similarly responsible for professional agricultural training. At local level 26 regional councils (regions) taking on a central role in vocational training, particularly for



young people between the ages of 16 to 25, for vocational training interns, and for young people working under apprenticeship contracts. The regions elaborate a PRDFP: “plan for developing the vocational training” (Plan régional de développement de la formation professionnelle) which concerns both initial and continual training. In order to promote the co-ordination of vocational training policy and action, French laws 2002-73 dated January 17, 2002 and 2002-92 dated January 22, 2002 instituted regional employment and vocational training co-ordination committees.

### **Policies:**

In June 2000 all laws governing education were compiled, forming a single Educational Code. In December 2004, Ministry of Education presented a bill «about orientation for the future of the School”. The target is: 50 % of an age group attain a higher education diploma.

The law n° 2005-380 of April 23rd, 2005, on orientation and programme for the future of the school with the objectives on: 100 % of pupils attain a diploma or a recognized qualification, at the end of their compulsory education; 80 % of an age group reach the level of the high school diploma (end of upper secondary education).

### **1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in IVET**

- Teachers in vocational and technical education. Their entrance examination is based on their professional knowledge and on previous professional experience in the relevant trade (accounting, hotel management, cabinet-making, etc). For the most part (90%), teachers are civil servants, and their status and rank is determined by national entrance examinations for admission to the profession and regulated by the state.
- The apprentice master is an employee responsible for training a young apprentice within the company.

### **1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs**

Programmes:

- The General Planning Commission carries out studies to gauge developments in trade areas and qualifications. For examples, a “Trade and Qualification Forecasting Study” was delivered to the Prime Minister in December 2002.
- Additional forecasting studies are carried out in each broad business sector and occupational category, from time to time, at the request of the Ministry of Education.
- From 2005, EDEC (development agreement for the employment and the skills - *engagement de développement de l'emploi et des compétences*).

The State, the representative organisations within a trade sector and one or more external operators take part in a continuous study elaborated in three phases: diagnostics, possible change scenarios and recommended actions, which is intended to help better anticipate changes. The Regional Training and Employment Observatories and The regional observatories of professions and qualifications (observatoires régional des métiers et des qualifications).

### **1.7 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET**

France's situation for what concerns information, guidance and counselling is characterised by a great deal of variety and complexity in the services offered to its users. The “Law of 2004 arranges that the region "defines the priorities relative to the information, guidance and counselling ". Since then, the Regions have been recognized to be invested



with a mission of coordination of the information, guidance and counselling. Two of the Ministries are particularly involved, namely those in charge, respectively, of education and employment. The services of the Ministry of National Education are targeted mainly towards the school-aged population (students of lower and upper secondary schools as well as university students). Its activities take place inside schools, but also in information and guidance centres (CIO). The services are offered mainly by specialists - psychologist-guidance counsellors - but are also handled by non-specialists, namely the students' main teachers. In addition, the Ministry is responsible for a major organisation in charge of producing information on studies and professions - the National Office for Information on Instruction and Professions (ONISEP).

### **1.8 Funding for initial vocational education and training**

The “Law dated 13 August 2004 relative to local freedoms and responsibilities further developed the decentralisation process”. Regions have been granted general authority over vocational training for “young people and adults seeking employment or a career change.”

The State is responsible for the remuneration of teachers and other educational and guidance staff. However, it is the local authorities that are now responsible for investment and operations.

The *Regions*, with regard to higher secondary education establishments in particular (high schools and regional special education schools or EREAs, for example), are responsible for:

- use of the facilities by trainees, food services, housing, and general and technical maintenance, with the exception of the guidance and supervision of students for establishments under regional responsibility;
- recruiting and managing technicians, labourers, and service staff;
- building, renovating, expanding, performing major repairs, equipment, and operations for establishments under regional responsibility.

The regions contribute to functioning costs in secondary schools, agricultural secondary schools and special education institutions. They can also give investment grants to help private technical instruction (technological and vocational secondary schools).

### **1.9 References**

Pigeaud, R., Rousseau, R., Hérault, S., Blanpain, N., and Némili, R (2008): France Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System. EknowVet – Thematics Overviews. Report within the Framework of ReferNet France and Centre for Information on continuing vocational training. Cedefop.



## 2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

### 2.1 Population

Law no. 2005-102, 11 February 2005: Definition of 'disabled': What constitutes a disability, within the meaning of the current law, is any limit on activity or restriction on participation in general society experienced by a person within his environment, by reason of a significant, long-lasting or permanent alteration of one or several physical, cognitive or mental functions or multiple disabilities or a disabling health condition.

This law gives a definition of disability that does not reduce the disabled person to their limitations, but attributes their difficulties to the obstacles and limitations that they suffer in their environment (educational, social or professional). In terms of children or adolescents of school age, this means that they cannot be discriminated against on the basis of their ability or inability to follow the regular school path and that the failure or success of their education is not predetermined by their limitations, but depends on the ability of the school environment to recognise their particular needs and provide an adapted response.

### 2.2 Organisation and Provision of Vet programmes

#### 2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

Currently SEN students have 5 VET options.

- Special VET schools that are mainly run by NGOs made up of disabled persons or parents of a disabled child. In 2006, 19,400 (23.5%) children and adolescents enrolled in special schools (excluding those enrolled in special schools for children with multiple disabilities) followed a VET course. Students enrolled in special schools for children with a visual impairment (28.2%), or hearing impairment (25.7%) and those enrolled in experimental special schools (25.6%) are more likely to follow VET courses.
- Regular VET opportunities that take place in regular schools under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.
- In 2010, 60,118 (25.1%) students with SEN enrolled in lower secondary education followed a VET course provided within special classes called "section d'enseignement Général et professionnel Adapté" (SEGPA). Students with mental health issues are disproportionately represented in such courses. These courses aim to provide students with qualifications and prepare them to develop a career plan and be included in society. Courses are proposed by special education teachers or by teachers from upper secondary VET schools.
- In the same year (2010), 6,313 (48.8%) of students with SEN enrolled in upper secondary education followed a VET education programme compared to 33% of the general school population. Particularly represented were students with an intellectual impairment (72.6%) or a mental health issue (59.2%). Of these students, 13.3% were enrolled in special classes called 'unités locales d'inclusion scolaire' (ULIS), which was particularly common for students with an intellectual impairment (45.5%).
- The Apprenticeship system falls mainly within the competence of the regions and the Chamber of trade or "métiers" and is supported by the AGEFIPH, which spent 70.2 million euros in 2010 on fostering apprenticeships and career development. In 2010, 2495 persons with disabilities accessed the apprenticeship system, which corresponds to 0.9% of all apprentices. The apprentices are predominantly male (75%) and 20 years old on





average. In 34% of cases they are trained in firms with over 20 employees and in 55% of cases, they are in the tertiary sector.

- VET opportunities are made available to disabled workers within the framework of the active labour market policies, under the aegis of the regions and supported by the AGEFIPH, which spent 128.8 million euros on this area in 2010. In 2010, 3,029 disabled people received a “contrat de professionnalisation” which corresponds to 2% of total recipients (147,990). Beneficiaries are predominantly male (52%) and 37 years old on average. In 61% of cases they work in firms with over 20 employees and work in the tertiary sector in 81% of cases.

From a legal point of view, persons with disabilities are entitled to the same educational opportunities as the general population and there is a trend for promoting access to inclusive VET opportunities.

### *2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings*

Education can be provided on an individual or collective basis, in a regular environment or in a medical-social establishment and 9% of disabled students are in private education.

In primary education, 64% of disabled students attend regular classes (individual school), as do 78% in secondary education. 81% and 92% of them respectively are enrolled full-time, whilst the rest are educated part time, which includes, in most cases, therapeutic monitoring and/or additional education (92%).

At the lower secondary education level, 27% of the students who were individually schooled received adapted teaching in the form of ‘SEGPA’ (Section of General and Vocational Adapted Education) in 2010. At upper secondary level however, education is received in EREA (Regional Adapted Education establishments).

There are 8 EREA that specialise in providing for physically disabled and visually impaired students, with 2139 students enrolled in the school year 2010-2011. In the same year, 75094 students received secondary education, of which 80% were enrolled in lower secondary education, 8% were in VET education programmes, 8% were in general courses and 3% were in EREA. Out of the 60118 students enrolled in lower secondary education in 2010, 45% were enrolled in regular classes and 29% were in special classes (ULIS). The same year, 48.8% (6,313) of students with SEN enrolled in upper secondary education followed a VET education programme, compared to 33% of the general population, and this was more often the case for students with an intellectual impairment (72.6%) or a mental health issue (59.2%). Of these, 13.3% were enrolled in special classes called ‘unités locales d’inclusion scolaire’ (ULIS) and this was more often the case for students with an intellectual impairment (45.5%).

The number of students educated via these specialised, medical-educational or hospital establishments was 76,000 in 2006. Of the students enrolled in special schools (excluding those enrolled in special schools for children with multiple disabilities and hospitals), 19,400 (23.5%) followed a VET course, particularly those enrolled in special schools for children with a visual impairment (28.2%), a hearing impairment (25.7%) and those enrolled in experimental special schools (25.6%).

In 2010, 2495 persons with disabilities accessed the apprenticeship system, which corresponds to 0.9% of all apprentices. The apprentices are predominantly male (75%) and 20 years old on average. In 34% of cases they are trained in firms with over 20 employees and in 55% of cases, they are in the tertiary sector.

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(52%) and 37 years old on average. In 61% of cases they work in firms with over 20 employees and work in the tertiary sector in 81% of cases.

In 2006, there were some 8,783 disabled students, of whom 82.67% attended university, 12.95% were in preparatory classes in high schools, schools and technician sectors, 3.65% were in public engineering schools and 0.73% were at 'Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres.'

AFPA enrolled 9,941 (10%) persons with disabilities, of which 7% are under the age of 25. These learners followed qualification courses (67%), prequalification courses (28%) and distance learning courses (5%), mainly financed by the Government (67%) and the Agefiph (19%).

### *2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas, etc)*

Disabled students benefit from adapted teaching material (financed by the National Education budget), the adaptation of buildings and specific transport designed to facilitate their education. 8% of disabled students have benefited from adapted teaching material, which amounts to half of visually impaired students, a third of those with motor disabilities and a quarter of those with hearing impairments.

In order to guarantee equality of opportunity between candidates, adaptations are made to the requirements for taking oral, written and practical exams.

Legally, students with SEN enrolled in lower secondary and upper secondary VET courses are entitled to support and arrangements if proposed by the CDAPH, whereas those enrolled in other types of VET opportunities (apprenticeship etc) have to be acknowledged as disabled workers by the "Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées" (CDAPH) in order to benefit from support and other arrangements.

These arrangements may be individual or collective and consist of pedagogical support, part time or occasional school opportunities and changes to the length of training and examination arrangements. While unemployed, trainees receive benefits from the Government or the regions that are equal to the wages earned during the working period or, if the trainee has never worked, amounting to 652,02 euros per month. These amounts can be combined with disability benefits or pensions.

Specific VET opportunities for persons recognised as disabled workers consist of :

- 8-12 week training sessions (stages de préorientation) aimed at supporting recipients in defining a career plan or in choosing a course adapted to his/her interests and needs.
- Long term vocational rehabilitation courses provided by special VET centres (centres de rééducation professionnelle (CRP))
- A vocational 'contrat de rééducation professionnelle'

By contrast with the general population, young adults with disabilities may enter apprenticeships beyond the age of 25, have the length of their course extended by a year where necessary for the best outcome and are entitled to distance learning. In addition to financial support provided under any apprenticeship contract, employers are entitled to premium of 520 times the minimum wage during the first two years and aids are allocated to both the young adult and the employer by the AGEFIPH. As with every apprentice, young adults with disabilities receive a wage corresponding to a percentage of the minimum wage, varying according to their age and progression within the apprenticeship.



## **2.3 VET programmes and employment**

### *2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes*

The needs of the student are identified priorly by the Department of Disabled Persons. According to the law of 11 February 2005, disabled students must be in contact with this department, who then, in connection with the multi-team services, evaluate the needs of students according to their study plans. The multi team includes a professional in charge of employment issues.

## **2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)**

### *2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.*

At secondary education level, 27% of the students who are individually schooled receive adapted teaching in the form of 'SEGPA' (Section of General and Vocational Adapted Education) or EREA (Regional Adapted Education establishments).

### *2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.*

See data above.

### *2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level*

See data above.

### *2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of "drop out". Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.*

Fewer than 20000 disabled people achieve the level of a formal qualification each year and taking into account the 'drop-out' and those people failing to achieve the qualification, fewer that 15000 of them graduate and enter the job market.

Furthermore, the gap between the numbers in primary and secondary education is significant; 110000 students in primary education compared to 52000 in secondary. The former predominantly includes students with intellectual difficulties. The further up through the school system we go, the fewer disabled students are enrolled. There is significant room for improvement. The proportion of students with intellectual/mental difficulties is 70%, compared with 30% with other motor or cognitive difficulties. It is the former which pose the most difficulty to the system in terms of ensuring the continuation of studies (even more so in higher education).

### *2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level*



The difficulties in labour market participation and access to employment primarily concern those people with a recognised disability. Their rate of activity is far inferior to that of the general 15-64 year old population (44% compared to 71% in 2007) In 2007 the rate of unemployment for disabled people was 19%, double that of the general population.

However, 59 % of people with a disability aged between 15 – 24 are active, compared to 41% of the general youth population. Disabled people rarely pursue higher education, which accelerates their entry into the labour market.

In 2007, 4.6% of disabled job-seekers had achieved a Bac+2 level and only 3% had a higher level Bac+2. 80.3% of disabled job-seekers don't have a qualification equal to CAP or BEP.

## **2.5 Legislation and policy**

### *2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation*

Law of 11 February 2005 : provides a definition of disability

Law concerning the employment of disabled people: reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination and reinforces the role of enterprises, by encouraging an annual negotiation of measures relating to professional integration.

Law concerning access to vocational training and lifelong learning reaffirms the importance of apprenticeships and of lifelong learning opportunities more generally.

### *2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment*

The Minister of National Education in 2008 made the enrolment of disabled children in school a top priority.

- A refocus on the philosophy of 'access to all for all', derived from the 11 February 2005 law.
- The training of non-specialist teachers.
- Human resources are insufficient and a clearly defined academic strategy is lacking. Teachers would benefit from a formalised teaching response, as well as standard working practices among multi-disciplinary teams.
- The general inspectors have recommended better academic control and a better link between the academic and departmental levels.

### *2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework*

There are more than 40000 training organisations, among which the most significant are Greta, Afpas and services providing continuous university training. The Chambers of commerce and 'parapublic' organisations play an equally important role.

### *2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market*

The education of a child must be monitored by National Education representatives, IEN-ASH in particular, who guarantee the quality, conformity and continuity of the education provided.

The necessary measures and adaptations for each child are decided by the Department for Disabled people (MDPH) level by the Commission for Rights and Autonomy (CDA).

The Ministry of Education is obliged to put into place the material and human resources foreseen by the CDA.



The Department for Disabled People (MDPH) is a key actor in the development and creation of the school curriculum for disabled children.

## **2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals**

### *2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers, etc.)*

27% of primary school level disabled students benefit from individual support. 8.4% of disabled students go to regular classes with the help of a specialised teacher.

If the help required by the disabled student doesn't consist of pedagogical support, these assistants can be recruited despite not having a diploma. They receive special training.

Teaching is also provided by people with qualifications from the Ministry of Education when the child's disability or health problem requires a stay in a health/medical-social establishment. These professionals are either public teachers, made available by a decree, or a private school teacher working in the framework of a contract between the establishment and the State.

Teachers and personnel receive, in the form of initial and continuous training, specific training on welcoming and educating disabled pupils and students, which includes specific information on the definition of disability found in the law.

Primary school teachers have a Capa-SH (professional skills certificate for specialised help, adapted teaching and teaching of disabled pupils). They receive specialised training in the form of 400 hours of theory.

400 secondary school teachers complete training and have a 2CA-SH certificate (for adapted teaching and the education of disabled pupils). The training consists of 150 hours over 1, 2 or 3 years.

### *2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes*

The PPS (personalised education plan) is intended to continue throughout the full training period but the role of the 'referral' teacher finishes at the end of the school course. A vocational referrer from the Department for People with Disabilities (MDPH) takes over for the entry into a vocation or higher education.

Concerning vocational training, schools are equipped with information about careers and vocational training with a view to guiding students post-school. This work is carried out by teachers, aided by psychological guidance counsellors, generally during the final year of school.

## **2.7 Funding**

- The Ministry of Education has stated that the number of disabled pupils enrolled in school in 2008 increased to 167,400, an increase of 5400 from 2007. To accommodate this increase and improve the education services provided to these disabled pupils, the budget allocation for school education increased sharply between 2008 and 2009.
- Disabled Child Education Allowance (Allocation d'éducation de l'enfant handicapé – AEEH) In 2006 the average monthly AEEH amount was 291 euro. At the end of 2006, around 10 out of 1000 students under the age of 20 were beneficiaries of AEEH.



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- The AGEFIPH is a development fund designed to increase entry into vocations and to ensure the employment of disabled people in the private sector. It is a private law association which brings together social partners, associations representing disabled people and a panel of qualified individuals.
  - FIPHFP  
This fund collects contributions from public employers who do not satisfy the requirement to have a workforce made up of 6% disabled people. It uses the fund to finance the entry of disabled people into public functions.
  - Higher education - Scholarships are awarded by the education officials according to social criteria that chiefly take into account the resources and expenditure of the student and their family, assessed against a national scale.