



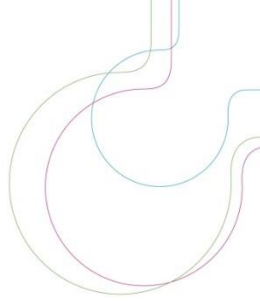
Validation systems in the French Higher Education

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Validation of prior experience and learning in the French HE : a strong tradition



□ A strong legal foundation

- Further education of adults is part of the missions of HE (inscribed in the education code) just like initial training of the students
- Validation of prior experiential learning is part of the further training policy of the HE institutions
- Its implementation is compulsory
- Since 1971, HE institutions are considered like any other provider in the field of adult training and then submitted to the same rules of the labour Code

□ **Laws for Higher education and adult further training have paved the way for the validation systems**

- **November 1968 : law on HE (loi d'orientation)**
Opening of the access to universities for adults without qualification
- **1971 : Employee continuing training law**
HE institutions become actors of the continuing training beside the other public providers and the private training providers
- **January 1984 : law on HE (loi d'orientation)**
Continuing training of adults becomes part of the missions of HE institutions
Assessment of professional and personal experience can give access to all the levels of HE
- **1992 : law on validation of professional experience in order to get a vocational or technological school qualification or a HE qualification**
A partial qualification can be obtained through exemption of units of the degree
- **2002 : creation of the VAE (validation of experiential learning), and the RNCP**
HE institutions can award a full (or a partial) qualification on the basis of the professional experience
- **2002 : creation of the VES : validation of prior studies carried out in France or abroad.**
HE institutions can award a full (or a partial) qualification.

How have these laws been expressed in terms of validation systems ?

□ The different validation systems existing today in Higher Education

- « VAP 85 », 1985 decree : access to Higher Education procedure
- VAE (validation des acquis de l'expérience), created by the 2002 « Social modernization Act » :
Possible validation of a full or partial qualification
- VES : validation des études supérieures (2002 decree)
validation of prior studies and qualifications
- « State engineer » qualification procedure created in 1934

The « State engineer » procedure



❑ Objective :

- Award of a full or a partial qualification of « state engineer » (different from a engineer title awarded by an engineering school)

❑ Condition required :

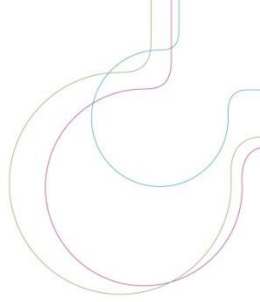
- 5 years in a technician or engineer position without possessing the engineer title

❑ 2 steps :

- Assessment of the application (portfolio) by an engineering school
- Decision by a national jury

About 100 qualifications awarded every year

The 1985 decree (« VAP 85 »)



❑ Objective :

- Access to HE to take up studying again

❑ Conditions :

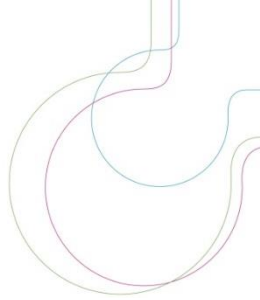
- To be at least 20 years old
- To have left initial training for at least 2 years
- Assessment of the professional, personal experience and the prior studies by a pedagogic commission



Access to any level of HE through exemption from the required qualification

**VAP 85 is today the most used validation system
(about 13 000 validations every year)**

2002 VAE : validation des acquis de l'expérience



□ VAE is an individual right :

- Opened to anybody involved in active life, whatever his age, profession, situation, nationality,
- Each person involved in a VAE procedure has the right to have a 24h VAE leave
- VAE is recognized as a tool of LLL of the employees and **its cost can be financed by the actors of LLL** (the national agency for unemployed, the Regions, the social partners)

only if the qualification the person wants to obtain is registered in the National Repertory of professional Qualifications, the French national qualification framework (RNCP)

□ Objective :

- Direct obtention (without following a study programme) of a partial or full qualification : a diploma with a professional purpose (which is the case of ALL the French HE degrees), a title, or a professional certificate (sectors)

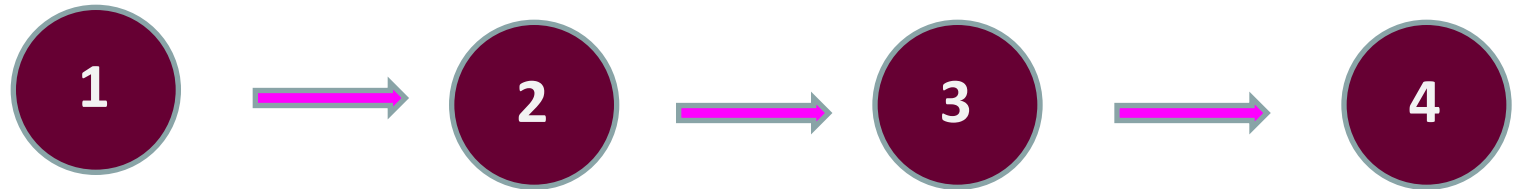
□ Conditions

- 1 year at least of work experience as an employee, an independant worker or a volunteer
- The experience must be related to the qualification aimed at

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The VAE procedure

The different steps of the VAE



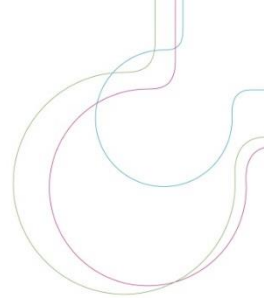
Information, guidance

Eligibility

Elaboration of the VAE portfolio
and counselling

Assessment
and
certification

Information and guidance



□ Sources of information and guidance

- **The information and guidance centres :**
 - Give general information on the procedure,
 - Analyse of the relevance of a VAE procedure to reach the objective of the person by taking into account her/his professional past and project,
 - Help the candidate to get a bearing off the qualifications offer
 - Guide the person towards the relevant awarding body/bodies
 - Expose the existing possibilities for financing the VAE according to the situation of the person

- **The universities or Higher Education schools** (if the person already knows what diploma he wants to get)
 - Their services for continuing training of adults assure the same type of information and guidance

Admissibility of the application



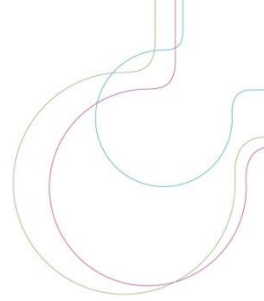
□ An administrative step

- Prior to the candidate commitment
- Main objective : checking the duration of the experience (**1 year**) in relation with the aimed qualification

□ Consisting of :

- An application file (a national official document accesible through the web),
- All documents related to the duration of the experience (professional, volunteering, electoral, or in an union and also the periods in an enterprise of an alternate training),
- Salary bills,
- Employers certificates...
- **+ for HE, diplomas (including diplomas obtained in a foreign country), certificates and any other document allowing the institution to evaluate the nature and the level of the prior studies**

□ The file is sent to the body awarding the qualification the candidate wants to obtain



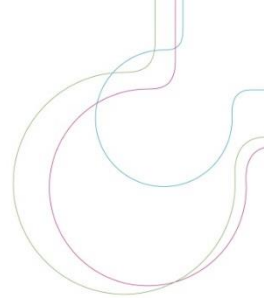
□ Wording the experience : the candidate

- Reconsiders his path and the key moments,
- Reinvests his work practices,
- Works on the meaning of his activities,
- Chooses among his activities the most relevant with regard to the qualification standard
- Analyses the activities and express them in terms of knowledge, skills and competences

□ Looking for traces

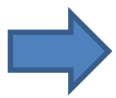
- The so-called « administrative evidence », all the documents the supporting the description and analysis of the experience

Counselling

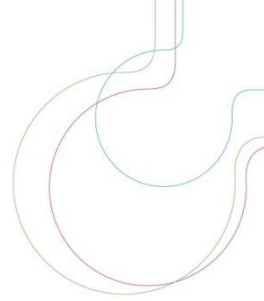


□ A methodological help to the candidate :

- To situate the need of qualification in his professional and personal project,
- To elaborate her/his file
- To distance herself/himself from her/his experience
- To choose the activities the most relevant with regard to the standard qualification
- To describe their context and the procedures carried on
- To « translate » them in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility in the job)
- To prepare her/him to the interview with the jury
- **To maintain the candidate motivation all along the procedure**



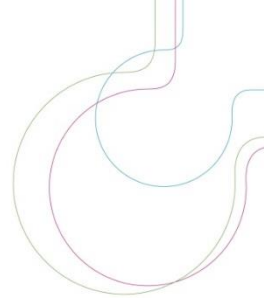
Not compulsory but highly recommended because it increases the chances of success



- ❑ **It is not the jury of the « normal » exam**
- ❑ **A mixed composition of professors and professional specialists**
- ❑ **His tools**
 - The candidate's file he has already studied
 - The activity standard, the skills and competences standard
- ❑ **His role**
 - interviewing the candidate, asking more precisions in order to check the veracity of what is described in the file,
- ❑ **Can award a full qualification, a partial one or nothing**
- ❑ **In case of partial qualification, he must prescribe the best way to get the missing learning outcomes**

 **More than 4000 VAE awarded every year of which 60 % for full qualifications**

How much does that cost ?



❑ Validation of prior studies :

- Free in most of the universities

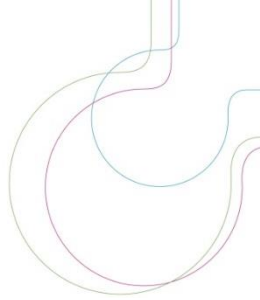
❑ Validation that gives access (« VAP 85 ») :

- Free in most of the universities

❑ VAE :

- Cost varies from one to another institution
- Average cost : 2000 euros, mostly for the cost of counselling
- But possibility for the person to have it financed , according to his situation :
 - from her/his employer when VAE is part of the company training plan,
 - through her/his personal training account (500 euros/year) ,
 - from the national agency for unemployed or the Region if she/he is unemployed

Validation and design of the qualifications



□ A convergence of factors

- Since 1992 (« VAP 92 »), professors try to find the best way to implement validation : many research projects financed by the ESF
- ➔ A necessary tool : a learning outcomes standard of the qualifications that will allow the comparison with the skills and competences developed by the candidate through his/her job experience
- The Bologna process : promotion of the LO approach
- 2002 : creation of the RNCP : qualifications have to be described in terms of skills to be registered
- 2018 law on professional further education : each qualification registered in the RNCP :
 - Has to be accompanied by an activity standard, a skills standard and a certification (assessment) standard
 - Each qualification has to be broken down into « competences blocks » which can be assessed and validated.

Conclusion



- ❑ **Validation is a tool for LLL, it allows to shorten the studies and avoid to have to learn again what is already known**
- ❑ **Validation is always less expensive than a normal training path**
- ❑ **It is a good way to move forward in one's personal and professional life**
- ❑ **It can be a means for public authorities to qualify certain groups of people**
 - to secure their professional paths (unemployed or low qualified people)
 - to respond to the needs of sectors in tension
 - to anticipate economic changes and fill gaps between future supply and demand