Validation of prior learning in France: Key lessons for professional designations and professional qualifications

Borhene Chakroun

Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems
Education Sector, UNESCO
A Historical Perspective

History of RPL in France

1934
In-company engineer

1985-
Validation of Professional experience: Access to HE

1992-
Validation of Professional experience: Exemption

2002-
Validation of Professional and life experience: Award of full/partial qualification

2014:
Lifelong Learning Entitlement including Validation of Professional and life experience

History of NQF in France

1969
Adoption of 5 Levels NQF

1971: Law related to tripartite governance of professional qualifications

2002 - Establishment of the National Qualification Commission and the national repository of Qualifications

2018
Adoption of 8 Levels NQF

2019:
Establishment of France Competence, NQF regulatory and financing body
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-Doctorat</td>
<td>Doctoral programmes (Doctorats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Master</td>
<td>Master degrees (Masters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-Grade de Licence</td>
<td>Bachelor programmes (Licences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Undergraduate technician certificates (Brevet de technicien supérieur) (BTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate technician certificates in agriculture (Brevet de technicien supérieur agricole) (BTSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate certificates in technology (Diplôme universitaire de technologie) (DUT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master qualifications (Brevets de maîtrise) issued by the Chambers of Trade (Chambre des métiers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Vocational baccalaureates (Baccalauréat professionnel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technological baccalaureates (Baccalauréat technologique)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional certificates (Brevet professionnel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied arts certificates (Brevet des métiers d'art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technician certificates (Brevet de technicien)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Secondary vocational certificates (Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle) (CAP), Brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary vocational certificates in agriculture (Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle agricole) (CAPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brevet d'études professionnelles agricoles (BEPA))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### National Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I- Doctorate grade</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I - Master grade</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II - Bachelor grade</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### European Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Qualifications

• Certifications initiated by the social partners within sectors/branches, mainly to meet skills requirements as identified in their sectors.

• They are built up via an approach aimed at covering a set of skills that make sense in terms of qualifications and/or jobs (they are referenced in the collective bargaining agreements).

• The NQF Repository classifies them in accordance with the “Nomenclature of Vocational Training Programmes” and not in terms of qualifications levels.

• Since January 2019, a new procedure for registration in the NQF repository (Law 5 septembre 2018), allow to level Professional Qualifications according to NQF.
Certificate of Professional Qualifications

Panorama des CQP
• Certifications that refer to authorizations covering exercise of activities, authorizations, and safety or quality standards imposed by the ministries or at an international level (e.g. operating and safety rules relating to construction site machinery).

• Professional designations are not recorded in the National Qualifications Repository as such. However, when they are integrated in a vocational certification procedure, i.e. it forms part of a qualification recorded in the national Repository, it is pointed out.
Level of awareness about professional qualifications

- **Yes**: 65
- **Yes but not clear purpose**: 17
- **No**: 18

- Yes
- Yes but not clear purpose
- No
Present Benefits of linking with NQF

• Listed in the RNCP, and hence benefit from national recognition,

• Drawn up in compliance with the principles set out in the NQF

• Help to facilitate job access, management of human resources and mobility (recognition by other Branches/Sectors);

• Facilitate access to Active Labour Market Measures and Lifelong Learning (eligible for financing)
RPL in France: Key definitions

- VAE/RPL is defined as an individual right in France. The purpose of VAE/RPL is to obtain a qualification (Article L. 6411-1 of the Labour Code).
- It can lead to the award of whole or parts of this qualification (certification) based on the knowledge and skills acquired through prior experience and learning in a variety of contexts.
- Any qualification listed in the national Repository of qualifications (RNCP), can be acquired and accessed through VAE/RPL.
- The general institutional framework for VAE/RPL is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, in partnership with regional councils and the other ministries that award qualifications.
- Specific rules and practices for the implementation of VAE are the responsibility of each authority awarding the qualifications included in the RNCP.
RPL Process

Stage 1
• Counselling/Information regarding qualifications

Stage 2
• Choice of the appropriate qualification

Stage 3
• Application for Funding

Stage 4
• Choice of Guidance and Counselling provider

Stage 5
• Assessment and Certification.
Guidance and Counselling: A must!

- Information and orientation including administrative processes
- Support for appropriate financing schemes in case training;
- Methodological support for portfolio preparation
- Support for preparing the assessment panel;
Financing RPL

**Training Levy**
Process, fees, guidance and counselling

**Regional Funds**
Decentralisation gives important role to local authorities

**Active Labour Market Measures**
Employment schemes, guidance and counselling, fees, others.

**House-hold**
Personal Choice

*Source: Survey*
Overall Statistics regarding the full certifications

4300 Professional Qualifications
17% of all certifications

Source: DARES
Levels of engagement

- National Frameworks/Initiatives/Targets
- Regional initiatives
- Collective RPL
- Individual/collective RPL

Enterprise (SMEs/VSE/Self-entrepreneur)
Branch/Sector council/Financing Body (OPCA)
Regional
National
E.VAE ACTALIANS COMMENT ÇA MARCHE ?

Après comment je peux faire ma VAE avec la plateforme e.VAE Actalians, je prends connaissance de l’animation et du soutien.

1. Inscription
2. Rédaction livret 1
3. Rédaction livret 2
4. Passage en jury
- 86% have a positive perception;
- 91% consider RPL useful for their staff;
- 82% encourage their staff to engage in RPL;
- 87% of managers where RPL took place encourage their peers to support similar initiative;
- 76% consider RPL useful for companies.
- 64% consider RPL a complex process.
Reasons for engaging in RPL:

- Access to a Qualification: 61 %
- Career Promotion: 23 %
- Access to Employment: 7 %
- Change of Employment: 6 %
- Access to Training: 6 %

RPL Process matter:

- Changed the perspective on their job/occupation (56%);
- Acquired Self-Confidence (30.6 %);
- Acquired new skills and knowledge (23 %);
- Acquired better understanding of their occupation/professionalism (22 %)
### Percentage of the candidates who obtained a qualification through VAE within the TVET system in 2015 (continuing training)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of candidates who obtained a diploma through continuing education (including individual candidates) [1]</th>
<th>Number of candidates who obtained a diploma through VAE [2]</th>
<th>Total number of diplomas obtained outside initial training [3 = 1 + 2]</th>
<th>Percentage of candidates who have graduated through VAE [2/3] (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BTS</td>
<td>22 790</td>
<td>4 395</td>
<td>27 185</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Bachelor</td>
<td>6 245</td>
<td>2 553</td>
<td>8 798</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional certificate</td>
<td>3 936</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>4 555</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>54 583</td>
<td>3 190</td>
<td>57 773</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEP</td>
<td>7 326</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7 440</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional mention (level IV and V)</td>
<td>1 387</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1 586</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96 267</td>
<td>11 264</td>
<td>107 337</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DARES
Looking Further Ahead
The labour market is becoming polarized in high income countries…

Annual average change in employment share, 1995-2012 (% points)
... and in low and middle income countries

Annual average change in employment share, 1995-2012 (% points)
Impacts of polarisation of labour market:

Current trends suggest career advancement is harder for some than for others: Taking care of the bottom of the Pyramid

- Agency
- Decent work
- Ability to leverage technology

- Low skills
- Low literacy
- Cannot leverage technology
Priorities for professional designations and professional qualifications

- **Urgency** of investing for better recognition and value in labour market and society

- **Alignment** with labour market needs

- **Massification of reskilling/upskilling**

- **Inclusive** participation

- **Flexibility & guidance**

- **Training** that has the desired **impact**

- **Adequate financing**
Future Development: Digital technology as an enabler and driver of changes

- Focus on wider set of skills (job-specific; transversal skills; digital skills; Citizenship and sustainability skills)

- Organised by wide range of stakeholders including private sector, Edtech, etc.;

- Digital credentialing, credentials jungle, new generations of NQFs, Quality Assurance issues;

- Individual pathways, supported by Artificial Intelligence;

- Digital Learners’ records

- Privacy and security, the ownership of learners’ records, inclusivity;
1. Learning Account;

2. Recognition of prior learning as right;

3. Right to Career guidance and counselling; and

4. Other rights: Right to information/internet, social security, privacy, etc.
Thank you

Borhene Chakroun
UNESCO
b.chakroun@unesco.org