

Overview

Quality Assurance System in Higher Education

France

Second edition (2017)



NIAD-QE

National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education

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1-29-1 Gakuen-Nishimachi, Kodaira, Tokyo 187-8587 Japan

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Introduction

In addition to its core activities of university evaluation, awarding of degrees and research activities, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE) is working closely with domestic and overseas quality assurance agencies, including those having advanced higher education systems and close ties with Japan, to gain the trust of the international community in Japanese higher education and promote international collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs).

As each country possesses different political, societal, cultural and language element, the structure of its quality assurance system for higher education also differs. In building relationships and realizing effective cooperation that transcend such barriers, 'mutual understanding' must be enhanced among cooperating organizations by exchanging accurate information on their respective quality assurance and higher education systems.

In this context, International Affairs Division of NIAD-QE has developed the 'Information Package' as a means for publishing comprehensive information on higher education and quality assurance systems in Japan as well as other countries. We have produced these of Japan, US, UK, Australia, the Netherlands, France, Germany, China and Korea.

In France, a quality assurance system linked with the contract policy which is conducted between the government and HEIs. Upon renewal of the contract, each institution conducts a self-evaluation, then, is evaluated by a quality assurance institution and presents a medium- to long-term strategy and an implementation plan to the government. With the enactment of the Law on Higher Education and Research in 2013, the government has promoted the policies for fostering territorial coordinations of HEIs and research institutions in France and the states of HEIs have been changing. Furthermore, in order to respond to this reform, the quality assurance system has been revised.

The **"Overview of the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education: France (second edition)"** was produced based on various information concerning higher education system and quality assurance system in France. We updated the first edition with the information collected through document studies and site visits of the organizations which were responsible for quality assurance in higher education in France conducted between 2015 and 2016, revising to the latest data and trends. We would like to thank everyone who gave us useful comments and suggestions for completing this document, including valuable direct advice from The High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES), which is an institution cooperating with NIAD-QE. We would especially like to express our special thanks to Professor François PERNOT, Director of Europe and International Department at HCÉRES, for his contributions to the production of this document.

This 'Overview' document is also available from our website:

<http://www.niad.ac.jp/english/cqa/international/information.html#package>

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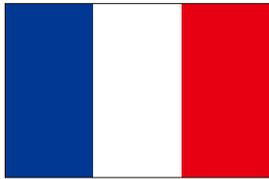
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I. Basic Information Regarding the Country

Name of country	French Republic	
Capital	Paris	
Major language	French	
Population*	66,630,000 (2016)	
Nominal GDP*	2,421,000 million USD (2015)	
Nominal GDP per capita*	37,675 USD (2015)	
Public spending on education as a percentage of total public expenditure**	All levels of education 8.4% (OECD average 11.2%)	HE level 2.2% (OECD average 3.1%) (2013)
Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP**	All levels of education 4.8% (OECD average 4.8%)	HE level 1.2% (OECD average 1.3%) (2013)
Annual expenditure by educational institutions per student at higher education level**	16,194 USD (2013)	
Annual public expenditure per student at higher education level**	12,479 USD (2013)	
Progression rate into higher education***	88.0% of 710,718 candidates passed the French <i>baccalauréat</i> examination in 2014. The details are as follows: General channel: 91.0% of 305,667 candidates passed the examination Technological channel: 90.7% of 129,210 passed Professional channel: 82.2% of 190,773 passed ※ %: Percentage of successful candidates against each qualification	
Organization of the education system***	See “I-1. Diagram of the French education system” and “I-2. The French educational system” (p.4).	
Cycle of academic year	The start and end of the academic year (between September 1 st and mid-July) differs depending on each university. The French academic year is divided into two semesters. Generally, the first semester is from early September to late January, and the second semester is from early February to late May. Examination periods are at the end of each semester.	

Sources

* National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies: <http://www.insee.fr/fr/accueil>

** International Monetary Fund (IMF): <http://imf.org/external/index.htm>

*** OECD: *Education at a Glance 2016*

**** Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI): *Higher Education & Research in France, facts and figures, November 2015*

- Tertiary education (*universités, grandes écoles*, etc.)

The term of study differs depending on the type of school. For details, see “II-2. Higher Education Institutions” (p.8).

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II. The Higher Education System

1. History and legislation

The history of higher education in France dates back to the 12th century when the first universities were established. They were independent institutions with autonomous status and were awarded significant privileges.

During the French Revolution of 1794 (late 18th century), the Convention created the special *grandes écoles*: the central school of public works (a year later renamed as the *école polytechnique*), arts and crafts conservatory, school of oriental languages, school of fine arts, etc. In 1806, Napoleon I enacted a law to establish the Imperial University (the first decree to organize it was enacted in 1808) to control the French education system, and all institutions were combined under this banner. The Imperial University was centralized. In the 27 cities where academic constituencies were installed, colleges (*facultés*) were directly managed by the central government. Contestation emerged against this centralization and continues to the present. During the reign of Napoleon III, the title of the Grand Master of the University (*Grand maître de l'université*) was designated to a minister who was the Emperor himself. Subsequently, France was divided into 16 academic constituencies, and the faculties took separate control, each taking the name of the University in 1896. The reform of 1896 authorized the universities to deliver their own diplomas even if the grades were still the responsibility of the state.

1-1) Edgar Faure Law

The framework law concerning higher education in 1968, known as the Edgar Faure Law, stipulated a new type of institution or a Public Establishment of Scientific and Cultural Character (EPCSC). Pursuant to this law, the former colleges were replaced with autonomous education and research units (UFR) that involved the participation of all the players in the university community and multidisciplinary¹. However, higher education is still categorized into two categories: the *grandes écoles* for educating the nation's senior officials and the universities that were effectively “UFR federations.” Another important point of this law was to give more autonomy to the universities after the contestations of May 1968 (election of president, with the presence of students in the councils).

1-2) Savary Law

The current organization of higher education is stipulated by the Code of Education of 1984, known as the Savary Law. Its main idea is to deliver national education and higher education as a public service. While maintaining the major principles of the Edgar Faure Law, it defines objectives to regroup the

¹ In this article the word “multidisciplinary” is different from the definition of “multidisciplinary” of evaluation (p.41). It means the field itself as a discipline.

grandes écoles in the same context as other HEIs and promote greater openness of these institutions with the outside world. It confirms their status as public institutions, now called EPSCP (p.29). The principle of equal opportunity has long been emphasized in the French education system. Therefore, universities are allowed to deliver lifelong education.

The most important elements in French higher education history between 1984 and 2007 were as follows: first, the implementation of a contractual policy that links the state and the institutions and provides independent HEIs with a new and viable content (1989); second, U2000 (University for 2000) Plan followed by the “U3M (University in the Third Millennium) Plan for 2000–2006, which outlined the major development guidelines for the higher education system within the framework of the state-region plan; and third, the implementation of the European qualification architecture since 2002, known as the LMD reform.

1-3) Fostering coordination among universities: Significant expansion of university autonomies

1-3-1) Strengthening the autonomy of educational institutions

The Edgar Faure Law expanded the autonomy of universities. It dismantled colleges in large cities to establish individual universities. Consequently, these universities were geographically close. Therefore, the effective use of resources was required. Meanwhile, the government promoted the territorial coordination of universities to tackle issues such as small French universities or a college’s slump in the international university rankings. In 1990, *pôle universitaire européen* (PUE), the center for European university, was launched, and 11 centers were established from 1991 to 2001. However, the effect of the government policy was limited because this system was a framework of coordination centered on universities. Therefore, *pôle de recherche et d’enseignement supérieur* (PRES), centers for research and higher education, were established by developing PUE based on the Act on Research of 2006.

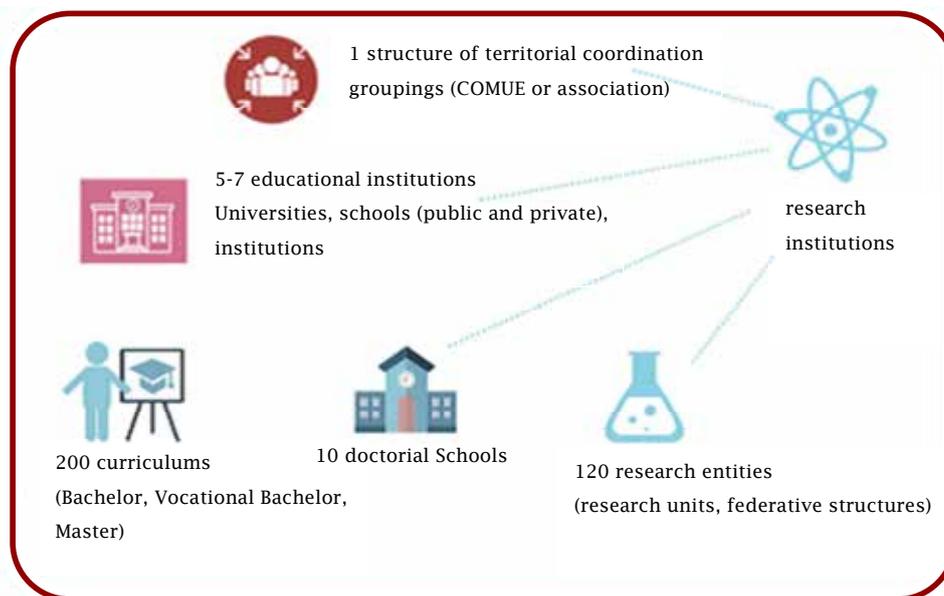
The main objectives of PRES were as follows: to have a unified strategy on educational and vocational expertise with respect to a specific area, improve the consistency and integration of the organization, improve efficiencies and governance, support the improvement of research competencies and international influence of educational institutions, and enable the joint development of new services and infrastructure. Furthermore, the Law for Liberties and Responsibilities of Universities (the LRU) was enacted in 2007 for the further enhancement of university autonomy with respect to the budget and personnel of universities. The LRU promoted integration of universities and accelerated movements toward autonomy.

1-3-2) Contract policy between the government and each institution

When the Savary Law was enacted, the French government began to establish relationships with each university and research institution based on the conclusion of contracts to promote strategic dialogs between the government and educational institutions while advancing the process for enhancing the autonomy of universities. Initially, this contract system was limited to the research field; however, it gradually extended and adapted to all missions of educational institutions. Contracts with the government that were voluntarily offered to universities have become compulsory since the enactment of the LRU in 2007. In 2010, the contract period was extended from four years to five years.

1-4) The Law on Higher Education and Research (2013): Territorial coordination of higher education and research institutions

While international competition intensified, the idea of strengthening territorial coordination emerged. As mentioned above, since 2006, the government promoted the establishment of PRES and merged institutions, with the aim of making it possible for universities, *grandes écoles*, and research institutions to provide human resources and implement projects jointly or mutually. In addition, the Law on Higher Education and Research in 2013 has promoted the integration of HEIs and research bodies within the same area, collaborations of curriculums and research strategies, improvement of student living conditions, and enhancement of domestic and international awareness of educational institutions in France. As of November 2016, there are 25 territorial coordination groupings. Moreover, 20 out of 25 groupings are in the form of COMUE², and the rest of the 5 groupings are in the form of associations that are less binding.



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² COMUE has replaced PRES in the form of the Public Establishment of Scientific Character (EPCS: *établissements publics de coopération scientifique*). Other than EPCS, as examples of PRES, there are Scientific Interest Group (GIS: *groupement d'intérêt scientifique*), Non-profit Association (*association Loi 1901*), Public Interest Group (GIP: *groupement d'intérêt public*), and Foundation of Scientific Cooperation (FCS: *fondation de coopération scientifique*). EPCS is the most binding form of all.

2. Higher education institutions

2-1) Various types of higher education institutions

Prospective higher education students need to acquire *baccalauréat* in common. Meanwhile, there are various types of HEIs in France. The institutions have respective objectives of, structure of, and conditions for admission. They can be divided into universities (*universités*), *grandes écoles*, *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (CPGE), *instituts universitaires de technologie* (IUT), *sections de technicien supérieur* (STS), and *écoles spécialisées* offering various vocational training programs.

Types of institutions

Name of institution	Term of study	Installation form
Universities (<i>Universités</i>)	More than three years	National
<i>Grandes Écoles</i>	three years	National or Private
<i>Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles</i> (CPGE)	two years	Attached to Public or Private <i>Lycée</i>
<i>Instituts Universitaires de Technologie</i> (IUT)	two-three years	Attached to Universities
<i>Sections de Technicien Supérieur</i> (STS)	two-three years	Attached to Public or Private <i>Lycée</i>
<i>Écoles Spécialisées</i>	one-five years	National or Private

2-1-1) Universities (*Universités*)

French universities are public establishments (EP, mainly EPSCP) (p.29) in accordance with the Savary Law of 1984. They have to accept all students with a French *baccalauréat* (p.12), the qualification of graduation from high school, with a few exceptions such as students from the field of medicine. They can also accept foreign diplomas that allow access to universities in the country of origin. French universities had a little more than 1.6 million students in 2015-2016. This includes 14% non-French students. Since 1984, they have been organized into training and research units (UFR). They also include internal institutes and schools such as University Institutes of Technology (IUT) created in 1966 and professional university institutes (IUP), created in 1994.

It is legally prohibited in France to use the term “University (*Université*)” in the names of private HEIs except for national universities (Article L 731-14 of the Code of Education). However, in some cases, “universities” commonly go by a name such as “X university (*université (catholique) X*)” to the private HEIs; sometimes, the word “university” is used in their international agreements. However, private HEIs must clearly indicate in their names that they are privately owned institutions. Private HEIs, commonly called private universities, are mainly free private Catholic HEIs, and 13 institutions in France are governed by the Law of 1875 for the freedom of higher education, which offers general university education programs. However, in principle, only national universities are permitted to confer academic degrees. Private HEIs that wish to award academic degrees need to conclude agreements with national universities. Students who pass the exams conducted by the national universities can obtain academic degrees (See II -4. “Courses and qualifications” (p.14)).

2-1-2) *Grandes Écoles*

Grandes écoles are institutions peculiar to France. The institutions are entitled to select their students, unlike the universities. *Grandes écoles* train engineers, high-level managers, and specialists in the arts, literature, social sciences, and law. Education in the *grandes écoles*³ generally takes five years, including two years of initial preparation, either in the *grandes écoles* itself or in secondary establishments (*lycées*) (preparatory classes for *grandes écoles*: CPGE). These schools therefore more often issue a diploma at the *baccalauréat* level + five years, providing a master's degree upon graduation.

The two largest groups of *grandes écoles* are schools of engineering and schools of management, but there are *écoles normales supérieures* (ENS) known as teacher training colleges, veterinary schools, and other schools in various specialized areas. Four ENS systems (two schools in Paris and two in Lyon) are under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI). Students who are citizens of the European Union (EU), attending ENS, *école spéciale militaire*, *école polytechnique*, *école nationale supérieure des mines*, *école nationale des ponts et chaussées*, and *école nationale d'administration* have the status of "civil servants in training" and receive a salary for the duration of their studies (currently four years) (see "II-4. Courses and qualifications" (p.14)).

2-1-3) Preparatory Classes for *Grandes Écoles* (CPGE: *Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles*)

CPGE are preparatory programs for entrance examinations to *grandes écoles* that are attached to nationwide *grandes écoles* or major *lycees* (secondary institutions). Entering CPGE is extremely difficult, and the entry rate is approximately 7% among new *baccalauréat* holders each year. CPGE students can enroll in universities and in CPGE to acquire the universities' diplomas; however, the students cannot obtain a license from CPGE as it specializes in preparatory studies for entrance examinations at the *grandes écoles*.

2-1-4) University Institutes of Technology (IUT: *Instituts Universitaires de Technologie*)

IUT were established to provide preparatory education for students to acquire a high-level qualification in engineering in two years. Unlike the aforementioned universities, students are required to take a document examination, a written examination, and an interview upon entering IUT. Curriculums are divided into 25 kinds of majors, and IUT provides professional education with a clear occupational orientation. Facilities are equipped with relatively high technology compared with those in universities; therefore, students can benefit from an outstanding learning environment. Besides, upon completing the curriculum, students can obtain a Technical Junior College Certificate (DUT: *Diplôme universitaire de technologie*) (p.19).

2-1-5) Higher Technician Sections (STS: *Sections de Technicien Supérieur*)

STS are attached to major *Lycées* (secondary educational institutions) as well as CPGE. Similar to IUT, STS train high-level engineers and are entitled to select its students. Moreover, specialized education is conducted by narrowing down the major field of study compared with that in IUT, and the number of specialized areas is 113. After completing the prescribed course, students can obtain a *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS) (p.20).

³ Many *grandes écoles* are partly funded by enterprises. Students have enough opportunities for dialogue in faculties because classes are small. Projects and case studies are the predominant educational models and students have a wide choice.

2-1-6) Specialized Schools (*Écoles Spécialisées*)

France is internationally recognized in the fields of gastronomy, hotel management, fashion, and films, among other areas. Numerous specialized schools offer programs in these and other fields (see “II-4. Courses and qualifications” (p.14)).

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2-2) Statistics

Transition of Number of Higher Education Institutions

(Unit: school)

Type of Institutions	Number of Institutions		increase rate
	2011	2015	
Universities (<i>Universités</i>)	75	72	△4%
University Institutes of Technology (IUT)	114	111	△2.7%
Higher Technician Sections (STS)	2,286	2,378	3.8%
Preparatory Classes for <i>Grandes Écoles</i> (CPGE)	449	445	△4%
Engineering schools including <i>Grandes Écoles</i>	254	261	2.6%
Business schools including <i>Grandes Écoles</i>	210	191	△9.9%
Other Higher Education Institutions ¹	1,091	1,186	8%
Grand total	4,479	4,644	3.5%

Source

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI): *REPÈRES & RÉFÉRENCES STATISTIQUES 2016*

Transition of Number of students

(Unit: Thousand)

Type of Institutions	Number of Students		increase rate
	2011-12	2015-16	
Universities (<i>Universités</i>) including IUT	1,450.7	1,593.2	9.8%
<i>University Institutes of Technology (IUT)</i>	115.0	116.2	1.0%
Higher Technician Sections (STS)	246.0	234.2	△ 4.8%
Preparatory Classes for <i>Grandes Écoles</i> (CPGE)	80.4	83.5	3.8%
Engineering schools including <i>Grandes Écoles</i>	130.4	143.0	9.7%
Business schools including <i>Grandes Écoles</i>	126.7	138.5	9.3%
Other Higher Education Institutions	316.7	358.7	13.3%
Grand total	2,350.9	2,551.1	8.5%

(Including overseas departments)

Source

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI): *Higher education & Research in France, Facts and figures, November 2015, REPÈRES & RÉFÉRENCES STATISTIQUES 2016*

3. Admission requirements of universities

Entry requirements to HEIs largely differ according to the respective institutions and the degrees offered. However, all institutions require, in general, the *baccalauréat* or an equivalent diploma.

The *baccalauréat* is a national examination and the academic qualification that certifies the completion of secondary education in France. It is divided into several categories such as natural sciences, economy and social sciences, or literature. The *baccalauréat* is, basically, the minimum requirement to enter HEIs; however, the study periods for obtaining a higher education diploma are considered important after passing the *baccalauréat* (expressed as Bac + α).

⁴ *Grandes écoles* except for engineering schools and business schools, specialized schools and schools for teacher education called *école normale supérieure* are included in this category.

Transition of immediate enrolment rates of *baccalauréat* holders (%) by the type of *baccalauréat* and higher education courses (metropolitan France + overseas departments)

Type of <i>Baccalauréat</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
General <i>Baccalauréat</i>						
Universities including IUT	64.6	64.6	65.5	64.6	64.1	65.2
<i>IUT (University Institutes of Technology)</i>	11.0	10.8	10.7	10.7	10.6	10.2
CPGE (Preparatory Classes for <i>Grandes écoles</i>)	13.8	13.3	13.2	13.2	13.0	12.5
STS (Higher Technician Sections)	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.6	8.1
Other courses	12.3	12.2	12.3	12.3	12.5	12.2
Technological <i>Baccalauréat</i>						
Universities including IUT	25.5	28.1	28.5	28.2	28.3	30.8
<i>IUT</i>	9.8	10.1	9.9	9.6	9.6	11.0
CPGE	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.7
STS	43.1	44.0	42.7	42.0	40.8	36.2
Other courses	5.5	5.6	5.1	5.2	5.6	5.4
Subtotal of General and Technological <i>Baccalauréat</i>						
Universities including IUT	51.9	53.1	53.5	53.2	53.4	55.2
<i>IUT</i>	10.6	10.6	10.4	10.3	10.3	10.4
CPGE	9.7	9.6	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.4
STS	20.1	19.9	19.8	19.1	18.3	16.2
Other courses	10.1	10.1	10.0	10.1	10.4	10.3
Vocational <i>Baccalauréat</i>						
Universities including IUT	5.4	7.7	7.7	9.0	8.8	8.6
<i>IUT</i>	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8
CPGE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
STS	17.4	17.7	18.4	18.8	19.3	23.8
Other course	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total for all <i>Baccalauréats</i> (general, technological, and vocational)						
Universities including IUT	42.6	43.0	43.3	41.1	39.4	42.6
<i>IUT</i>	8.6	8.4	8.3	7.7	7.3	7.8
CPGE	7.8	7.5	7.3	6.9	6.6	6.9
STS	19.6	19.4	19.5	19.1	18.6	18.3
Other courses	8.2	8.0	7.9	7.5	7.4	7.6

Source

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI): *Higher education & Research in France, Facts and figures, November 2015*

Access to the different levels of post-*baccalauréat* education offered by institutions under the MESRI (whether universities, educational institutes, or public schools) can also be gained through the professional experience validation system (VAE) (p.22). Students with foreign degrees, for example, can benefit from this validation process for the admission. Validation is decided by the president of the university or the director of the institution on the advice of a teaching committee.

3-1) Admission requirements of universities

There is no selection process for students at the bachelor level. Universities have to accept all students having the following diploma:

- French *baccalauréat* or a document that is considered to be equivalent (e.g., *certificat de capacité en droit*)
- Diploma for Access to University Studies (DAEU) by passing the tests
DAEU is a national higher education diploma created in 1994. It replaced the Special Examination of Entry to the University (ESEU).

Admission to IUT, however, is based on an application process involving an interview of *baccalauréat*-holding candidates.

3-2) Admission requirements of *Grandes Écoles*

Public and private *grandes écoles* are often different in nature, but all share a strict process for admission. Most candidates must have their *baccalauréat* and succeed in passing a high-level admission test that requires two years of preparation in CPGE, where entry is difficult. However, the National Institute for Applied Sciences (INSA), for example, selects their students just after the *baccalauréat* without the CPGE. Students who fail their admission test can enter a university if they complete the admission requirement of the university.

3-3) Access to higher education (APB: Admission Post-Bac) portal site

The Admission Post-Bac portal site provides a list of all French higher education programs for prospective students who wish to learn at HEIs to obtain more appropriate information on these institutions and decide their future course. In addition, those who are citizens of the EU and wish to enter universities, *grandes écoles*, STS, or IUT are obliged to submit an online application through this portal site and can submit applications to up to 24 organizations.

Sources

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<http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/>
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4. Courses and qualifications

4-1) Courses

In France, higher education courses are categorized into three types: short programs, long programs, and specialized programs. An overview of these courses is described as follows:

4-1-1) Short programs

Short programs mostly require two or three years of study and are common in the areas of business, manufacturing, and services. Many are offered in multidisciplinary institutes affiliated with universities or specialized schools. These programs are designed to enable graduates to start their careers in the shortest possible time, without forgoing the possibility of continuing their higher education. As these programs always include at least one internship with a commercial enterprise, short programs offer a practical, relevant introduction to the job market. Most are highly selective in their admissions; when delivered by universities, these are exceptions to the principle of non-selection for admission to the first cycle of university degrees.

4-1-2) Long Programs

Long programs are offered in universities, *grandes écoles*, and specialized schools.

Universities

Studies at universities are organized into three basic levels (p.17):

- Bachelor: three years of study corresponding to six semesters and 180 ECTS credits.
- Master: five years of study (after three years study of bachelor) corresponding to four additional semesters and 120 ECTS credits.
- Doctor/Ph.D.: eight years of study (after three years study of bachelor and two years of master) corresponding to six additional semesters.

Grandes Écoles

Long programs in the *grandes écoles* represent five years of post-secondary study, starting with two years of preparatory study at CPGE in the *grandes écoles* or in the *lycées* (secondary educational institutions). CPGE courses are intensive programs that enable graduates to sit for entrance exams for three-year programs at *grandes écoles*. The CPGE courses, which are usually held in the *lycées*, are the equivalent of the first cycle of tertiary education. They are broken down into three categories of economic and business classes, literature classes, and science classes. The programs give their students the credits in European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which are compatible in the European frame. Upon the successful completion of five years of post-secondary study, graduates are awarded their school's diploma, which is the formal equivalent to a master's degree. Many *grandes écoles* programs are now taught in English, especially in the areas in which the school specializes. Degree programs in the *grandes écoles* usually include international internships and study abroad.

Specialized schools

Specialized schools offer academic degrees in fields such as communications, tourism, health, paramedical specialties, gastronomy, hotel management, fashion, film, comic art, animation, video games, photography, performing arts, journalism, social work, etc. Specialized schools are entitled to deliver diplomas or academic degrees specific to the school. Most programs are two to five years in duration. Admission decisions are typically based on examination results or on the screening of the student's application.

4-1-3) Specialized programs

Combined theoretical and practical training programs

This training program system combines theoretical training in HEIs with practical training in companies. This type of training, which provides professional experience and competence, is constantly progressing in the higher education sector. The combined training program provides diplomas at the *baccalauréat* level +2, such as BTS, *baccalauréat* +3, or *baccalauréat* +5. Some universities and *grandes écoles* offer engineering bachelor's or master's diplomas through combined training programs.

Long-distance education

The MESRI has established the National Center for Distance Education (CNED) for offering correspondence courses in all fields. Online seminars and meetings between students and teachers are organized for programs that require a higher degree of professional qualification. "The electronic campus (*campus électronique*)" program offered by CNED gives users access to all the services available at an actual campus, including the library.

Lifelong learning at higher education institutions

HEIs also provide lifelong learning. This type of education began with the Law of 1971 (Law on the organization of vocational training as part of continuing education), and universities have been providing access to professional training since 1985 and have issued partial degrees rewarding professional experience since 1993. Lifelong learning was taken a step further in 2002 when an entire degree could be earned through the validation of professional experiences, including volunteer, social, and unpaid work. These programs are being organized into related subjects (UE: *Unité d'Enseignement*), and information technology options are being explored for those with limited access to onsite education (due to work, or family obligations, or distance).

4-2) Curriculum

In 2002, the Ministerial Order on University Studies Leading to A Bachelor stipulated that programs be spread out over six semesters and organized them by field in both initial and continuing education formats. The programs operate under defined objectives for the following academic degrees:

- DEUG and bachelors (the Ministerial Order of 1997)
- Multidiscipline bachelors (the Ministerial Order of 1994)
- Bachelor in public administration (the Ministerial Order of 1985)
- DUT (the Ministerial Order of 1994)
- DEUST (the Ministerial Order of 1984, not included in the LMD structure from 2007-2008)
- Vocational bachelor (the Ministerial Order of 1999)
- National interpreter/guide degree (the Ministerial Order of 1995)

The educational programs basically include, to a various extent depending on the degree, education theory, methodology, and practical applications. Based on the educational objectives (while ensuring that students acquire a certain general foundation of knowledge), the programs can include elements of pre-professionalization, professionalization, individual or group projects, and one or more internships. The programs are organized into mandatory teaching units chosen by the student and elective units in some cases. They include appropriate levels of modern foreign language teaching and IT training. The curricula notably involve learning methods and research techniques in universities.

4-2-1) Student Assessment

In French universities, courses are usually grouped into UE that are cumulative. An academic degree comprises a certain number of UE; some are mandatory, and others are optional or selective. Once a student completes a UE, it is never lost. It can be carried over and counted toward the degree requirements of another program.

Assessment of student performance

Student performance is assessed in two ways in French higher education:

- Continuous assessment. Learning is measured continuously through tests and quizzes administered throughout the year in every subject.
- Final examinations. These measures are for student learning in all subjects for several days. Final exams are taken twice a year at the end of each semester.

Grading scale

In general, French HEIs use the French grading scale from 20 (the highest mark) to 0 (the lowest mark) for each subject.

The French grading scale

Numerical Grade	Description	Meaning	Note
From 16 to 20	<i>Très bien</i> (TB)	Very good	
14 and 15	<i>Bien</i> (B)	Good	
12 and 13	<i>Assez bien</i> (AB)	Fairly good	
8 to 11	<i>Passable</i>	Satisfactory	From 8 to 9, a supplementary exam may be taken in some cases
0 to 7	<i>Ajourné</i>	Unsatisfactory	

Source

Nuffic: *Education system France - The French education system described and compared with the Dutch system*

The ECTS grading scale has been developed to help institutions translate the grades awarded by host institutions to European students.

Awarding credits for experience

Numerous regulations have now made it possible for French HEIs to award academic credits toward academic degrees, certificates, or other credentials (such as a professional qualification) in recognition of a candidate's experience on the job or in another setting. Candidates seeking credits are required to complete an application in which they describe their professional experience and the skills acquired. The application is presented to a jury that decides how many academic credits the candidate should receive for the experience and skills described. If the jury decides to award less than the full amount of credits sought, the candidate is offered suggestions on how to make up the remaining credits.

Two distinct procedures are used. VAP 85 makes it possible for candidates to directly transfer into a program at the level decided by the validation process. Validation System of Acquirement of Experience (VAE) (p.22) allows the candidate to receive a degree or credits toward a degree based on the jury's assessment of the candidate's prior learning and accomplishments.

4-2-2) Advancement and Access to the labor market

Advancement

To create a teaching environment wherein objectives are consistent with outcomes, universities establish their rules of advancement within the programs they offer with respect to the requirements for the various UE proposed. This advancement framework makes it possible to redirect students through the establishment of “gateways.”

University studies can now begin with an orientation semester. This semester gives students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the university and the discipline they have chosen and to decide whether the choices they have made are right for them. In the second semester, they can choose to

- continue the same bachelor program
- change to another bachelor program
- ask to be transferred to a different program (STS, IUT, etc.)

Access to the labor market

In France, professional integration of students is facilitated by creating relationships between educational institutions and the professional world and employment services that provide access to it. In the reform of the first cycle of university education since 1973, guidance departments at universities were officially launched to implement employment support for students. The LRU imposes a mission on HEIs to provide vocational guidance to students at the bachelor level to support them until they find jobs. Institutions are required to publish not only their graduation rates but also statistics on the professional integration of their graduates. The LRU stipulates that each institution must create professional integration support offices that will publish lists of work placements and job offers that correspond to the education provided by the university. Furthermore, a system for a vocational bachelor's degree was introduced in 1999, and it established internships for developing human resources sought by industries for promoting the employment of university students.

4-3) Qualifications

4-3-1) Introduction of the LMD system

The French government signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999 with some other European countries. The Bologna Process was set up to harmonize national education systems in the member states, facilitate student and staff mobility, and achieve structural uniformity, transparency, and quality assurance. One of the ways to establish Europe-wide standardization within the higher education system resides in the three-tier bachelor, master, and PhD academic award system. These three levels have constituted a rather revolutionary reform in French education and are abbreviated as LMD. In accordance with the European organization of higher education, long training programs offered in France are organized into three successive levels, with three types of national diploma:

- Bachelor⁵ (*Licence*) is prepared in six semesters
 - Two possible options:
 - Bachelor comprises general training
 - Vocational bachelor comprises vocational training

⁵ The *Licence* was once the diploma that certified the one-year completion of the third year in a university. However, it has changed to the one that certifies the three-year completion from the admission since the LMD system was introduced.

- Master (Master) is prepared in four semesters after the bachelor's degree
Two possible options
 - Research Master (*master recherche*): More research-oriented, which will allow continuation to acquire a doctorate degree
 - Vocational Master (*master professionnel*): More professional-oriented, which will be a preparation for a specific profession and allows immediate entry into the job market.
- Doctorate/Ph.D. (Doctorat) is prepared in six semesters after the master's degree in a doctoral school (*école doctorale*)⁶. This third level is dedicated to research work. The doctorate diploma is obtained after a thesis.

4-3-2) Degrees and diplomas (*diplôme*)

French HEIs award various sorts of diplomas (*diplômes*). A diploma is a certificate that proves the completion of a course of study under a certain educational program. A “national diploma (*diplôme nationale*)” is awarded in accordance with the procedures provided under legislation or recognized by the government. Meanwhile, a “university diploma (*diplôme universitaire*)” is awarded under the authority of the university itself. The government has an exclusive right to award academic degrees and conduct accreditation (*accreditation*) for each institution. A student who has a diploma issued by the institutions having a right to award national diplomas and can be associated to an academic degree or a title is automatically awarded an academic degree or a title. It means that universities and other HEIs are allowed to award only diplomas, not academic degrees or titles.

HEIs eligible to award national diplomas have educational and academic autonomy (Article 4 of the Decree concerning university academic degrees and academic titles, and national diplomas No.2002-481). Educational institutions eligible to award diplomas are not only universities but also others including *grandes écoles* and EP.

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 CampusFrance: <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/>
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⁶ In 1989, the government began an overall reform of doctoral education to increase the number of Doctorate/Ph.D. holders. Doctoral schools were established as the framework of this reform and developed throughout the 1990s. After that, pursuant to the Ministerial Order of 2002, doctoral programs that provide doctoral education qualified as study programs that follow the Bologna Process with the introduction of LMD. Since then, doctorate programs have been provided exclusively at doctoral schools.

Higher education institutions and degrees (diplomas)

Levels		The LMD System		
Universities				
9	18 semesters (+9 years)	Doctoral school • State diploma of doctor of medicine • Doctorate / PhD	<i>Grandes Écoles</i> Schools of business Schools of engineering	
8	DOCTORATE 16 semesters (+8 years)		Schools of art Schools of architecture Other institutions (<i>Lycées</i> , Specialized schools)	
7	480 ECTS			
6	12 semesters (+6 years)	• State diploma of doctor of dental surgery • State diploma of doctor of pharmacy • Research master • Professional master • Engineering diploma	• Specialized Master (MS) • Master of Business Administration (MBA)	• Professional credential for Independent practice of architecture (HMONP)
5	MASTER 10 semesters (+5 years)		• Engineering diploma • Master of Science (MSc) • Business school diplomas • Degrees of the <i>Grandes Écoles</i>	• Diploma of art schools (DNSEP) • State diploma of architect • Diplomas of specialized Schools (health, social work, tourism)
4	300 ECTS			
3	BACHELOR 6 semesters (+3 years) 180 ECTS	• Bachelor • Vocational bachelor • University diploma in technology (DUT)		
2	4 semesters (+2 years)		• Admission to the first year of a <i>Grande École</i> program • Preparation for admission to <i>Grandes Écoles</i> (CPGE)	
1	120 ECTS		• Diploma of art schools (DMA) • Higher technical certificate (BTS)	

Note: Completion of secondary school + *Baccalauréat* or equivalent (eligibility to enter higher education in home country) = access to French higher education
 The degrees conferred in French universities and other institutions of higher education are certified by the French government.

Source

CampusFrance: *Choisir la France 2016-2017*

4-3-3) Degrees from short programs

DUT: *Diplôme universitaire de technologie* (University Diploma of Technology) - university degree

This is a two-year diploma awarded by 111 IUTs in France. Designed to train mid-level technical personnel in two years, IUT programs also allow graduates to continue for a more higher-level degree, such as a vocational bachelor (*licence professionnelle*), and approximately 80% of IUT graduates do so. The types of courses offered are the DUT for Legal Careers, DUT for Corporate Management and Administration, and DUT for Information and Communication.

DEUST: *Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques* (Scientific and Technical University Studies Diploma) - university degree

This is a career-oriented degree offered in two-year university programs. Each of the 80-odd DEUST specialties is very specific, and the curriculum is created in response to local labor-market needs. The curriculum of DEUST programs is often designed in consultation with employers and local governments. Practicing professionals take a share of the teaching load. In this course, graduates may continue for another degree, and the vocational bachelor (*licence professionnelle*) is the most common choice.

BTS: *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (Higher Technician Certificate) - non university degree

BTS is offered in the STS of vocational secondary schools; these programs require two years of study (120 ECTS credits). They are designed to train middle managers in one of 145 defined specialties. The BTS courses take place in *lycées*, where these are considered as higher education studies, and in IUT. Upon graduation, more than 30% of students continue their higher education at a university, engineering school, or business school.

Vocational Bachelor (*Licence professionnelle*) - university degree

This degree is awarded after one year of further study to students who successfully complete two years of post-secondary study. The content of the wide variety of vocational bachelor's programs is determined by partnerships of universities, employers, and professional associations; the teaching faculty includes many active professionals. The vocational bachelor is one of the best French degrees for individuals hoping to find a job immediately after graduation.

4-3-4) Intermediate degrees

These types of degrees or master 1 (Bac +2 degree or Bac +4 degree) are not recognized as valid diplomas in Europe. However, for historical reasons, the master 1 (Bac +4 degree) as well as the Bac +2 degree are considered to be important in France because they were one of the reference degrees for obtaining a job before the LMD reform. Moreover, the countries historically linked to France sometimes used to send their students at this level to France since the local universities face a lack of degree courses or materials for this level. The number of ECTS permits the students to pursue their studies in another university, but this is possible only between two semesters.

4-3-5) Degrees from long programs

To align the French system with the rest of Europe, the implementation of the “LMD reform” has seen a new degree structure for higher education by offering three levels of studies (bachelor/master/doctorate) in accordance with the Bologna Process. These are as follows:

- Bachelor, Vocational bachelor, DNTS (National Diploma for Specialized Technology): degrees obtained after three years of post-*baccalauréat* studies corresponding to 180 ECTS credits;
- Vocational Master, Research Master: degrees obtained after five years of post-*baccalauréat* studies corresponding to 300 ECTS credits;
- Doctorate: a degree obtained after post-master's studies corresponding to 480 ECTS.

Degree awarding authorization

In France, the authority for institutions to award degrees is granted and renewed by the MESRI. Therefore, HEIs apply for institutional accreditation conducted by the MESRI every five years to maintain the eligibility to award degrees regardless of juridical personality (Note; Evaluation of institutions are conducted by the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (the HCÉRES). See “III-3. Evaluation of institutions are conducted by the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (the HCÉRES)” (p.32).) Accreditation is conducted when the government concludes or renews the contracts with universities referring to the evaluation results of the HCÉRES .

Academic degrees include the *baccalauréat* and the bachelor, master, and doctorate. The *baccalauréat* is not recognized as an academic degree in the context of the Bologna Process, but it is the first-level degree in French legislation. Bachelor and master's degree programs, as well as intermediary degrees, are issued by universities and occasionally by other EPCSCP accredited for educational purpose by the MESRI.

4-3-6) National qualification frameworks

Professional qualifications

Professional qualifications in France vary greatly in type and level, and national diplomas awarded by universities can be considered as professional qualifications in many cases. One of the common features is that most of them are national qualifications under the control of the national government. Different ministries, including the MESRI, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Armed Force, and the Ministry of Culture, have different professional qualifications in response to their own services. Types of professional qualifications required to perform respective job duties are generally specified in a collective agreement entered into between workers and employers. Professional qualifications are usually given through school education and accredited by diplomas.

National Commission for Vocational Certification (CNCP)

The CNCP was set up under the French Social Modernization Law in 2002; the national commission for professional certification is placed under the authority of the French minister in charge of vocational training. The institution constitutes 43 members, including representatives of ministers, representatives of the regions, social partners, representatives of public establishments of economic field, and qualified persons.

The missions of the CNCP are to

- List the offer of vocational certifications (national register of vocational certifications: RNCP)
- Inform people and companies about the certifications listed in the national register and the certifications recognized in the member states of the EU
- Check the coherence and renewal of diplomas and qualification documents, in addition to their adaptation to evolution in qualifications and work organization.
- Issue recommendations for the attention of the institutions awarding diplomas and qualification documents for professional purposes or professional qualification certificates
- Indicate any full or partial correspondences between certifications listed in the national register or between the latter and other certifications, mainly European certifications
- Draw up a new nomenclature covering levels of certifications in relation to jobs held.

Under the authority of its chairperson, the CNCP relies on the work performed by a specialized committee, a permanent secretariat, and a network of regional correspondents. It contributes to work at an international level on transparency of qualifications.

National Register of Professional Certifications (RNCP) : <http://www.cncp.gouv.fr/>

The RNCP provides the public and enterprises with up-to-date information on certifications and qualification documents for professional purposes, in addition to the qualification certificates shown in the lists drawn up by the CNCP under the authority of the French minister in charge of vocational training. It helps facilitate job access, management of human resources, and professional mobility. The certifications listed in the register are recognized throughout France.

In practice, the RNCP can be used to consult descriptions of certifications: activities targeted, sectors of activities, elements of competence acquired, modalities of access, levels, etc. An up-to-date quantitative analysis of the register (number of data sheets that can be consulted online, number of data sheets undergoing validation, list per certifying authority, etc.) is placed at the users' disposal at regular intervals.

Validation of experience acquired (VAE)

The VAE allows people who meet certain conditions to acquire a diploma through professional experience outside the formal education system. This system enables those concerned to obtain, totally or partially, a diploma, title, or certificate of professional/vocational qualification. The act of January 17, 2002, is known as the “Social and Modernization Act” and states that “Every person who is engaged in actual life has the right to have their experiences validated, especially abilities obtained through professional experiences in achieving diplomas, professional-oriented academic titles, or professional qualifications.” The accreditation of experience acquired is applicable to any person irrespective of his/her age and level of studies or status to validate his/her acquired experience to obtain a professional certification. Three years of experience in relation to the content of the desired certification is necessary. The VAE can be financed by vocational training funds provided that the professional certification sought is listed in the RNCP.

Recognition of diplomas

Apart from a few exceptions, there is no regulatory equivalence between French diplomas and diplomas awarded in other countries. However, diplomas awarded in other countries can be recognized in France. If the purpose of such recognition is to continue education, it is known as academic recognition. If the purpose is that of exercising a profession, it is known as professional recognition. It is possible to obtain general information on recognition of diplomas by contacting the International Center for Pedagogic Studies (CIEP) as the national information centers (NIC).

The European qualification framework (EQF) is a way of understanding diplomas and qualifications in Europe. The European Commission adopted the recommendation made by the European Parliament and the Council, aiming at establishing a EQF for lifelong learning. The EQF regulates the common criteria that help the member states, enterprises, and citizens to compare the certifications issued under the various European education and training systems.

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- National Commission for Vocational Certification (CNCP): <http://www.cncp.gouv.fr/>

5. Tuition fees and financial aid for students

5-1) Tuition fees

The idea of tuition fees for public HEIs does not exist in France. The government bears the bulk of the cost of education for public HEIs in France, 10,000-14,000 euros per student per year. Students bear the annual fees for registration of enrolment in their universities, which are stipulated by the law. The fees paid by students for the 2016-2017 academic year are as follows:

- €184 for bachelor's programs
- €256 for master's programs
- €391 for doctoral programs
- €610 for programs leading to the engineering diploma

Tuition fees at private institutions (particularly schools of business and management) are often higher than those at public ones. The annual fees generally range between €3,000 and €10,000.

5-2) Financial aid for students

Several types of financial aid are available to students in France, including scholarships, accommodation subsidies, and other financial aid. The requirements for receiving "social criteria scholarships" comprise the three elements: the household income of the student, number of dependent children in this household, and distance between the family's residence and the student's place of study. In addition, a national emergency aid fund has been provided as aid for students experiencing difficulties that cannot be resolved by the scholarship system based on social criteria (for example, students whose parents suddenly lose their jobs, adults resuming their studies, or a student breaking away from his/her family and who must take responsibility for his/her self). The aid will be allocated in each institution by a committee chaired by the director of the National Center for University and School Works (CNOUS) (p.25). Finally, there is now easier access to loans, and all students, regardless of whether they are scholarship holders, may benefit, without parental guarantee, from deferred payment loans (full or partial as the student sees fit).

With regard to accommodation, the higher education policy aims to increase the amount of accommodation offered by the CNOUS, diversify the solutions for accommodation issues, make use of available property whenever possible, and improve access to accommodation for all students. From 2013 to 2015, 20,722 social housings were provided for students. The government has a plan to build an additional 40,000 housings by the end of 2017.

No matter whether they receive grants or not, international students have the same rights as French students in terms of access to canteens run by the regional university centers and school-related benefits (CROUS) or social services.

5-2-1) *CampusBourses*: Grant search engine

CampusBourses is the website of a grant search engine operated by *CampusFrance*. It is an essential tool for financing one's education in France. It enables users to search according to their needs; therefore, they can immediately receive information on financial aid through this website. From the bachelor to the post-doc levels, *CampusBourses* provides the data on scholarships granted by national and local governments, enterprises, foundations, and HEIs, in addition to the systems. The following list contains the relevant organizations and outlines the aid from France and from the EU:

- European Union
Erasmus Program and Erasmus Plus (for non-Europeans).
- The Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
Grants are provided to international students from the Paris offices (25%, including the Eiffel Excellence Scholarship Programme) or the French embassies abroad (75%).
- The MESRI
Need-based and affirmative-action grants are awarded to French citizens and certain groups of foreign students (notably those who have lived in France for at least two years and whose residence for tax purposes is located in France) and doctoral contracts (for those who study at any doctoral program throughout France).
- Public research organizations
Of these, most prominent is the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), which operates in all disciplines, while others specialize in, for example, economic and social development (IRD), energy and the environment (ADEME), or exploitation of the seas (IFREMER).
- Regional councils
Grants are awarded to students and scholars who belong to institutions in their region, particularly doctoral and post-doctoral support administered by institutions of higher education and research, usually funded in partnership with a public research organization or a private firm.
- Higher education institutions
Direct grants are provided, especially for doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars.

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 French government: <http://www.gouvernement.fr/>
 Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI):
<http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/>

6. Internationalization of French higher education

Since 1998, *EduFrance*, which has since been renamed *CampusFrance* (the French operational structure dedicated to international mobility), has been the focus of French efforts in the field of international higher education, which is increasingly competitive. Dedicated to international academic and research mobility, *CampusFrance* exists under the auspices of two French government ministries: the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the MESRI. In addition, *CampusFrance* is leading the international consortium constituted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic), British Council, European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc), and Institute of International Education in the US. *CampusFrance* also participates in projects financed by the European Commission, such as Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalization (IMPI) and Eurodata II (Study on mobility developments in higher education).

With 295,000 international students (12% of the total student population), France is the third largest host nation of international students after the US and UK, and the number of international students in France has grown by 21% in the previous decade. The number of programs held in English has expanded dramatically; *CampusFrance* stated that there are nearly 600 higher education programs. The new movement to enlarge the English-language programs has come from the involvement in the EU Erasmus project. As for areas of origin, Africa (43%) accounted for the most in 2013.

Sources

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CampusFrance: <http://www.campusfrance.org/>
CNOUS: <http://www.cnous.fr/>
European Commission (EC): <http://ec.europa.eu/>
Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI): *Higher education & Research in France, facts and figures, November 2015*

7. Responsible authorities and higher education-related bodies

Government department

MESRI (Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation):

<http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/>

The French government is responsible for the overall public policy of education.

Research funding council

ANR (National Agency for Research): <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/>

Public research bodies

EPST (Public Establishment of Scientific and Technological Character)

CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research): <http://www.cnrs.fr/>

INSERM (National Institute for Health and Medical Research): <http://www.inserm.fr/>

INRA (French National Institute for Agricultural Research): <http://www.international.inra.fr/>

INRIA (National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control): <http://www.inria.fr/>

EPIC (Public Establishment of Industrial and Commercial Character)

CEA (Atomic Energy Authority): <http://www cea.fr/>

CNES (National Center for Space Studies): <http://www.cnes.fr/>

Foundations

Institut Pasteur: <http://www.pasteur.fr/>

Institut Curie: <http://www.curie.fr/>

Academic Information Center for Domestic and International Students and Student Union

CampusFrance: <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/>

CampusFrance is the French operational structure for promoting international mobility. CampusFrance currently operates 155 offices and 78 branches in 119 countries worldwide. The aim is to promote higher education among international students, particularly through education fairs. CampusFrance centers advise and guide international students who are contemplating study in France, and the centers are liaisons for all administrative procedures prior to students' arrival in France. In 31 countries, CampusFrance centers have online systems that allow students to apply for a visa while applying for admission to a program.

CNOUS (National Center for University and School Works): <http://www.cnous.fr/>

Under the supervision of the MESRI, the CNOUS manages the CROUS Network, whose objective is to provide all students equal access to higher education and an equal opportunity to succeed by lending support for their everyday activities, including information on financial aid, residences, or

part-time jobs. As of 2016, there were 28 CROUS networks in France including overseas territories that supported more than 20,000 students. Each of the 28 networks has a regional center (CROUS center). The comprehensive regional coverage allows a local response to user needs and constitutes the core of a network of university social services.

CIEP (International Center for Pedagogic Studies): <http://www.ciep.fr/>

The CIEP is designated as a French ENIC-NARIC Center, a specific department under the European ENIC-NARIC agency network, to promote international mobility. The CIEP delivers the recognition of overseas academic and professional qualifications⁷ as well as provides information on these qualifications in France and other countries.

Student Unions: <http://www.unef.fr/>

The National Union of Students of France (UNEF), founded in 1907, is the main national student union in France. The organization works to represent the interests of students toward the national and local governments, political parties, and government bodies concerned with higher education and university administrations. The organization is also active on the international area, particularly within the European Students' Union (ESU).

Representative organizations

CPU (Conference of University Presidents): <http://www.cpu.fr/>

The CPU represents the common interests of the institutions that include universities, technological universities, the National Polytechnic Institute, ENS, the National Institute of Applied Sciences, the *grandes écoles*, and the Higher Education Research Centers. One of the roles of the CPU is to arouse public debate on higher education and research in France, and it has become an indispensable interlocutor of the authorities of those universities having issues.

CNU (National Council of Universities): <http://www.cpcnu.fr/>

The CNU is the national body that adjudicates on measures relating to qualifications, recruitment, and the career of teachers and researchers (professors and lecturers) of French universities. The CNU is composed of subcommittees; each subcommittee corresponds to a discipline. The subcommittees and the members of each subcommittee are determined by order of the MESRI. Two thirds of the members of each subcommittee are elected by their peers, and the remaining one third is made up of members appointed by the order of the MESRI among university teachers and allied staff and lecturers and allied personnel.

CGE (Conference of *Grandes Écoles*): <http://www.cge.asso.fr/>

This is an association (Act 1901) of the *grandes écoles* of engineering and management that is recognized by the state and awards a national diploma attesting to at least five years of study after the baccalauréat.

※ For quality assurance institutions, see “III-2. The quality assurance system of French higher education”. (p.29)

⁷ The CIEP evaluates the academic degrees awarded in other countries in comparison with the ones in the French higher education system upon the request of applicants and issues certificates to them. While the judgment of comparability is entrusted to institutions where applicants wish to enroll, institutions generally refer to the certificates for their judgments.

8. Legislation

Loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur: 12/11/1968

The framework law of 1968 on higher education, called the Edgar Faure Law, stipulated the fundamental legislative framework for university organization in France. The Law provided for academic, administrative, and financial autonomy of the universities, which replaced the old colleges. This law has not been repealed, and the provisions not in contradiction with those of the law on higher education dated 26/01/1984 remain in force. (p.5)

Loi sur l'enseignement supérieur: 26/01/1984

The law of 1984 on higher education, known as the Savary Law, defines the fundamental principles applying to higher education courses under the responsibility of the MESRI. It establishes the principles governing the organization and operation of HEIs, including universities, colleges, and educational institutions outside universities, ENS, French schools abroad, and *grandes écoles*. The Law reorganizes the university system, formerly governed by the framework law on higher education dated 12/11/1968, by granting more autonomy in administrative, financial, teaching, and scientific matters to universities. (p.5)

Loi de programme pour la recherche: 18/04/2006

The Act on Research of 2006 aims to improve the strategic vision and coherence of the research system. It aims to develop interfaces and cooperation between public research actors and between them and the business sector. Besides, this act (art 9), which introduces the research code articles L.114-3-1 to L.114-3-7, is a legal framework for the creation of the Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (the AERES), the predecessor of the HCÉRES. These articles mostly define the mission of the AERES (L.114-3-1 and L.114-3-5) as well as the tasks and composition of that council (L.114-3-3). (p.28)

Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités: 10/08/2007

The Law for Liberties and Responsibilities of Universities (the LRU) is the law reforming autonomous status and management in the universities. (p.6)

La loi sur l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche: 22/07/2013

The Law on higher education and research brought a major structural change by promoting the integration of HEIs and research institutions within the same area. Besides, this law No. 2013-660 states the abolition of the AERES and its replacement by the HCÉRES. (p.7, 28)

Sources

Legifrance: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/>

European Commission (EC): *Eurydice - Organisation of the education system in France, 2009/2010*

High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

III. The Quality Assurance System

1. The transition of the French quality assurance system

1-1) The National Council for Evaluation of Universities (CNE)

An external evaluation system was formed in France in the middle of the 1980s. The CNE was set up in 1984 and played a central role in evaluation. It was an autonomous administrative entity that reported directly to the President of the Republic. Its mission was the evaluation of universities, schools, and other institutions in the areas linked to the mission of higher education in the public sector. The AERES inherited this mission and the HCÉRES is currently carrying it out.

1-2) The Bologna Process

France is no exception among the European states that saw drastic changes in higher education due to the Bologna Declaration (1999). New state regulations were introduced from 2002 (p.17), under the LMD system, intended to build a structure of academic degrees common to all HEIs. The implementation of these regulations was phased in step by step, and a study of the quality assurance process was commenced.

1-3) The Act on Research (2006): Establishment of the current quality assurance system

In response to the requirement of quality assurance under the Bologna process, the Act on Research (law no. 2006-450, April 18, 2006) and the LRU were enacted; these brought a huge change to the quality assurance system, in addition to enhancing the autonomy and responsibility of universities. At the same time, a new organization, called the AERES, which was created to evaluate the programs of higher education and research, was established, replacing the CNE, as stipulated by the Act on Research of 2006. The mission of the AERES was to evaluate institutions, including universities, high schools, research organizations, research units, and bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs.

1-4) The Law on Higher Education and Research (2013): Quality assurance corresponding to the acceleration of coordination among higher education institutions

The Act on Higher Education and Research, which revised the Law on the LRU was enacted on July 22, 2013, reorganizing the AERES into the HCÉRES, which retained the status of an independent administrative authority and inherited all rights and obligations of the AERES. Since the Law on Higher Education and Research was enacted, the government has introduced the concept of territorial coordination groupings and has been promoting the coordination and integrations of higher education and research institutions. The groupings are organizational modes responsible for strategic coordination at the regional level. According to study programs, the groupings do not directly deliver education but monitor the coordination status among study programs provided by HEIs which compose the groupings (in many cases, coordination is implemented at the doctoral level and it is unusual at the master level). Meanwhile, the groupings make contracts with the government that are of the same duration as those of the educational institutions.⁸ The groupings have gradually been recognized as the target of HCÉRES's evaluations, and after a trial implementation, it began to fully operate in the cycle of 2016-2017.

⁸ With regard to a conclusion of a contract for each territorial coordination grouping, stakeholders of higher education opposed strongly at the time of the consultation on a formulation of the Act on Higher Education and Research. Therefore it was decided to set a particular contract regarding budgets allocation for each composite institution.

2. The quality assurance system of French higher education

2-1) Higher education institution and university approval system

2-1-1) Establishment of public corporations of higher education

Public corporations in higher education are legal entities that have been established by the government for the purposes of higher education and training. These corporations are granted formal autonomy to govern themselves and manage their own finances.

The EPSCP (Public Establishment of Scientific, Cultural, and Professional Character)

Public universities, national polytechnic institutes, and IUT are included in this legal status; all those with the status of COMUE (p.7) are EPSCP. The Savary Law of 1984 stipulates the definitions and organization of these institutions. Their composition provides for a federal structure of departments (UFR, schools, or institutes) that offer both research and teaching and for elected executives. They are created by the government after consultation with the National Council for Higher Education and Research (CNESER). Changes in the internal structure of the institutions must be approved by the minister of the MESRI.

The EPA (Public Establishment of Administrative Character)

HEIs under the jurisdiction of various ministries are set by the Act in the same way as the EPSCP. An EPA does not have a special status as an educational institution under legislation but has the same status as other public corporations. EPAs exist as not only HEIs but also various types of corporations in all sectors of ministries. The heads of these corporations are appointed by the minister with jurisdiction (*Ministère de tutelle*). Therefore, the heads of EPAs as HEIs are appointed by the minister of the MESRI. There are extremely diverse types of the EPA, some being classified as *grandes écoles*, such as the *école polytechnique* under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Armed Force. The following institutions are included in this category.

- Local public education institutions (EPLE) with CPGE or STS;
- Scientific *grandes écoles* under the authority of the MESRI;
- Superior institutes of military education under the authority of the Ministry of Armed Force: the army, navy and air force institutes;
- The National School of Administration (ENA), under the authority of the Prime Minister;
- Superior agricultural institutes under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- National veterinary schools, under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- Superior institutes of artistic studies under the authority of the Ministry of Culture;
- National superior engineering institutes and national engineering schools.
- The Paris institute of corporate administration (IAE-Paris), which provides a link between university education and practical business studies;
- The Institute of Higher Education for Science and Technology (IHEST), under the authority of the ministers of MESRI.

Other EPAs are able to be EPSCPs by the Cabinet Order or requests from the EPAs themselves after the approval of the CNESER.

Departments of public administration

Some HEIs are mere departments of ministries, without any formal autonomy or corporate identity.

2-1-2) Establishment of private institutions of higher education

According to the section L731-1 of the Code of Education, all French citizens and members of the European Community or the European Economic Area who are more than 25 years old are eligible to freely attend courses and HEIs, under some conditions (e.g., notification given to the prefectures). These private institutions need to be recognized by the government for public financial aids and awarding academic degrees. (p.8)

2-2) Internal quality assurance

HEIs make contracts with the government and receive budgetary allocations. Under this framework, the self-evaluation conducted by each institution is emphasized. Since the Law Relative to the Finance Laws (LOLF) was enacted, budgetary allocations have relied on a performance-based system. This means that HEIs are allowed to allocate their budgets for appropriate missions although these are required for genuine internal control. Since 1996, universities must conduct a self-evaluation of their educational programs, including student surveys. Institutions have therefore established specialized services, called "*observatories*," that collect data, conduct surveys, and produce internal indicators for students and graduates, with the aim of the enhancement of their own statistical and analytical capacity. Accordingly, the accreditation process under the ministries has increasingly been associated with the external evaluation of educational programs. Meanwhile, the Act on Higher Education and Research requires each institution to internally establish a self-evaluation committee. Some universities placed students on the committees. In addition, the Quality Network of Higher Education and Research (*REseau quaLité en Enseignement supérieur et Recherche*), whose members are all French universities, promotes the exchange of staff who engage with quality assurance; 15 members were elected to a steering committee. The committee hosts events such as training programs and seminars on evaluation for members through this network.

2-3) External quality assurance

In France, the government and HEIs make contracts on strategies and resources every five years for the implementation of the national strategy toward higher education and research. This system was set into motion by the Law Relative to the LOLF of 2001, which is an organizational law that stipulated the foundation of the compilation and implementation of the national budget. It was in full effect starting with the 2006 budget (starting on January 1 of the same year). For the purposes of making contracts, the government divided France into five geographical zones (A, B, C, D, and E) and conducted accreditation of institutions (including approval of the establishment of a curriculum, certification and renewal of the authority to confer academic degrees). The government refers to the results of HCÉRES's evaluation for contract renewal for each institution and budgetary allocation, so it has substantial influence.

Hence the system of contracts between the government and each institution and accreditations are closely linked and, since the LOLF was enacted, has required institutions to improve their practices in light of their performance-based evaluation and fulfill their accountability while increasing the universities' authority to implement a comprehensive allocation of their budgets based on a definite guideline. It appears that the circumstances of evaluation have shifted from a "culture of measures" to a "culture of result and performance." The authority of the governing section in institutions was expanded under the new system, and the section came to have the power to steer finance and personnel, as well as organization reforms. However, the management structure controlled by the government was reduced, and university autonomy was increased. Thus, independent evaluations of universities came to be necessary. The evaluation of institutions was considered to oppose the principle of academic freedom in universities; on the other hand, the institutions are obliged to protect

their students. Therefore, an external quality assurance system is needed to maintain the balance.

Furthermore, current discussions all over Europe and in France of the roles and organizational circumstances of universities based on the LRU focused on the necessity of expanding the responsibility of HEIs. In this context, the evaluation of institutions conducted by external quality assurance agencies must consider the results of self-evaluation and clarify the capacity of institutions to set and achieve those of their objectives that correspond to the government directions, to recognize issues, and carry out improvements. Meanwhile, as of 2010, the integrated evaluation that was conducted at the final phase of the overall evaluation process targeted certain institutions. However, taking into account the changes that are producing integration among HEIs and regionally establishing territorial coordination groupings, it is necessary to take into account the phased status of the development of the groupings. Thus, the target scope for external quality assurance conducted by the HCÉRES was also extensively modified to cover the various elements that compose the groupings.

External quality assurance agencies

The followings are external quality assurance agencies in France;

- The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES):
<http://www.hceres.fr/> (See “III-3. The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (The HCÉRES)” (p. 32))
The HCÉRES carries out the Evaluation of territorial coordination groupings, institutions, study programs and doctoral schools and research.
- The Commission for Engineer Titles (the CTI): <http://www.cti-commission.fr/> (See “Appendix. The Commission for Engineer Titles (the CTI)” (p. 46))
The CTI carries out the Evaluation of programs for engineering.
- The Commission of Evaluation of training and Diplomas of Management (the CEFDG):
<https://www.cefdg.fr/>
The CEFDG establishes quality management system for higher education regarding the disciplines of business and management
- The National Consultative Commission of IUT (the CCN-IUT)
The CCN-IUT operates external quality assurance for IUT.

Explanation that starts from the following page concerns evaluation practices conducted by the HCÉRES, which is the leading quality assurance agency in France.

Sources

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Thierry Chevaillier: *The Changing Role of the State in French Higher Education : From Curriculum Control to Program Accreditation*
Stefanie Schwarz and Don F. Westerheijden (Eds.) (2004): *Accreditation and Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area, kluwer Academic Publishers*

3. The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (the HCÉRES)

3-1) Overview of the HCÉRES

(As of 2016)

Year of establishment	2014 (the AERES, a predecessor of the HCÉRES was established in 2007.)
Character of the organization	The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (the HCÉRES: <i>Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur</i>) was established with the Act of Higher Education and Research of 2013. The HCÉRES is the Independent Administrative Authority (AAI), organization and operation of which were stipulated by decree no. 2014-1365 of 14 November 2014. Its characteristics can describe as the comprehensive approach to assessment, and it covers all higher education and research institutions, research laboratories, and advanced programs.
Location	2 rue Albert Einstein, Paris, 75013, FRANCE
Representative	Michel COSNARD (President)
Number of staff	Administrative staff: 217 (including 102 staff of the management division and 115 researchers and professors termed "scientific delegates")
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members - 30 French and overseas members • Experts - 4,500 evaluators a year (part-time assignment), 20% of whom are overseas members • Scientific delegates - 115 (part-time assignment) <p>The role of the scientific delegates is to select the experts and to manage the evaluation committee. Scientific delegates are of senior researchers who have great experience and connections with the legacy of university, such as former presidents and deans of faculty.</p>

- Organizational structure: the following four departments, another one, the Department Europe and international (DEI), an observatory of sciences and techniques (OST) section (integrated with the HCÉRES in January 2015), and the secretariat

- Department of the evaluation of institutions (Dept. 1) evaluates higher education and research institutions, research organizations, scientific cooperation foundations, and institutions, as well as the National Agency for Research (ANR).
- Department of the evaluation of research (Dept. 2) evaluates the research of HEIs and research organizations.
- Department of the evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools (Dept. 3) evaluates study programs and doctoral schools (bachelors, masters, doctoral schools), covering all bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs of public or private HEIs.
- Department of the evaluation of territorial coordinations (Dept. 4) evaluates 25 territorial coordination groupings that are the corporate bodies of higher education and research institutions.

Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

3-2) Mission

The HCÉRES establishes its missions as follows:

- Evaluating territorial coordination groupings, research organizations and institutions, higher education and research institutions, and scientific cooperation foundations and institutions, as well as the French National Research Agency, taking account of their missions and activities, and further, conducting meta-evaluation as required for other quality assurance agencies in France to

respond to a request of French institutions or programs to ensure the quality of their evaluation.

- Evaluating research activities conducted by the research units of the aforementioned organizations and institutions, which the HCÉRES either does directly or with the support of the research organizations and institutions according to procedures that it has approved.
- Evaluating the study programs and doctoral schools of HEIs.

3-3) Principles

The HCÉRES conducts evaluations based on three principles: independence, transparency, and impartiality. It also works to carry out its mission with respect to the key values specified in its evaluation charter.

3-4) Tasks

The HCÉRES has three tasks:

- Evaluating higher education and research institutions (universities, INSERM, CEA, CNRS, and other) with consideration for their missions and activities.
- Evaluating the research activity of each unit and group of these institutions.
- Evaluating the study programs and doctoral schools of the higher education system (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs).

3-5) Outline of evaluation

The HCÉRES evaluates territorial coordination groupings, universities, some *grandes écoles*, research, study programs and doctoral schools while having no power to make decisions on accreditation and funding. Another feature is that the department for research and the one for study programs and doctoral schools cooperate and evaluate both research and higher education provisions, sharing the same scientific delegates. Furthermore, transparency and independence are assured in each evaluation process, with all reports accessible on the website for the perusal of all stakeholders, and the HCÉRES ensures the sustainable improvement of its evaluation process.

The HCÉRES conducts four evaluations, as below.

1. evaluation of territorial coordinations
2. evaluation of institutions
3. evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools
4. evaluation of research (research units, research fields)

In evaluation of territorial coordinations, the HCÉRES conduct integrated evaluation of all four evaluations.

3-5-1) Evaluation cycle

The HCÉRES evaluates one-fifth of the French higher education and research institutions every year. France is divided into five geographical zones (Groups A to E) which are determined by the contracts between the MESRI and respective HEIs, and evaluations are carried out for each.

Group (<i>vague</i>)	Name of target regions
A	Comprises the regional education authorities of Lyons, Grenoble, Toulouse, and Bordeaux
B	Comprises the regional education authorities of Rouen, Caen, Rennes, Nantes, Dijon, Besançon, Clermont-Ferrand, Orleans-Tours, and Limoges, as well as New Caledonia and French Polynesia.
C	Comprises the regional education authorities of Amiens, Reims, Nancy-Metz, Strasbourg, Poitiers, Aix-Marseille, Nice, and Corsica
D	Comprises the regional education authorities of the Parisian region, Créteil, and Versailles
E	Comprises the regional education authorities of the Parisian region, Lille, Montpellier, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, as well as French Guiana and Réunion.

Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

3-5-2) Integrated evaluation

Features as integrated evaluation of territorial coordinations

Before territorial coordinations became a target of evaluation, the HCÉRES had conducted integrated evaluation at an institutional level. At first, the HCÉRES described the results of its evaluation of research units (Dept. 2), then study programs and doctoral schools in three phases (Dept. 3), and finally institutions (Dept. 1) in its integrated evaluation report. The implementation of integrated evaluation, including territorial coordinations, which became a new target of evaluation, are described as a major action in the HCÉRES's medium-term strategy for 2016–2020. The HCÉRES will conduct an integrated evaluation that takes into account the diversity of territorial coordination groupings. The integrated reports are referred by the government and are utilized as a basis for subsequent self-evaluation.

The HCÉRES works to conduct coherent integrated evaluation reports for regional coordination and the evaluation target bodies through the practices as below.

- Analyzing institutional strategies for promoting regional coordination, the progress of practices carried out by each institution in its territorial coordination grouping and the association functions between these strategies and the indigenous growth policies of each institution.
- Confirming the comprehensiveness and the consistency of all evaluations (evaluation of territorial coordinations, evaluation of institutions, evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools and evaluation of research) taken under the initiative of the HCÉRES.
- Avoiding wasted reduplications of requirements, attempting not to overlap analysis targets in the evaluations.
- Contributing to the strategic management of each territorial coordination grouping and institution by making final integrated evaluation reports on regional coordination and relevant reports on all evaluated institutions. These reports must include recommendations for continuous improvement.

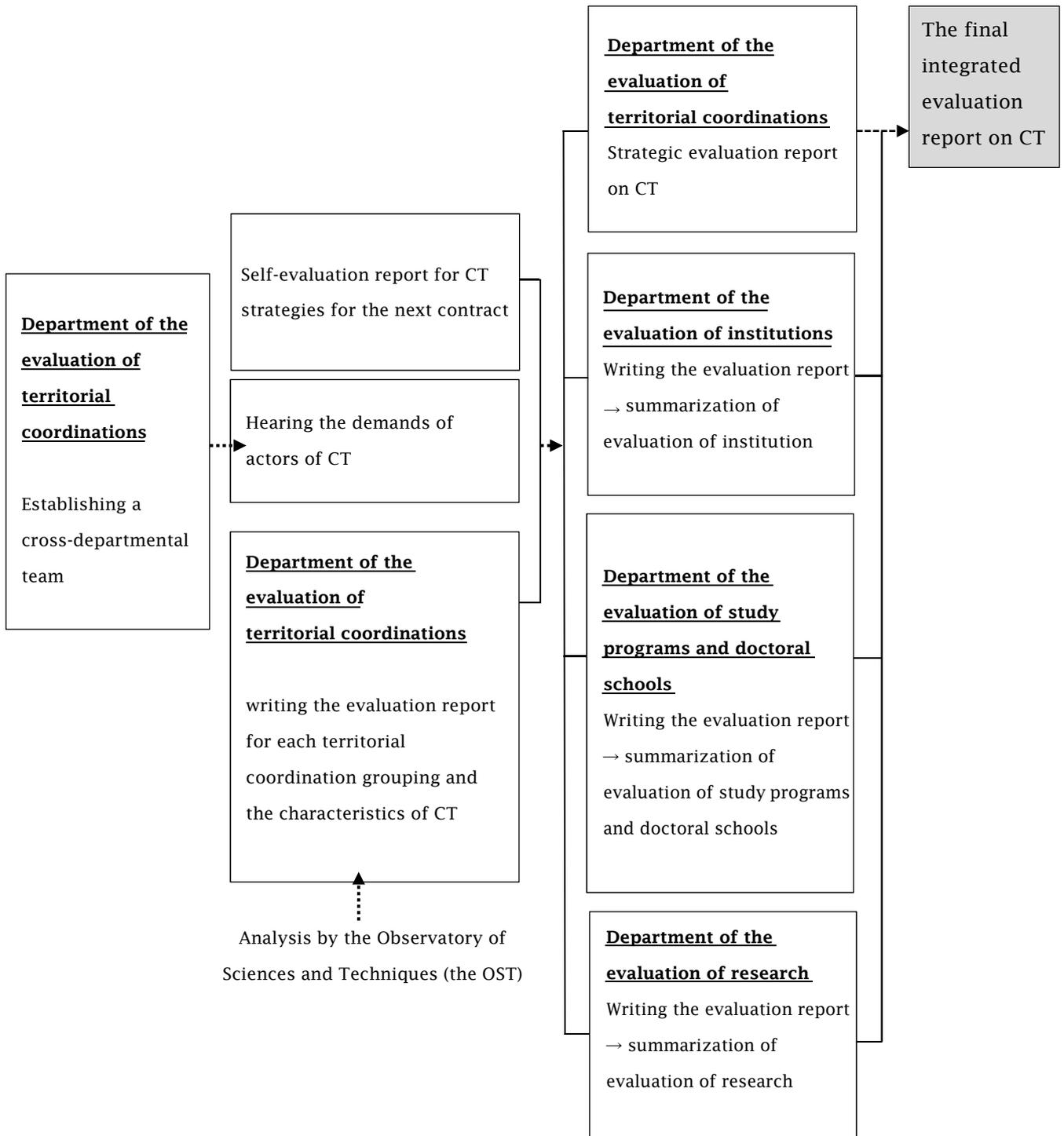
Integrated evaluation process

1. The cross-departmental team (p.37) analyses the activities and action plans that are implemented by all evaluated institutions of territorial coordination groupings (each institution, each study program and doctoral school, and all research) over five years, the duration of the contract with the government (within the relation of territorial coordination groupings, cross-departmental team

analyses through referring to the objectives and strategies that are described in a self-evaluation report concerning the groupings).

2. The department of evaluation of territorial coordinations conducts it for the regional coordination of the groupings. The department writes evaluation reports both for the groupings themselves and for their strategies (a strategic evaluation report). Part of the strategic evaluation report is used as guidance for evaluation for each institution, each study program and doctoral school, and all research.
3. Each evaluation department conducts evaluation of institutions, study programs and doctoral schools, and research; then the HCÉRES compiles an internal document based on the report, made by committees of experts of each department of evaluations.
4. Finally, the cross-departmental team is reassembled and compiles the strategic evaluation report written at step "2" above, and the internal document written by the HCÉRES at step "3". Then the chairman of the committee of experts for evaluation of territorial coordinations writes an integrated evaluation report on the regional coordination of the grouping as a representative of the committee. The purpose of the integrated report is to complement recommendations stated in the internal document written by the HCÉRES and to be the final report stating comprehensive recommendations. This report is used to lead the quality improvement for the governance of territorial coordination groupings.

Process chart of integrated evaluation



CT = Regional Coordination of territorial coordination grouping

Source
The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

3-5-3) Evaluation of territorial coordinations

Since the Act on Higher Education and Research was enacted in 2013, the government has introduced the concept of territorial coordination groupings, composed by the coordination and integration of academic institutions such as universities and research institutions that usually are close to each other. The government previously made contracts with each institution every five years and confirmed whether each institution was implementing the actions agreed upon the contract through HCÉRES's evaluation. In addition to this, the government came to promote the creation of contracts between it and territorial coordination groupings (the contract durations are the same as those the institutions make with their territorial coordination groupings). Following this, the HCÉRES adopted evaluation of territorial coordinations on a pilot basis and officially began conducting this from 2016-2017 (*vague C*).

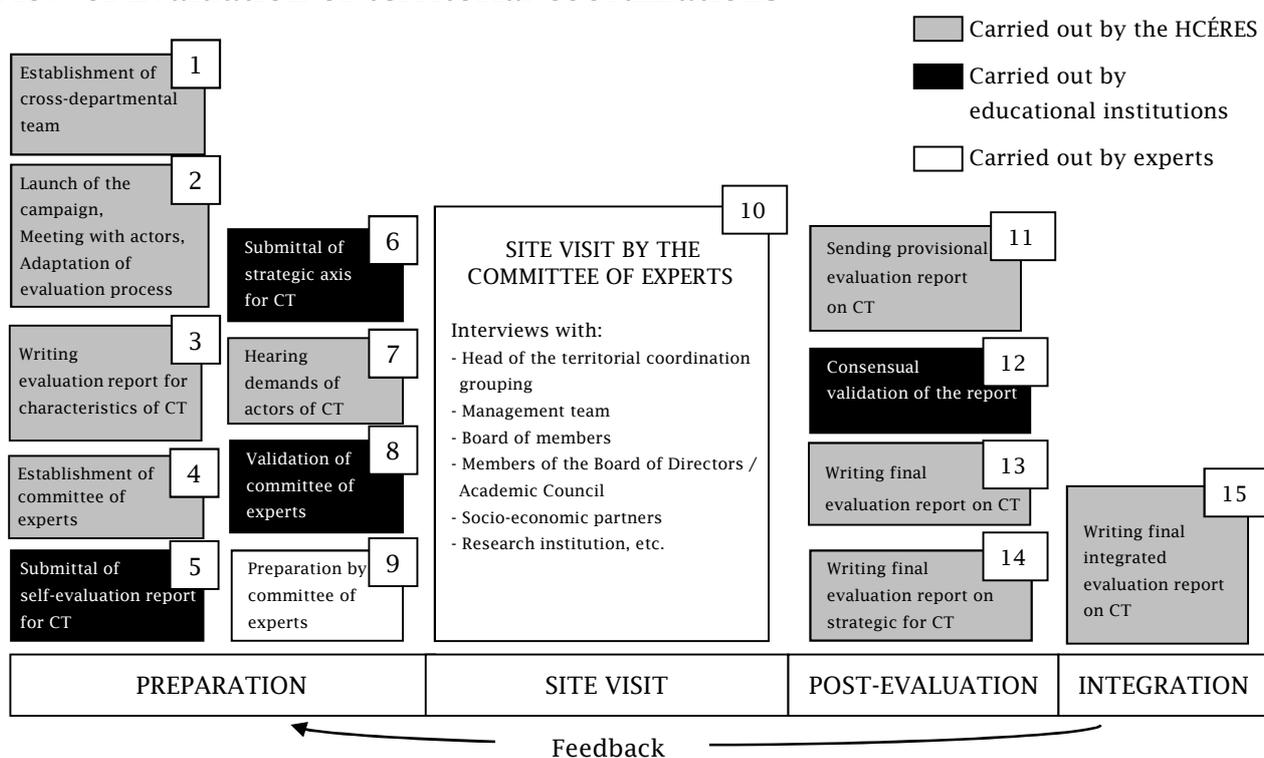
The range of evaluation targets for territorial coordinations is set wider than the ones for each institution that composes the groupings regardless of legal status (COMUE or association). Hence the evaluation target includes all stakeholders related to the policy for the regional integration, it includes institutions that are not covered by HCÉRES's evaluation. These institutions are not evaluated by the HCÉRES individually (such evaluation of institution).

In the HCÉRES, evaluation of territorial coordinations is carried out by the department of evaluation of territorial coordinations (Dept. 4). However, the cross-departmental team command the entire operation of the evaluation process. The team consists of the members named below.

- Several scientific delegates who belong to the five departments of the HCÉRES (the departments of evaluation of institutions, research, study programs and doctoral schools, territorial coordinations, and OST)
- A project coordinator who is allocated to targeted territorial coordination groupings

The teams join the preparation, as in the below illustration, and gather together to conduct integrated evaluations for territorial coordinations (p.34).

Flow of Evaluation of territorial coordinations



Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

Evaluation standards for territorial coordinations

Evaluation of territorial coordinations is conducted in accordance with the following standards. These standards for integrated evaluation, beginning from the territorial coordination strategy implemented by the territorial coordination groupings, especially focus on the analysis of the objectives of territorial coordination and the capability to perform various tasks of the grouping. The standards are versatile enough to adapt to the various tasks and capabilities of the groupings. They consist of three fields, and each field is further divided into several survey areas.

Field 1: Organizational positioning and growth strategy for territorial coordinations

- Area 1: Analysis of organizational positioning
- Area 2: Growth strategy

Field 2: Governance and operational commands of territorial coordinations

- Area 1: Organization of territorial coordinations
- Area 2: Governance for the development and implementation of the strategic project
- Area 3: Piloting for the operational commands for the strategic project

Field 3: Tasks and competences of territorial coordinations

- Area 1: Monitoring of territorial coordinations
- Area 2: Trajectory followed by territorial coordinations

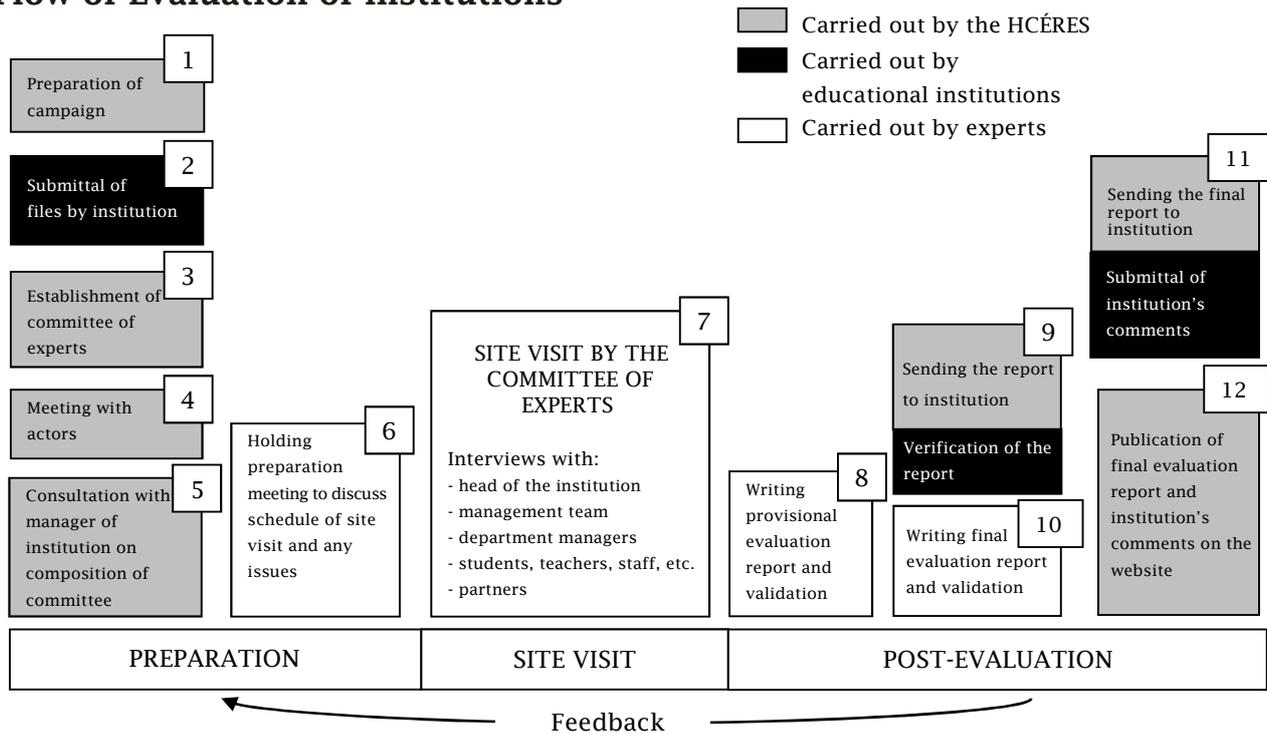
3-5-4) Evaluation of institutions

The department for evaluation of institutions (Dept. 1) of the HCÉRES evaluates higher education institutions, research organizations, i.e., public science and technology institutions like the CNRS, the National Institute for Health and Medical Research (the INSERM), and the Public Establishment of Scientific and Technological Character, scientific cooperation foundations and institutions as well as the National Agency for Research. As of 2016, evaluation of institutions targets about 310 higher education and research institutions and about 60 institutions are evaluated every year (The evaluation cycle is five years). Meanwhile, as of 2010, about 190 institutions were targets of evaluation of institutions reports and about 50 institutions were evaluated every year (The evaluation cycle is four years).

HCÉRES's evaluation of institutions reports are based on the results of the self-evaluation conducted by each institution and site visits carried out to the evaluated institution at least once. The purpose of evaluation of institutions is to identify strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations. After evaluation, the HCÉRES compiles a draft report and sends it to the target institution. Then the institution submits an opinion to the HCÉRES. Both HCÉRES's report and the institution's opinion are published publically on HCÉRES's website.

In the evaluation of research institutions, all of their missions, particularly as regards the use of findings and transfers, are significant. The HCÉRES compiles a summary of research evaluation every year.

Flow of Evaluation of institutions



Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

Evaluation standards for institutions

Evaluation standards for institutions consist of the major six areas below. The HCÉRES analyzes to what extent expectations for the governance of higher education and research institutions are being met and compares the self-evaluation reports written by each institution are achieved with the standards.

1. Institutional positioning and growth strategy
2. Governance and steering of the institution
3. Research and study programs
4. Student unit status and degree acquisition
5. Utilization of research results and academic knowledge
6. European and international relations

3-5-5) Evaluation of research (evaluation of research units and research field)

Regarding the outcomes of academic research, it is difficult to quantitatively measure their effects. However, in societies where research is financed by the government or private enterprise, the effectiveness of research must be evaluated; such evaluation is practiced on all kinds of groups conducting academic research, ranging from the evaluation of individuals to that of universities or other institutions.

In France, before 2007, the Public Establishment of Scientific and Technological Character (the EPST) such as the CNRS once every four years had evaluated institutions that were in partnerships or desired a partnership. These partnerships between research institutions and public establishments affected financing and employment opportunities for new researchers. In 2007, the AERES, and subsequently the HCÉRES, began to evaluate all education and research institutions, such as the CNRS and the National Institute for Health and Medical Research (the INSERM) etc.

The department of the evaluation of research (Dept. 2) of the HCÉRES conducts research evaluations. The department creates an average of 575 evaluations of HEIs and research institutions every year. These cover the CNRS and the INSERM or the Atomic Energy Authority (the CEA), supervised by the

MESRI and other French ministries (e.g., Agriculture and Food).

Before the establishment of territorial coordination groupings, the evaluation of research units was conducted to characterize potential research abilities and to clarify the status of its target research institutions in light of the regional, national, or international context, in accordance with the research institutions' missions and strategic objectives. Furthermore, in addition to evaluation of research units, evaluation of research fields (*champs de recherché*) was launched in 2017-2018 (*vague D*). Evaluation of research units is targeted on small compositions of research units, and evaluation of research field is for evaluating larger units, of structured research at the level of territorial coordination groupings.

1. Evaluation of research field

A research field⁹ is defined by a competent authority for each research unit belonging to each educational institution and territorial coordination grouping based on consultations with the HCÉRES before conducting evaluation. As of 2016, there are major differences in the grouping. Therefore, evaluation of the research fields is conducted gradually and flexibly and the evaluation process is different for each grouping.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria for a research field is as below:

- Positioning in the academic environment and strategic objectives
- Organization (consistency and synergistic and complementary action for each compositional element) and steering system
- Quality of relevance between study program and research

2. Evaluation of research units

The evaluation process begins with the submittal of relevant materials and a self-evaluation by a research unit, and an expert committee writes a draft report based on the materials. After this, the expert committee conducts a site visit to the unit and writes a draft report. After the validation of the draft report by the HCÉRES, it is sent to the research unit for feedback. The final report is published on the HCÉRES website attached to opinions submitted by the research unit.

Evaluation criteria

To conduct evaluations for various research units, six evaluation criteria have been set; these criteria is reduced to three criteria in 2017-2018. In evaluation of research units, past practices and their outcomes as well as prospective activities and strategies for implementation of them are preferentially evaluated.

1. Research activities and qualities for research outcomes, which are divided into three groups as below.
 - Activities and outcomes relating to the creation of knowledge
 - Activities and outcomes extracted from utilization of research results, relocation, and interaction with the surrounding environment
 - Education using research and related activities and outcomes
2. Organization of research units and research life
3. Quality and feasibility of the academic project

⁹ Research Field is various structured form that is summarized as an aggregate that each research unit belongs to territorial coordination grouping defined in accordance with consistencies of themes and departments etc.

3-5-6) Evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools

Since 2007, the AERES had been evaluating all the existing programs in universities and HEIs (except programs granting the title of engineer) from bachelor's to master's and doctoral programs. After the reorganization of the AERES in 2013, the HCÉRES took over the evaluation.

The scope for evaluation that the department for evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools of the HCÉRES (Dept. 3) includes all bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs at public or private HEIs, mainly those supervised by the MESRI, as well as those supervised by other French ministries (of Culture, Agriculture and Food, Armed Force, and others). Evaluation objectives are set for each of the three levels: bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The HCÉRES evaluates the appropriateness of education and research outcomes in terms of the resources that are invested knowledge acquisition and capacity development, the integration of doctorates into the job market, and continuation of studies.

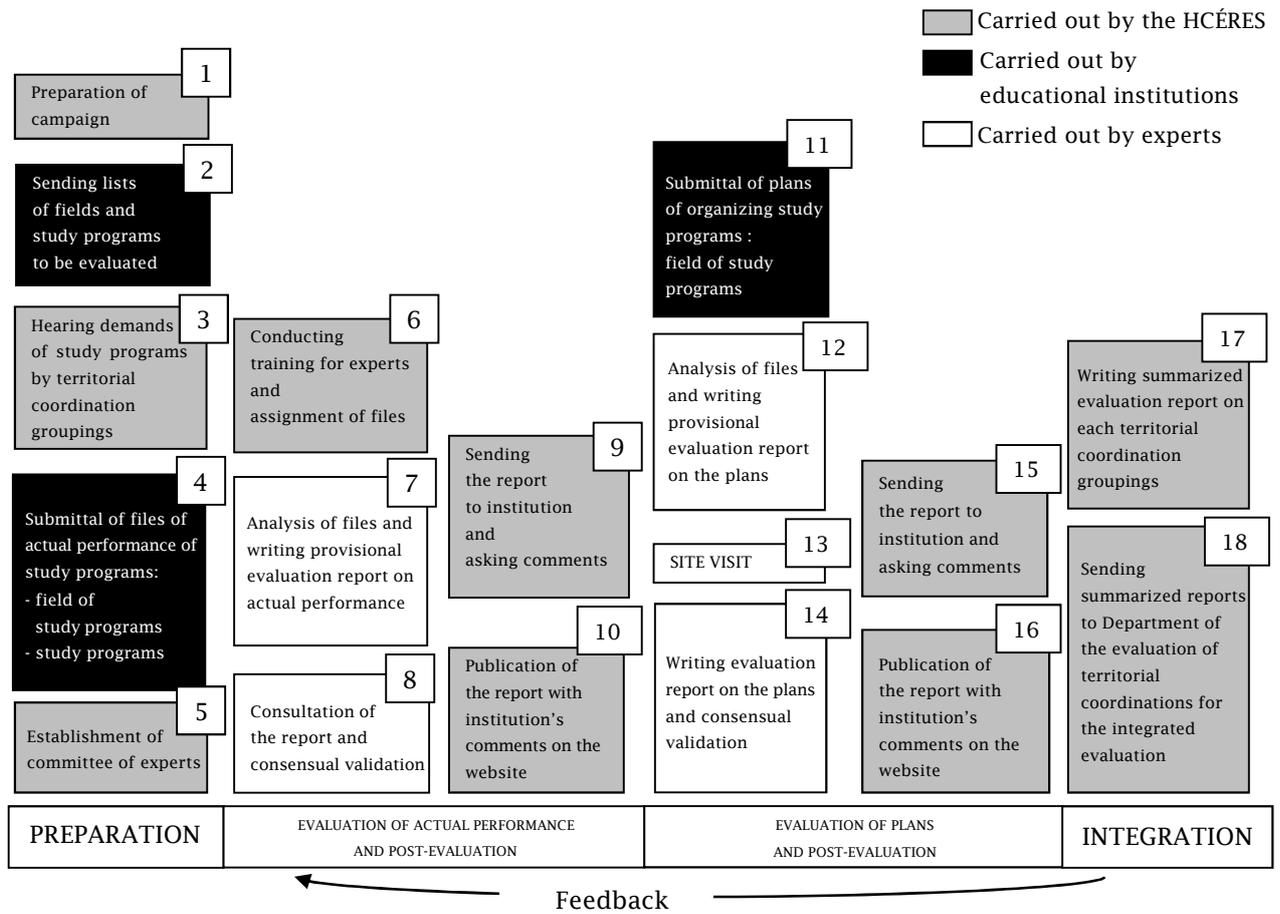
Evaluation of field of study program¹⁰

Before 2013, the HCÉRES (in its existence as the AERES) had been conducting evaluations for all specific fields and all bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Self-evaluation reports had to include the descriptions in each field of study programs for the degrees and each specific field and major that are its substructures and showed advantages, disadvantages, and improvements. The organizational units of each specific field were subdivided according to their evaluation results. Since 2014, to reduce the burden of the evaluations, the organizational unit for the self-evaluation report was changed. As for the outlines of the upper level field of study programs (*domaine/champs de formations*) by each organizational unit such as Art, Literature, and Linguistics; Humanities and Social Sciences; Science, Technology, and Health; and Law, Economics, and Management, it is required to collate information on each program that makes up HEIs or territorial coordination groupings.

¹⁰ In this article the word 'Field of Study Program' means coherent aggregate of study programs that each institution which composes a territorial coordination grouping present as strategies. A definition and an object scope are established by each educational institution. Accordingly, it is different from the definition of 'multidisciplinary' that means the field itself as a disciple field (p.5)

Flow of evaluation of study programs and doctoral schools

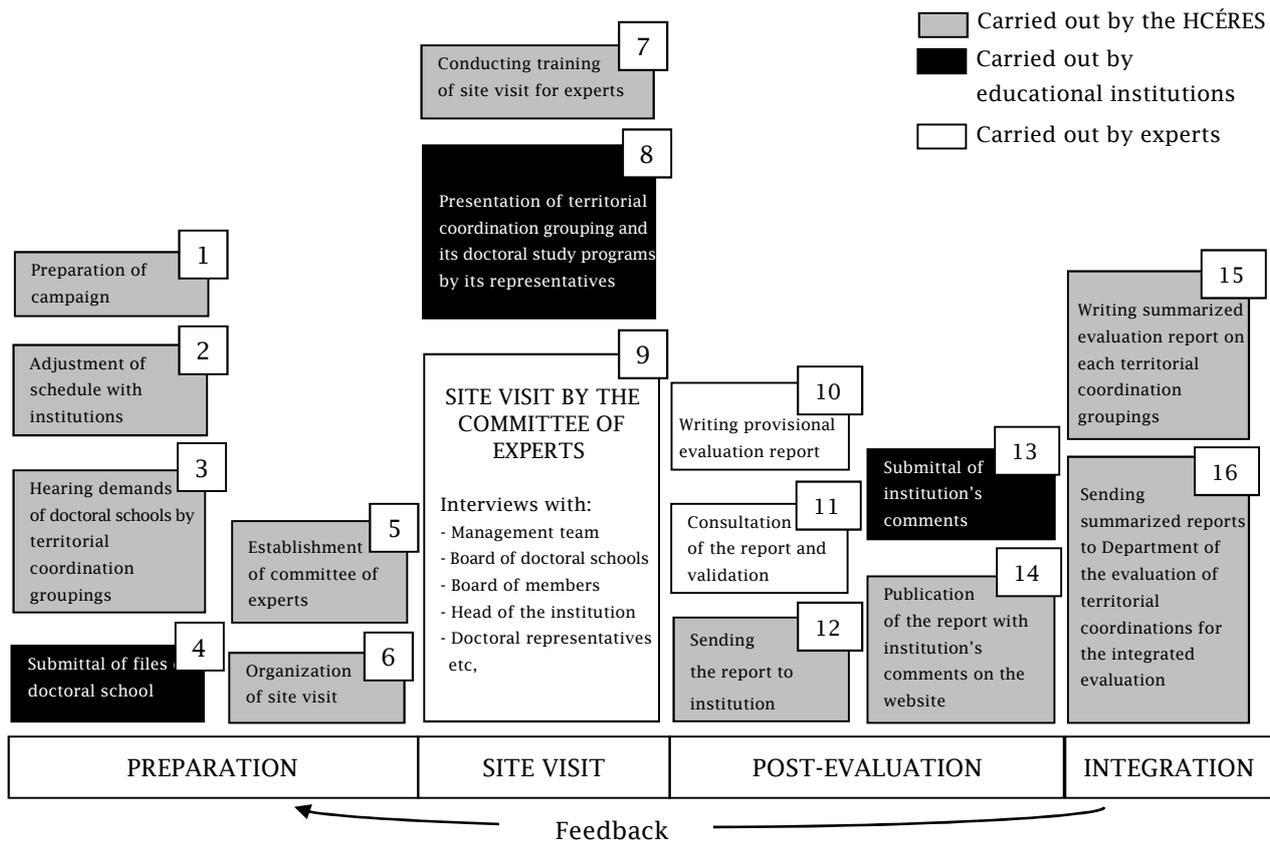
Evaluation of bachelor's, vocational bachelor's and master's degree program



Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

Evaluation of doctoral school



Source

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

Criteria for study programs and doctoral schools

The criteria for study programs and doctoral schools clearly explain the perspectives of the expert panels, in addition to the objectives and the initiatives that the evaluated educational programs should produce. The criteria for evaluation of bachelor's, vocational bachelor's, and master's degree programs and evaluation of doctoral schools consists of the following sections:

- Evaluation of bachelor's, vocational bachelor's, and master's degree program
 1. Purpose of study program
 2. Position of study program
 3. Organization of faculty members
 4. Operation of study program
- Evaluation of doctoral school
 1. Functions and academic support of educational institutions
 2. Guidance and education of doctoral students
 3. Follow-up courses for doctoral students

3-6) Impact of HCÉRES's evaluation results

While it has a responsibility for evaluation, the HCÉRES cannot make decisions on allocation of budgetary resources for HEIs based on their evaluations. The results are distributed to regulatory ministries and institutions. The government and the universities individually discuss the results of evaluation based on their contract policy.

3-7) Validation of HCÉRES's evaluation

The HCÉRES considers that the quality of its evaluations is key for ensuring its credibility and earning the trust of HEIs, research organizations, public authorities, students, and all stakeholders. The HCÉRES applies the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), adopted in Bergen in 2005 by the ministers of higher education of the Bologna process member states. In this context, the HCÉRES undertakes to:

- Implement quality assurance based on the process approach that is adapted to the end goals of the agency's action throughout its various departments and activities.
- Give it the necessary resources.
- Provide a lasting framework for setting and reviewing quality objectives, evaluating their fitness to meet the requirements of the various stakeholders and making necessary changes and improvements
- Continuously improve the effectiveness of its methods and procedures.

This quality policy declaration is submitted by the Management to the Agency Board and made publicly available. The quality policy set by the management is also sent to all of its staff members. Everyone's adherence to the continuous improvement process is a major aspect of the agency's quality management system.

Sources

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Thierry Chevaillier: *The Changing Role of the State in French Higher Education : From Curriculum Control to Program Accreditation*
European Committee : *Eurydice - Organization of the education system in France, 2009/2010*
The CampusFrance : <http://www.campusfrance.org/>
Legifrance: <http://www.legifrance.fr/>
Réseau quaLité en Enseignement supérieur et Recherche: <http://www.relier-univ.fr/>
Ayaka Noda: *Evaluation of Program and Degrees in French Higher Education (2015), National Institution for Academic Degree and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE)*

4. Internationalization and quality assurance

4-1) Joint recognition and accreditation of academic degrees/qualifications in cooperation with other countries

Joint recognition of international joint educational programs

As the EU becomes more entrenched, the promotion of cooperation between HEIs becomes increasingly important. Building up mutual trust from the perspective of the recognition of quality assurance and accreditation assessments is a necessary element of enhancing European unity. International accreditation facilitates the mobility of students and academics while ensuring quality through compliance with QA legislation in each nation and in the European framework. As a result, the number of joint accreditation projects involving quality assurance agencies from various countries and regions is increasing, and French institutions are determined to be at the forefront of these efforts.

The ENIC-NARIC (European Network of Information Centers - National Academic Recognition Information Centers)

Since 2004, the ENIC-NARIC France, which is attached to the International Center for Pedagogic Studies (CIEP), has been responsible for providing information on diploma recognition. The CIEP prepares certificates of recognition of study levels for foreign diplomas, obtains information regarding procedures for recognition for French diplomas in other countries and information regarding foreign education systems, and provides information concerning procedures to be followed to exercise a regulated profession. In addition, the ENIC-NARIC France is associated with the MESRI, the Conference of University Presidents (CPU), the Commission for Engineer Titles (CTI), Conference of *grandes écoles*

(CGE) and other institutional partners. Moreover, the ENIC-NARIC maintains regular contacts with the HCÉRES to exchange good practices. International collaboration is also a key area for ENIC-NARIC; such activities include a project with the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic) on the recognition of qualifications gained as a result of professional experience and work with UNESCO on the creation of the MERIC network (Mediterranean Recognition Information Centers).

4-2) The HCÉRES's international activities

The AERES, a predecessor of the HCÉRES, was established in the midst of a trend marked by the increasing international application of higher education and research activities. The HCÉRES intends to play a key role in this development, particularly through its cooperation with other evaluation stakeholders worldwide. The HCÉRES views its own international reputation as an innovative quality assurance agency as essential for boosting the credibility of the French higher education system to make it attractive to potential international students and potential employers of French graduates, particularly in the context of the increasingly competitive European market. The HCÉRES is therefore involved in pan-European Quality Assurance initiatives such as the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), which was set up by the 47 European countries participating in the Bologna process, and the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

In May 2010, ENQA evaluated the AERES in terms of its adherence to European Higher Education Area standards and it passed with flying colors. In May 2011, the AERES was listed on the European Register by EQAR and recognized as an agency that substantially complies with common set of principles for quality assurance adopted in Europe by the 47 ministers in Bergen in 2005 (known as the ESG (the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area)). Accordingly, the HCÉRES has been registered by the EQAR as the successor of the AERES since the cycle of 2015-2016. HCÉRES renewed its membership of ENQA as a full member and registration of EQAR for the next five years in 2017.

Collaborations with other bodies

The HCÉRES also works to respond to European and international calls for tender. For example, the HCÉRES signed an agreement with the CIEP, with which it shares its expertise as a reviewer and is also considering partnerships with other French and/or European collective bodies and forging links with other quality assurance agencies, including those in Spain, Italy, Vietnam, China, Senegal, Mali, Angola, Argentina, and Japan. Such collaborations include holding international seminars to promote the exchange of ideas and practices between agencies. The HCÉRES is working to promote its activities in such forums as the ENQA, the EUA, or the G8.

Evaluation of non-French institutions

The HCÉRES has commenced evaluation of non-French institutions in an effort to broaden its experience; it has been conducting evaluation of HEIs in other countries, overseas branch campuses, joint programs and overseas programs. These institutions are found in Vietnam, Armenia, Costa Rica, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Sources

The International Center for Pedagogic Studies (the CIEP): <http://www.ciep.fr/>

The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

Appendix. The Commission for Engineer Titles (the CTI)

1. Overview of the CTI

Year of establishment	1934
Character of the organization	<p>The Commission for Engineer Titles (the CTI: <i>Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur</i>) is a nonprofit organization officially recognized as the independent body in charge of performing program accreditation of engineering degrees in France. The CTI was established in 1934 according to the education Code L242-1 to 12.</p> <p>Its missions are to evaluate and accreditate programs in the fields of engineering and applied sciences in France and abroad (i.e., Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Vietnam, and others in process), develop quality in engineering education, and promote engineering curricula.</p>
Location	44 rue Cambronne, 75015 PARIS
Representative	Laurent Mahieu (President)
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine-member Executive Board, including a president and two vice presidents • The commission members come from the following three organizations: academia, employee's union, and labor union. There are 32 members, and they have a tenure of four years. The members are appointed by the MESRI and are allowed one reappointment. Administrative staff is also designated by the MESRI. <p><The first organization></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members of public institutions of a scientific, cultural, or professional character (four members) 2. Members of schools and institutions (four members) 3. Members of scientific and technical skills (eight members) <p><The second organization></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Members of employer organizations (eight members) <p><The third organization></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Members of associations and professional organizations of engineers (eight members)

Sources

CTI: *La Plaquette de la CTI*

CTI: <http://www.cti-commission.fr/>

2. Mission and goals

2-1) Mission

The missions of the CTI are as follows: evaluation and accreditation of HEIs and its curricula in the fields of engineering (e.g., computer science, applied mathematics, and project management); the development of quality in engineering education; and the promotion of engineering curricula and careers in France and abroad (i.e., Belgium, Switzerland, China, Morocco, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Tunisia and Burkina Faso).

2-2) Goals

The CTI sets as a goal supporting higher education engineering institutions in the implementation of effective internal quality assurance and fostering competence-based engineering education to offer its experience to foreign universities wishing to increase their international visibility.

Sources

CTI: *La Plaquette de la CTI*

CTI: <http://www.cti-commission.fr/>

3. Main areas of activities

3-1) Evaluation and accreditation

The CTI evaluates and accredits programs only at the master's level. (In France, the engineering programs are organized as an integrated five-year master program. Currently, engineering bachelor programs do not exist in France.) There are about 220 French institutions accredited by the CTI, awarding yearly about 30,000 engineering master's degrees. Each year, the CTI evaluates about 150 engineering programs.

Procedures and evaluation criteria

The evaluation and accreditation of engineering curricula by the CTI are conducted according to the ESG (the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area) and to the standards of EUR-ACE label (European Accreditation Consortium of Engineering Programs). The accreditation is valid for a maximum of six years. This period may be shortened to three years or even less if the evaluation reveals important problems which need to be resolved rapidly.

Procedures

The procedures for the institutional accreditation consist of:

- A preparatory stage in which a self-evaluation report must be made by the HEI
- An audit stage,
- An accreditation stage, and
- A communication stage.

Evaluation criteria

The CTI sets criteria for each institution to practice self-evaluation, as follows:

- A. Mission and organization
- B. Openness and partnerships
- C. Student admission
- D. Education and training for the integrated master's degree
- E. Employment of graduate engineers
- F. Quality management and ongoing quality development

3-2) The CTI's international accreditation

Worldwide, the CTI is known as one of the most experienced bodies in evaluation and accreditation of engineering curricula and institutions. The CTI has progressively widened its activities and has been fully involved in the development of the European Higher Education Area.

Procedures

Foreign research institutions that have received positive judgment of the CTI are able to ask the French government for official recognition of their curricula. The first step is accreditation by the CTI according to its procedure and based on its standards, fitted to the academic and industrial context of the country concerned. A list of accredited foreign engineering degrees is published annually in the French Official Journal. Graduates holding a foreign engineering degree from an institution that is published on this list are entitled to have the same professional rights and levels of recognition in France as graduates from French institutions. The CTI is also entitled by the ENAEE (European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education) to deliver the EUR-ACE label (European engineering accreditation label) (p.48) to all accredited engineering programs which increases awareness of CTI's accreditation.

Accreditation criteria

Engineering graduate schools from abroad must also globally comply with the criteria mentioned above.

3-3) Other international activities

Collaboration with other overseas accreditation bodies

The CTI signed agreements for the mutual recognition of accreditation results with the NVAO (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders) and the OAQ (Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Swiss Universities) as bilateral recognition. They have also provided joint accreditation for some master's programs through the authorization by each organization. Their legal framework is a combination of the European Standards and Guidelines, the ECA Code of Good Practice and the ECA Principles for the Selection of Experts. The accreditation process involves self-evaluation, on-site visit (done jointly), and decision-making (done separately).

The CTI has also implemented joint accreditation with the ASIIN (German Accreditation Agency for Degree Programs in Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences, and Mathematics). Their work toward the accreditation of bi-national engineering degree programs includes writing a joint accreditation report and if this is successful, a joint certificate, together with undertaking a review of the procedures and criteria for the joint accreditation process at regular basis. This partnership is based on the ASIIN-CTI cooperation agreement of 2005, regarding criteria and procedures facilitated by cooperation in the framework of the EUR-ACE project. Further, the CTI participates in the ECA-MULTRA (Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programs) as multilateral recognition. In addition, the CTI also acts as a professional body, because there is not a board of engineers in France. The agency has signed an agreement of professional recognition with the board of engineers in Canada and is preparing a similar accord with the board of engineers in Malaysia.

The EUR-ACE Project

The EUR-ACE project (September 2004/March 2006) has formulated and proposed a European system of accreditation of engineering programs at the First and Second Cycle level (but allowing also accreditation of integrated programs, i.e., programs leading directly to a SC degree). To this end, a set of framework standards to be respected by all participating organizations has been formulated and

published. To operate this system, an international nonprofit association (the ENAEE: the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education) has been established. The ENAEE supports the EUR-ACE Implementation project, which is intended to make these proposals operational by setting up the necessary organization, planning, and supervising the award of the first EUR-ACE labels, favoring the spread of the system to other countries, establishing a fee policy that can rapidly make the system self-supporting. On November 2008, after an external review of its standards and procedures, the CTI was authorized until 31 December 2019 to award the EUR-ACE label to accredited engineering programs of master's degrees.

Sources

CTI: La Plaque de la CTI

CTI: *References and guidelines 2009 (Références et Orientations 2009)*

CTI: <http://www.cti-commission.fr/>

The Rolex Learning Center: *Welcome to Swiss Tech Lausanne (EPFL), a Learning Technological University (powerpoint presentation) (2010)*

The European Consortium for Accreditation (the ECA): <http://www.eacaconsortium.net/>

Appendix: Glossary

Abbreviations & Glossary

Certain words and abbreviations that appeared in the text are defined here in alphabetic order. For abbreviation, next to the abbreviation comes the full title in French (*in italics*), after which the full title in English and a description of the organization are given.

AAI: *Autorité administrative indépendante*, Independent Administrative Authority

AERES: *Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur*, Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (a predecessor of the HCERES)

ANR: *Agence nationale de la recherche*, National Agency for Research

The ANR is a research funding organization established by the French government law in 2005. The role of the organization is to fund research projects, based on competitive schemes giving researchers the best opportunities to realize their projects and contribute to groundbreaking new knowledge.

BTS: *Brevet de technicien supérieur*, Higher Technician Certificate

CEA: *Commissariat à l'énergie atomique*, Atomic Energy Authority

Certificat, Certificate

Certification is a generic term which applies to a wide number of subjects and actions, official or not

CGE: *Conférence des grandes écoles*, Conference of *Grandes Écoles*

CIEP: *Centre international d'études pédagogiques*, International Center for Pedagogic Studies

CIO: *Centre d'information et d'orientation*, Center for Information and Orientation

CNCP: *Commission nationale de la certification professionnelle*, National Commission for Vocational Certification

CNE: *Commission nationale d'évaluation*, National Commission for Evaluation

CNED: *Centre national d'enseignement à distance*, National Center for Distance Education

The CNED is an establishment primarily in charge of providing correspondence teaching at all levels of academic teaching, including university training and the presentation of competitive administrative exams.

CNES: *Centre national d'études spatiales*, National Center for Space Studies

CNESER: *Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*, National Council for Higher Education and Research

CNRS: *Centre nationale de la recherche scientifique*, National Center for Scientific Research

CNOUS: *Centre national des œuvres universitaires et scolaires*, National Center for University and School Works

CNU: *Conseil national des universités*, National Council of Universities

CPGE: *Classes préparatoire aux Grandes Écoles*, Preparatory Classes for *Grandes Écoles*

CPU: *Conférence des présidents d'université*, Conference of University Presidents

CTI: *Commission des titres d'Ingénieur*, Commission for Engineer Titles

DAEU: *Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires*, Diploma for Access to University Studies

The DAEU provides the same rights as the *baccalauréat* for those who wish to enter higher education studies to increase their opportunities of promotion or return to the job market, to acquire a diploma to allow them to take the administrative competitive examinations requiring the *baccalauréat*, and obtain a diploma certifying their general competence.

DEUG: *Diplôme d'études universitaires générales*, General University Studies Diploma

DEUST: *Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques*, Scientific and Technical University Studies Diploma

Diplôme, Diploma

A written document establishing rights (as applicable: access to competitive examinations, the continuation of studies, or others). It is issued by a relevant authority under the control of the state. It determines access to certain occupations and certain training programs or competitive examinations. It acknowledges the verified skill level of the diploma holder.

DNTS: *Diplôme national de technologie spécialisée*, National Diploma for Specialized Technology

DU: *Diplôme universitaire*, University Diploma

DUT: *Diplôme universitaire de technologie*, University Diploma of Technology

The DUT is a two-year diploma awarded by France's 111 IUTs (University Institutes of Technology). Designed to train mid-level technical personnel in two years, IUT programs also allow graduates to continue on for a more advanced degree, such as a vocational bachelor. The types of courses offered are the DUT for Legal Careers, the DUT for Corporate Management and Administration (GEA), and the DUT for Information and Communication.

ENA: *École nationale d'administration*, National School of Administration

ENS: *École normale supérieure*, known as teacher a training college

EP: *Établissement public*, Public Establishment

EPA: *Établissement public à caractère administratif*, Public Establishment of Administrative Character

EPCSC: *Établissement public à caractère scientifique et culturel*, Public Establishment of Scientific and Cultural Character

EPSCP: *Établissement public à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnelle*, Public Establishment of Scientific, Cultural, and Professional Character

EPST: *Établissement public à caractère scientifique et technologique*, Public Establishment of Scientific and Technological Character

EPIC: *Établissement public à caractère industriel et commercial*, Public Establishment of Industrial and Commercial Character

ESEU: *Examen spécial d'entrée à l'université*, Special Examination of Entry to the University

ESU: European Students Union

HCÉRES: *Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur*, the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education

IAE: *Institut d'administration des entreprises*, Institute of Business Administration

IEP: *Institut d'études politiques*, Institute of Political Studies

INRA: *Institut national de la recherche agronomique*, National Institute for Agrocultural Research

INRIA: *Institut national de recherche en informatique et automatique*, National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control

INSA: *Institut national des sciences appliquées*, National Institute for Applied Sciences

INSERM: *Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale*, National Institute for Health and Medical Research

IUP: *Institut universitaire professionnalisé*, University Institute for Vocational Training

IUT: *Institut universitaire de technologie*, University Institute of Technology

LMD: *Licence-master-doctorat*, Bachelor's-Master's-Doctorate

LOLF: *Loi organique relative aux lois de finances*, Law Relative to the Finance Laws

LP: *Licence professionnelle*, Vocational bachelor

LRU: *Loi sur les libertés et responsabilités des universités*, Law for the Liberties and Responsibilities of Universities

MESRI: *Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation*, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation

PRES: *Les pôles de recherches et d'enseignement supérieur*, Centers of Research and Higher Education

RNCP: *Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*, National Register of Professional

Certifications

SCUIOP: *Services communs universitaires d'information et d'orientation*

STS: *Section de technicien supérieur*, Higher Technician Section

This is a form of technical training for two years after the *baccalauréat* that provides access to the BTS.

UFR: *Unité de formation et de recherche*, Training and Research unit

UNEF: *Union nationale des étudiants de France*, National Students Union of France

VAE: *Validation des acquis de l'expérience*, Validation System of Acquirement of Experience

Sources

High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCÉRES): <http://www.hceres.fr/>

National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE): <http://www.insee.fr/>

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For more information or materials, please contact:

International Affairs Division,

National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE)

1-29-1 Gakuen-Nishimachi, Kodaira, Tokyo 187-8587 Japan

Tel: +81-42-307-1616 Fax: +81-42-307-1559 E-mail: kokusai@niad.ac.jp



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