



# The French legal framework of validation of prior learning

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# VPL systems in France



## 3 main systems :

- ❑ **VAE : 2002 - Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience, validation of experiential learning –**

Possibility to obtain a whole or a partial qualification of any level of the NQF (HE included) without more training or studies

- ❑ **VES : 2002 - Validation des Etudes Supérieures, validation of prior studies and degrees obtained in France or abroad**

Possibility to get a whole or a partial diploma without entering a study programme

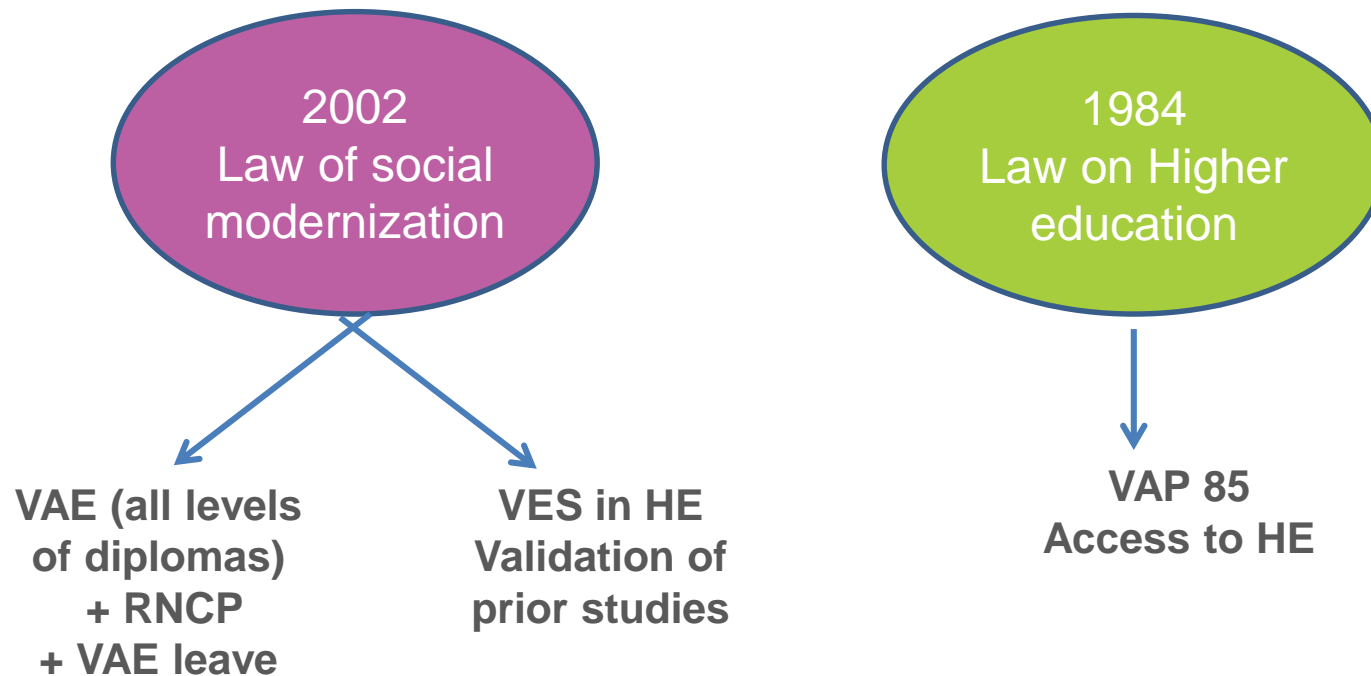
- ❑ **« VAP 85 » : 1985 validation of prior experience (personal or professional), studies and diplomas got in France or abroad**

Possibility to access any level of HE

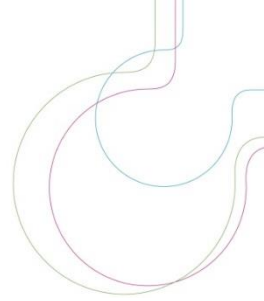
# French VPL : Legal basis

## □ A strong legal basis :

- All the validation systems stem from a law



# The 2002 Social modernisation Act VAE and RNCP



## □ VAE : an individual right

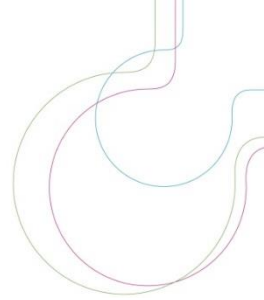
- Anybody involved in active life, whatever his age, profession, situation, nationality
- 3 years at least of work experience as an employee, an independant worker or a volunteer



The **RIGHT** to have his experience («acquis») validated to get a full or a partial qualification registered in the RNCP

- Validation covers all levels, sectors of education and training (level 3 to level 8 of EQF)

# VAE : a national integrated system



## ❑ VAE is linked to the RNCP (French NQF)

## ❑ VAE is integrated in our national educational and training system :

- Is inscribed in our Education Code for the description of the procedure
- no parallel system of qualifications



Its implementation is mandatory for all the public institutions and the private institutions which want to have their qualifications registered in the RNCP

## ❑ VAE integrated in the national and regional policies for employment :

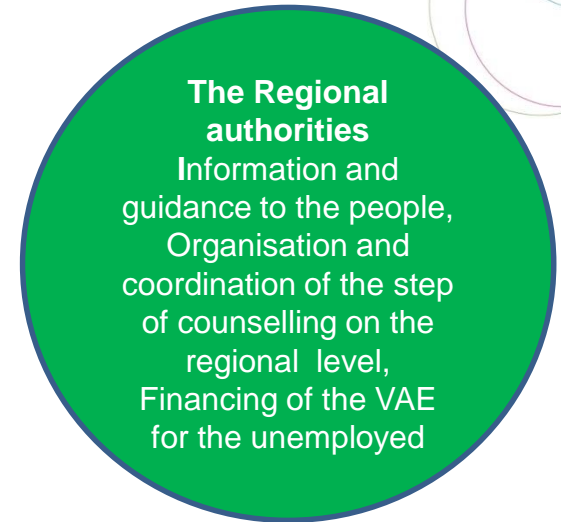
- VAE is mentioned in all the laws on guidance and LLL of the employees since 2002
- VAE is inscribed in our labor code for its purpose, its legal regime and its implementation
- VAE is defined as an activity contributing to the acquisition of skills



can be financed through the training plan of the companies and the personal training account

## ❑ A shared responsibility between different actors

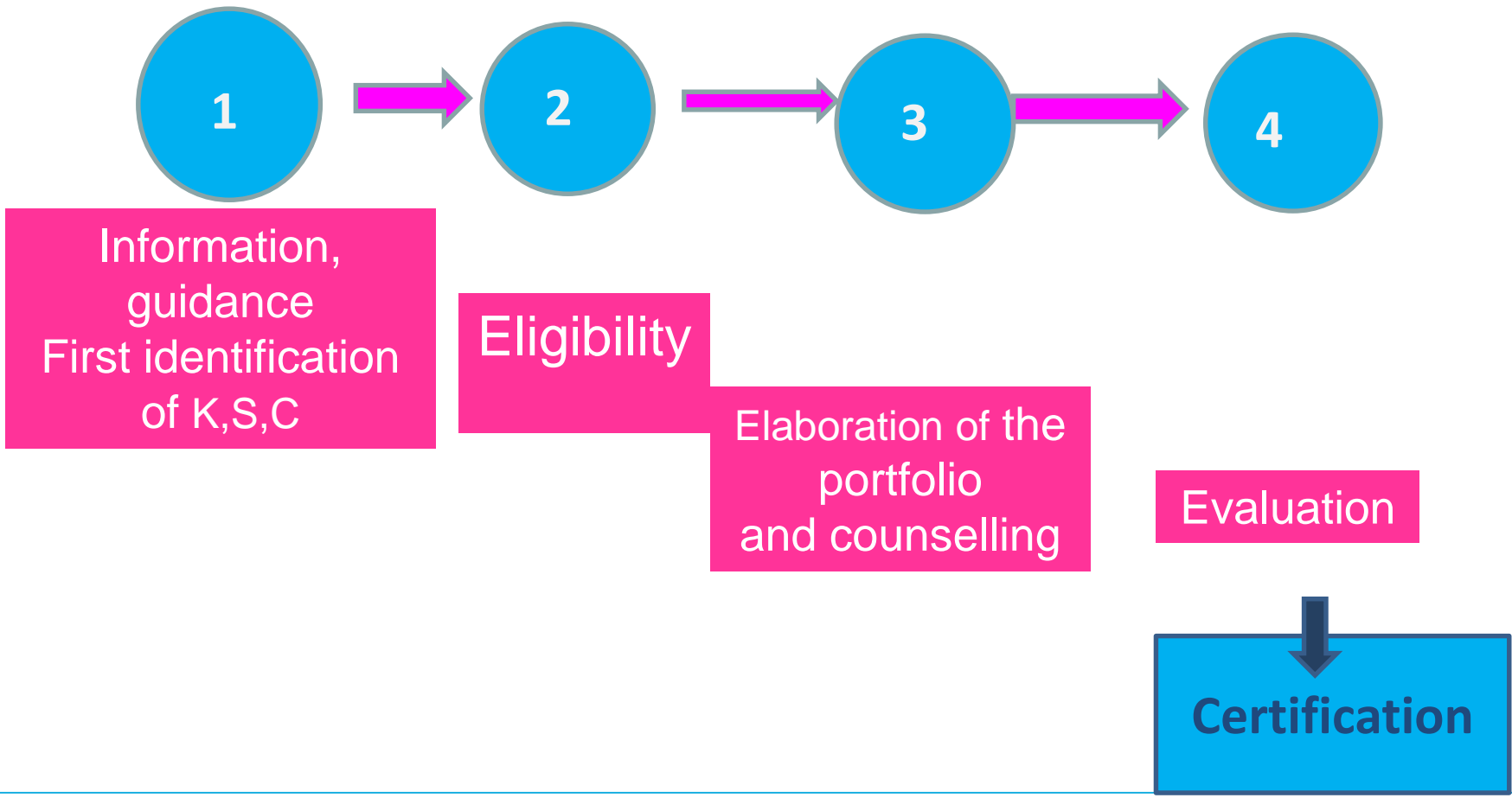
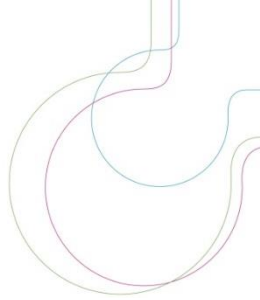
# VAE : a national system



## The stakeholders



# VAE : a 4 step procedure



# Implementation of the VAE



□ VAE is a right integrated in labour Code and education code

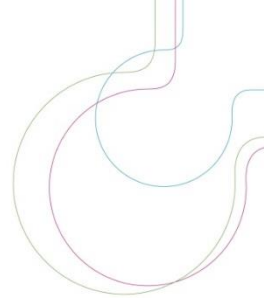
➔ a series of legislative and regulatory provisions related to all the aspects of the VAE

□ For the labour Code, provisions on :

- **Information and guidance** : for the public wishing to validate their experience : centers of information and advice, qualification awarding bodies, organizations authorized to offer professional development advice)
- **The objective and conditions of implementation** :
  - ❖ Obtaining of a full or a part of qualification registered in the NQF
  - ❖ Precision on the admissibility step : for example, obligation for the awarding bodies to give a reply to the candidate within two months, otherwise the request is admissible
  - ❖ Provisions related to the rights of the employees as for the VAE leave but also the obligation of the candidate's consent
  - ❖ Source and financing mechanism according to the status of the candidate (active y.c self employed workers or unemployed)
  - ❖ The nature of the expenses that can be supported (costs of examining the admissibility file, costs of counselling, costs of organizing evaluation session, cost of transports, accommodation, meals)
  - ❖ Financial support to employees participating to a jury
  - ❖ Description of the optional support [counselling] service



# Implementation of the VAE



## □ For the Education code : provisions defining the procedure

- **Type of activity taken into account to calculate the experience** (salaried, non-salaried, volunteer, mandate of elected officials or union representatives, high level athlete) but also the periods of initial or continuous training carried out in a professional environment,
- **Definition of the duration of experience and the methods of calculation** according to the type of experience (periods of on-the-job training must be less long than the duration of the activity carried out independently)
- **Definition of the different mandatory steps of the procedure and their organisation :**
  - the examination of the admissibility of the application with possible recommendations from the qualification awarding bodies,
  - preparation by the candidate of the validation file explaining and analysing his experiences in relation to the standard of the certification aimed,
  - the evaluation session,
  - the support [counselling] is an optional step but strongly recommended. It is also defined in the labour code.

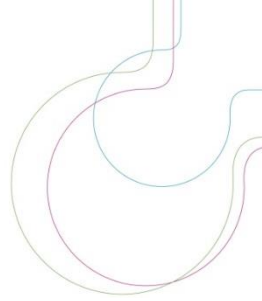
## □ In most ministries issuing public qualifications, the legislative and regulatory provisions are set out in circulars that specify the implementation of the VAE according to their own organization

# An evolving legal framework



- ❑ The evolution of the VAE follows the policies for employment and professional continuing training and the laws that express them
- ❑ Measures directly concerning the VAE (1)
  - 2014 law :
    - VAE access extended to all persons exercising a trade union responsibility or functions as councillors in a town, a « département », a region,
    - Length of experience relaxed for people who have not reached level 3 of the EQF (integration in the 3 years of the periods of initial or continuing training in the work place)
    - Legal basis for the admissibility stage of the application
    - Description of the content of the candidate's support to write his/her file describing his/her experience
    - Designation of statistical monitoring bodies (Region/CREFOP)
  - 2016 law (so called Loi Travail) :
    - **Duration of the required experience reduced from 3 to 1 year :**
    - Periods of initial or continuing training carried out in a professional environment, whatever the level of qualification the candidate is, are included in the one year of experience
  - ➡ *Expected development of VAE for qualifications corresponding to trades that do not require a long period of significant experience,*
  - ➡ *Expected new candidates : ex school dropouts.*

# An evolving legal framework



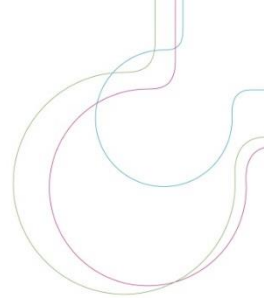
## □ Measures directly concerning the VAE (2)

### ➤ 2016 law (so called Loi Travail) :

- **A single admissibility file** that applies to all applicants and organizations awarding qualifications
- **No more limitation in the time to acquire the missing parts of qualification in case of partial validation** (5 years before). The qualification parts that correspond to a “skills block” identified in the vocational qualification are definitively valid and can be taken into account for the renewal of an application
- Social partners : **during the biennial interview with the employee, the employer must provide information on the VAE.**

In the previous laws, provisions requiring or encouraging the social partners to systematically introduce the VAE theme in collective bargaining (collective redundancies or agreements on the forecasting management of jobs and skills)

# An evolving legal framework



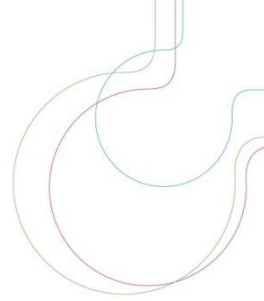
## □ The measures that facilitate the VAE (1)

### ▪ Financial measures

- 2014 and 2018 : the personal training account
  - A right to education open to any individual
  - An account before in hours now in euros (500 euros/year) the individual can use when he wants : a mobile application is expected for September 2019

### ▪ Support to the employees

- 2014 : Creation of a Counselling for professional evolution
  - A tailored service to the person to build his/her professional project and path



## □ The measures that facilitate the VAE (2)

### ▪ Changes in the conception of professional qualification

- **2016** : « **The skills blocks** ». Programmes leading to a « skills block », ie an « identified part of a qualification » can be financed

➡ facilitates the continuation of access to qualification in case of partial validation

- **2018 law** : to be inscribed in the RNCP, qualifications have to be described in « skills blocks »
- To each qualification must be attached : an occupation standard, a skills standard and an assessment standard

### ▪ Change of the definition of a training activity

➡ "activity contributing to skills acquisition" = training, skills audit, VAE

### ▪ Quality assurance :

- **2018** : a more demanding quality required from the providers of these types of activities. Must be certified by a quality certification organism itself recognized by the national organism COFRAC (Comité français d'accréditation) or by France Compétences (the national organism responsible for the governance of the whole professional qualification system) on the basis of a national standard

# A strong but not rigid legal framework



## A legal framework which

- ❑ Ensures consistency of the procedure all over the country,
- ❑ Ensures the equal treatment of all citizens, in the different sectors of education and whatever the aimed qualification is
- ❑ Evolves with the needs of society and economy to be a real LLL tool
- ❑ Does not prevent innovative projects on a national, regional or local level in terms of better organization, mutualisation of best practices, partnerships, etc.