The initial training required of those responsible for education depends on the age of the pupils, but also on the type of institution and the study direction chosen.

**Institutions, levels and models of training**

The requirement for initial training for staff at all childcare facilities is relatively recent, and the qualifications required vary depending on the type of facility.

In April 2014, a decree (11 April 2014) (décret réglementant les titres et fonctions dans l'enseignement fondamental et secondaire organisé et subventionné par la Communauté française), changed the qualifications required for different functions.

The teaching profession can be categorised according to pupil age, educational level, specific nature of studies and training objectives. Initial training for teachers in pre-secondary and secondary education includes several training routes which lead to the following qualifications:

- bachelor’s degree – pre-school teaching
- bachelor’s degree – primary teaching
- bachelor’s degree – lower secondary education
- master’s degree – upper secondary teaching diploma

**Non-school childcare facilities**

The training of childcare workers is a vocational upper secondary education programme, in which courses on health and hygiene still feature prominently compared with educational psychology.

Whereas no diploma had previously been required for childminders looking after children at home or parents staffing a parental day nursery, childminders must now hold a degree. The decree of 5 May 2004 made accelerated initial training a requirement for anyone who lacks the required qualifications. Childminders’ training is provided by secondary education (ordinary or dual vocational), higher education (short-type programmes or long-type programmes), social advancement education or IFAPME/EFPME.

**Bachelors (pre-school and primary teaching, lower secondary education)**

The initial training of the bachelors (Pre-School and Primary Teaching, Lower Secondary Education) generally takes place in the Hautes écoles. All the networks organise this type of education. Administratively, the education departments at hautes écoles form part of the short-type, full-time higher education system. Teachers of Latin, Greek, Spanish and Italian are trained at university. Teachers of arts subjects, except those who have been trained at hautes écoles and hold a certificate of lower secondary education in the fine arts, are trained in arts colleges.
In pre-secondary education, teachers hold a bachelor’s degree in pre-primary or primary teaching, depending on the level of schooling, whereas in lower secondary education, they hold bachelor’s degrees in lower secondary education (AESI).

An essential principle underpinning training courses and reinforced by the decree of 12 December 2000 [1] is the linking of theory and practice. Various aspects of organisation, content, and teaching activities are instrumental in enabling students not only to acquire the reflexes of teaching professionals, but also to become theoreticians of their practices. The training model used is a simultaneous one. Teaching practice is organised during each of the three years of study: in the first year, this consists of participative observation in the presence of the internship supervisor; in the second and third years, the student takes charge of a class.

Students preferably undergo their teaching practice in teams of at least two people on the same school site. Guidance is provided firstly by associate teachers, lecturers, workshop heads, or haute école professors, and secondly by internship supervisors. Professors responsible for teacher training and professors responsible for discipline-specific training share in supervising each student at the rate of at least one visit per week. Internship supervisors who have second- or third-year students in their class must be approved by the haute école authorities as part of an explicit cooperation agreement, and are remunerated.

Vocational training workshops provide students with a package of activities, which are designed to foster professional skills and reflective knowledge about those skills. They enable them to experience, observe, and analyse the different aspects of the profession. They are run by full professors of teacher training (1/3 of the time), discipline-specific training lecturers (1/3), and associate professors of practical training, who work separately or in teams of two or three. The associate professors of practical training are hired for no more than half-time by the haute école and work at least half time in pre-secondary or lower secondary education.

Additionally, professional identity-building interdisciplinary activities are organised during the course as seminar activities and supervised by either haute école professors or outside experts. They relate to developing teacher identity and preparing the teacher's dossier; the openness of the school to the outside world and education in cultural diversity; and professional ethics and the development of a career plan.

**Masters (upper secondary teaching diploma)**

Training is organised principally in the universities and in some Hautes écoles which organise long-type higher education programmes that follow the consecutive model.

The training programme for all students enrolled in studies leading to the upper secondary teaching diploma lasts 300 hours, of which 70% are common and 30% are dedicated to activities that the institutions decide on completely autonomously.

Practical analysis seminars are intended to allow students to experiment, observe and analyse the different parts of the profession, progressively develop their professional identity and plan their future training.

Teaching practice in real-life situations must include training periods as an observing participant, periods as a teacher (moving progressively into a teaching situation), and periods of school activities outside lessons (being involved in activities related to the running of the institution and the relationships between its players). Part of the teaching practice must be done by teams of at least two students in the same institution. Varying the places where the teaching practice is performed allows
students to experience as many professional situations as possible.

Internship supervisors who are approved by the institution that provides the teacher training, and paid, look after the trainees, provide them with educational support, and collaborate with the course teachers in the guidance and assessment of the trainees. They can contribute to the practical analysis seminars.

Second-cycle studies for the 120 ECTS credit teaching master’s degree include 30 ECTS credits specific to the teacher training for the upper secondary teaching diploma. Like the certificate, these studies are only organised for the academic degrees corresponding to the titles required to teach in upper secondary education.

**Admission requirements**

**Non-school childcare facilities**

Access to the third stage of vocational secondary education is contingent on successful completion of the fourth year of secondary education. Admission to studies to qualify as a childcare worker is subject to a number of additional conditions:

- a favourable opinion from the admissions board (which may request the opinion of the Centre for Psychological, Medical and Social Services concerning the pupil’s aptitude for the practical part of the course);
- the production of a certificate of fitness in which a doctor who is approved by the head of institution or the controlling authority confirms that he/she has not discovered any long-term health condition in the pupil which is likely to compromise the normal completion of the teaching experience programme, to be exacerbated by it or to endanger the safety of those with whom the pupil will associate in the school premises concerned.

**Bachelors (pre-school and primary teaching, lower secondary education)**

Training courses to become bachelors are accessible to holders of the upper secondary education certificate (CESS) or qualifications recognised as equivalent (decree of 5 August 1995, Article 22). They are also accessible to students who do not hold any of the qualifications which authorise access to higher education but can provide proof of having passed:

- either the special exam for admission to engineering science (complete exam)
- or the admission exam organised by a university in the French Community.

There are no other entrance requirements. However, some Hautes écoles have taken the initiative of arranging interviews with candidates to understand their motivation and to make certain that they have no disabilities which might hinder their work in the teaching profession.

An additional medical examination is required to determine whether the student is fit to undergo all the teaching and professional activities of lower secondary school teachers (bachelors) in physical education.

Teachers of vocational practical courses and some teachers of technical courses for whom no full-time training is provided, may prepare for the teaching profession by attending training leading to the teaching proficiency certificate (CAP) organised by higher-level social advancement education, while in employment. Entrance requirements and the length of these courses depend on the candidate’s profile, and in particular on his/her school and/or academic record and the qualifications that he/she
holds. There is a CAP section open to candidates who hold a higher education degree and one open to candidates who do not hold such a qualification.

Higher education is an open system incorporating legally defined gateways by which a student can change course, dispensations and the recognition of personal or professional experience. Many students begin a teacher-training course after having attempted to follow other higher education programmes. A system of dispensations enables all holders of a teaching diploma to obtain a reduction in the length of the studies leading to another teaching diploma (e.g. a holder of the pre-primary teaching diploma may become a primary school teacher in one year).

**Masters (upper secondary teaching diploma)**

Students who have received an academic degree after successful completion of a basic second-cycle programme or who are enrolled in such a programme, have access to programmes leading to the upper secondary teaching diploma. This diploma can only be obtained after obtaining a second-cycle degree. It is also issued jointly with the teaching master’s degree.

Curriculum modifications are arranged for students who already hold a teaching diploma issued by an Haute école. A system of gateways enables faster access to a second-cycle university degree.

**Curriculum, level of specialisation and learning outcomes**

**Non-school childcare facilities**

The three-year curriculum leading to the childcare worker’s qualification consists of at least:

- 1,000 periods of general, special and philosophical instruction;
- 1,700 periods of technical instruction and professional practice.

The course content covers the various skills in the childcare worker’s training profile. The profile is based on six functions (educating and socialising the child; caring, health and safety; organising and planning; management and administration; social and communication aspects; professional ethics), each corresponding to a number of activities, which are in turn translated into skills and indicators of the mastery of those skills. Thus, for example, the function ‘educating and socialising the child’ includes the activity ‘integrating the child in the group’, which involves – among other skills – ‘creating an atmosphere which enables, fosters and validates interactions, communication and cooperation between children’. The indicator of the mastery of this skill is as follows: ‘The learner identifies cooperative interactions and validates them while respecting the need for individual activities’.

Preparation for the qualification tests also requires successful completion of at least 1,000 50-minute periods of teaching experience, including at least 400 periods in the seventh year if the pupil has taken the ‘childcare’ grouped basic option and 500 periods if he/she has taken the nursery care work grouped basic option.

Internships are organised in institutions which are authorised for this purpose and located in Belgium or, by dispensation, abroad, and which offer the necessary clinical, social, ethical and educational psychology resources for pupils’ technical, psychological, ethical and social training. The supervision of trainees is the responsibility of an ‘internship supervisor’ who is qualified in accordance with the objectives assigned to each internship: this supervisor undertakes the individual educational supervision of the trainees and, by monitoring the development of the internship in collaboration with the staff at the host institution, assesses it. Under no circumstances may the number of children per
trainee be less than four. At the end of each internship, the pupils draw up a report in order to provide
evidence of their progressive learning of an approach of observation, analysis and adaptation and of
their completion of the planned internships. The trainees must be given the opportunity to perform
tasks that reflect their level of competence. These tasks must be consistent with the activities
described in the training profile.

**Bachelors (pre-school and primary teaching, lower secondary education)**

With a view to aligning teacher training to the Decree on the Missions of Schools, a decree adopted on
12 December 2000 defines thirteen competencies to be developed as part of initial training for
bachelors:

- using knowledge of the human sciences for an accurate interpretation of situations encountered
  inside and outside class and for better adaptation to the school population;
- maintaining effective partnership relations with institutions, colleagues, and pupils’ parents;
- understanding their role within the school and functioning in the profession as defined by the
  relevant laws;
- internalising the disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge that underpins teaching work;
- mastering the disciplines’ didactics, which guide teaching work;
- demonstrating a broad general culture in order to awaken pupils’ interest in the cultural world;
- developing the relational skills commensurate with the profession’s requirements;
- understanding the ethical issues associated with day-to-day teaching practice;
- working in a team in the school;
- developing, testing, evaluating and refining teaching aids;
- maintaining a critical and autonomous relationship with past and future scientific knowledge;
- planning, managing and evaluating learning situations;
- maintaining a reflective view of one’s own practice and organising one’s own continuing
  training.

The training includes teaching activities for students from all sections (ordinary pre-school, ordinary
primary, ordinary secondary and ordinary technical), activities for students in a single section, and
teaching activities of a practical nature, which are organised in small groups.

All students receive

- discipline-specific training (including didactics, information and communication technologies,
  and French proficiency),
- practical training (vocational training workshops and internships),
- professional identity-building interdisciplinary activities (the teacher’s identity, individual
  learning paths, the openness of the school to the outside world, education in cultural diversity,
  professional ethics, the career plan).

They must also write a final dissertation.

In each of the sections, the training has the following points of focus:

- Socio-cultural studies (at least 120 hours);
- Socio-affective and relational studies (at least 120 hours);
- Disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies (at least 1020 hours);
- Educational studies (at least 180 hours);
- Scientific approach and research attitudes (at least 45 hours);
- Know-how (at least 780 hours).
• Professional identity-building interdisciplinary activities (at least 80 hours).

Know-how is based on the link between theory and practice. It is acquired at professional training workshops and by taking part in teaching practice internships. The professional training workshops offer students a series of activities which are designed to develop methodological skills and a reflective attitude towards those skills. They enable the students to try out, observe and analyse the various components of the profession. They integrate discipline-specific and general didactics in the context of activities organised both in the field and at the Haute école. Teaching practice is arranged in all three study years. In the first year, it consists of participatory observation activities, with the student accompanying the internship supervisor. They may gradually lead to the student taking over a class, in close collaboration with the internship supervisor. In the second and third years, the student properly takes charge of a class. Students should ideally undertake their teaching practice in teams of at least two people at the same site.

Professional identity-building interdisciplinary activities are always coupled with teaching practice or a practical activity. They include the compilation of a career plan, training in neutrality, the school’s openness to the outside world, the teacher’s identity, professional ethics and the teacher’s dossier.

The final dissertation is a personal and original written work in which the third-year student uses his/her knowledge in the specific context of the subject he/she has chosen to discuss and of the research that he/she conducts in this connection. The paper is presented orally.

Optional modules may be organised in the pre-school and primary sections: information on specialised education (15 hours), training in the teaching of ethics or religion (60 hours), or training in teaching a second language (60 hours in the ordinary primary section).

The curricula are determined by the controlling authority of the teacher training institute, provided they cover the various compulsory elements of content, with a given minimum number of hours per domain, and within the framework of 880 hours of disciplinary and interdisciplinary training. The minimum timetable and total hours for the pre-primary, primary and secondary sections are fixed.

Additionally, the hautes écoles have a hundred hours at their disposal which are reserved for teaching activities that they are completely free to determine. Some hautes écoles and a number of social advancement schools organise specialisations in psychomotility and special education.

Future bachelors (lower secondary education teachers) must choose an area of specialisation from among the following options:

Ordinary secondary section (general courses):

- Fine arts;
- Physical education;
- French and French as a foreign language;
- French and ethics;
- French and religion;
- Germanic languages;
- Mathematics;
- Sciences: biology, chemistry, physics;
- Economics and applied economics;
- Human science: history, geography, and social science;

Technical section (technical or vocational practice courses):
Woodwork/construction;
Family and social economics;
Electrical engineering;
Clothing.

The reference schedules for the sub-sections ‘Germanic languages’ and ‘physical education’ include training hours aimed at preparing the future teachers to teach pupils in primary education. The reference schedule for the sub-section ‘Germanic languages’ includes hours earmarked for a language-oriented trip lasting at least two weeks for one of the languages. 15-hour information modules on specialised education and on social advancement education may be organised for students who so wish.

**Masters (upper secondary teaching diploma)**

Since the *Bologna Decree* of the French Community of Belgium (31 March 2004) (décret définissant l'enseignement supérieur), students must attend classes in the chosen subject(s) for five years until they gain their second-cycle degree. This degree certifies scientific training in the following disciplines:

- philosophy;
- history;
- classical philology;
- Germanic philology;
- Romance philology;
- chemistry, zoology, botany, physics, mathematics, and geography;
- physical education;
- psychology and educational science;
- economics.

In addition to this specific training, students must take compulsory courses aimed at developing teaching skills: the upper secondary teaching diploma, or choose the Teaching Master’s. In case of the upper secondary teaching diploma, students have the option to take their teacher training at the same time as the last two years of their studies or even to concentrate it into the final year, or to prepare for the teaching profession during a complementary year. The upper secondary teaching diploma curriculum does not include any additional discipline-specific training.

The course for the upper secondary teaching diploma consists of 30 ECTS. The core activities are organised around four themes:

- socio-cultural studies (educational sociology, analysis of the school institution and its players, theoretical approach to cultural diversity, educational policy, ethical aspects of the profession) (at least 30 hours).
- educational studies, including the development of a scientific approach and research attitude (didactic transposition covering the discipline’s epistemology, the discipline’s didactics, the interdisciplinary approach, knowledge and educational use of information and communication technologies and media) (at least 60 hours).
- socio-affective and relational studies (approaches to adolescents and school life, the management of groups in and around the class, the study of interpersonal relations in a school context) (at least 30 hours).
- know-how (linking of theory and practice, during teaching practice in real-life situations and practical analysis seminars) (at least 90 hours).
Command of French is assessed throughout the duration of the training.

The 120 ECTS credit teaching master degrees (two years) include the training leading to the upper secondary teaching diploma (300 hours – 30 ECTS credits).

**Teacher educators**

**Non-school childcare facilities**

Future childcare workers are trained by secondary school teachers whose qualifications correspond to the courses in question.

**Pre-secondary and secondary education**

The trainers of future pre-secondary and secondary teachers hold the qualifications required to teach the courses on the curriculum of these future teachers at the various institutions (primarily the Hautes écoles and universities, but also social advancement education and higher arts education).

**Qualifications, evaluation and certificates**

**Non-school childcare facilities**

**Certification**

A decree adopted on 27 February 2003 reinforces the professional character of childcare and specifies that the supervisory personnel of every childcare facility, as well as childminders, must prove that they have been trained or have practical experience supplemented by continuing training in childcare. The required qualifications are defined by a decree of the French Community government dated 5 May 2004.

The childcare qualification certificate, endorsed by the French Community, is issued at the end of the vocational seventh year in ‘childcare’ to regular pupils who meet the following conditions:

- they must have passed a qualifying test to check that they have mastered the relevant skills and incorporated them into their practice;
- they must hold a certificate of upper secondary education.

The examination board responsible for issuing this certificate consists of at least one nursing member of teaching staff and one member of the teaching staff with responsibility for training in educational psychology. The member of staff responsible for coordinating the internship automatically has a place on the board.

**Assessment during training**

Each controlling authority is free to adapt its assessment procedures (choice of subjects, types of exam, time allotted for each exam, etc.) for the various stages, forms and streams of education, and in light of the specific characteristics of its environment. Nevertheless, in order to avoid too wide a disparity, it is recommended that schools consult one another. Furthermore, the Decree on the Missions of Schools has created committees on assessment tools in relation to the knowledge and skills expected upon completion of qualification-stream education. These committees are responsible for producing batteries of standardised assessment tests, which correspond to these reference guides. The government distributes these tools as a guideline to all schools organised or grant-aided
by the French Community. An Administrative Steering Unit organises non-certificative external assessments of pupils’ achievements at the start of the second and fourth/fifth year of secondary school. These relate successively to reading/production of writing, mathematics and introductory science. They enable teachers to better measure the level attained by their pupils and, consequently, to adjust their teaching. The unit produces an analysis of the results and develops teaching methods. The inspectorate ensures educational monitoring.

In qualification-stream education, it is suggested that global comprehensive exams on grouped options be given during the school year. These exams encourage coordination between theoretical and practical lessons and prepare pupils for the qualification tests. Certificates of competence are issued to pupils upon successful completion of these exams. The members of the qualification examination board from outside the school are invited to examine pupils’ work continually during the school year.

One or two sessions of annual examinations are organised every year. The primary purpose of the June exam is to ascertain whether pupils have achieved the minimum competencies needed to progress. A student deferred in June must take examinations in September.

There must be continuity between learning in school and in the childcare facility. An internship must meet precise educational criteria. The teacher who is the internship supervisor handles assessment preparation and guidance. He or she collaborates with the ‘tutor’, who is a company employee responsible for the student at the internship premises. According to predetermined criteria, the internship is continually assessed with the student’s involvement. The assessment is formative. A report is issued upon completion of the internship (summary assessment).

**Bachelors (pre-school and primary teaching, lower secondary education)**

**Certification**

The Hautes écoles issue bachelor’s degrees in pre-school or primary education and bachelor’s degrees in lower secondary education. These degrees are ratified by the government of the French Community.

**Internal assessment**

Internal assessment is one of the fields where educational freedom is guaranteed for each network; accordingly, in compliance with applicable laws and decrees, each controlling authority may define the type of assessment it prefers, the means of assessment, and how it will communicate assessment results. Assessment is summative and certificative, and is based on end-of-year exams and a final dissertation.

A dossier is also examined in which the student’s performance is recorded, in particular in the practical training and teaching experience. Initiatives have been taken recently to establish approaches to formative assessment, which are intended to provide teachers and students with frequent feedback opportunities.

Upon completion of their studies, graduates must take the Socratic oath in public, vowing to commit all their energy and skill to the education of all the pupils entrusted to them.

Technical teacher-training courses taught in French Community examination board [4], without attending social advancement courses.

French Community examination boards also award certificates to teachers of specialised courses (shorthand and typing, word processing, music).
Masters (upper secondary teaching diploma)

Students must either obtain the teaching master degree in the discipline of their choice, or first obtain a second-cycle university degree (after five years of study), which certifies specific training, followed by an upper secondary teaching diploma (AESS), which certifies teaching proficiency (in the consecutive training model). This degree may be obtained without any specific time requirement.

Trainee students are supervised at least three times during the course of their teaching practice under the responsibility of the teachers from the institutions that organise the teaching diploma. Upon completion of their studies, graduates take the Socratic oath.

Alternative training pathways

Non-school childcare facilities

A number of qualifications are recognised as possible substitutes for the childcare qualification. Provided at least half of the staff responsible for supervising the children hold a childcare certificate, it may be replaced by other qualifications in the case of other members of staff: either similar qualifications issued by full-time secondary education (educational worker, nursery worker, educational assistant), by diplomas of training in educational psychology obtained at an Haute école or university (e.g. bachelor’s degree in educational science, speech therapy diploma, pre-school teacher’s diploma).

If they do not hold a childcare certificate or a qualification recognised as a valid substitute, parents who look after children in parental nurseries and childminders must take an accelerated training course (a module of at least 100 hours organised by a training institution accredited by the government). The training covers all of the following domains: the child’s overall development, the principles of childcare in educational psychology, the organisation of childcare, relations with the persons who entrust the child, conflict management, setting up a partnership, relevant legislation. The training institutions which provide the accelerated initial training issue attendance certificates to those who have successfully attended a recognised accelerated training programme.

Pre-secondary and secondary education

The unemployed

Any unemployed person can begin certain complementary training programmes while retaining the right to unemployment benefits, provided the training leads to an educational qualification for which the National Employment Office (Onem) considers there is a shortage. Specifically, for the last few years, this measure has related to the position of primary school teacher.

Moreover, some university programmes giving access to a teaching career, provided they are followed by the upper secondary teaching diploma, are compatible with maintaining unemployment benefits: such as IT or Germanic philology.

Supplementary educational qualifications

Practical and vocational teaching courses in secondary education can be entrusted to holders of a qualification in the subject to be taught who do not have a teaching qualification, provided they have obtained a teaching proficiency certificate (CAP) upon completion of a training programme in a school for social advancement. These courses include a cycle of variable duration depending on prior studies:
• one year for those with a higher education degree;
• two years for those with an upper secondary qualification;
• three years for those with a lower secondary qualification.
The programme includes general courses, courses in educational science, and teaching practice. Following the consecutive model, the first year is spent on general training and the second and third years are spent on educational psychology and teaching practice. In the context of practical training, students receive a minimal introduction to teaching practice and develop their skills by teaching classes under the supervision of trainers.

Examination boards

It is also possible to sit for examinations in the presence of the French Community Examination boards [4], in particular for subjects for which no initial training is provided in full-time education or in education for social advancement.

In the event of a recognised shortage, observed by the Government, the latter can organise accelerated training which takes place between the start of the academic year and 31 December of the same calendar year.

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