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Key competences for people 50+

REPORT



The state of education in terms of key competences and the needs of the target group (people aged 50 and over) in France

Project result 1 - Methodology of training courses
"Key competences for people aged 50+" (part 1)

Free publication

PREPARED BY: ISC
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Report

The state of education of key competences and the educational needs of adults, including people aged 50+ in France

Version:English

Prepared by: ISC

within the project 2021-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000035200, „Key competences for people aged 50+”

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1) Active population in France.

On average in 2020, according to the Employment survey, the active population as defined by the International Labor Office (ILO) is 28.9 million people aged between 15 and 64 in France (excluding Mayotte), of which 14.1 million are women and 14.8 million men (Figure 1) for a total of 67.39 million inhabitants.

Figure 1 - Labour force and participation rate by individual characteristics 2017-2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020			
					T1	T2	T3	T4
Active population	29 206	29 316	29 192	28 902	29 170	28 257	29 136	29 045
women	14 088	14 189	14 185	14 056	14 173	13 730	14 143	14 176
men	15 119	15 128	15 007	14 845	14 998	14 527	14 994	14 869
Activity rate of 15 to 64 years old (in %)	71,5	71,9	71,7	71,0	71,7	69,4	71,6	71,4
Gender								
women	67,6	68,2	68,2	67,6	68,2	66,1	68,1	68,2
men	75,5	75,7	75,3	74,5	75,3	72,9	75,4	74,7
Age								
15 to 24	36,9	37,5	36,8	35,6	36,6	33,6	36,7	35,8
25 to 49	87,8	88,0	87,8	87,1	87,8	85,2	87,8	87,4
50 to 64	65,7	66,5	67,0	67,1	67,2	66,0	67,4	67,8
with : 55 to 59	76,9	77,2	77,3	77,5	nd	nd	nd	nd
60 to 64	31,7	33,7	35,4	35,5	nd	nd	nd	nd
Active population from 65 or more								
Number of actives	271	259	300	296	nd	nd	nd	nd
Activity rate of 65 to 69 (in %)	7,0	6,7	7,8	7,7	nd	nd	nd	nd

- Source: Insee, Employment surveys.

Stable in the first quarter of 2020, the participation rate fell by 2.3 points in the second quarter, to 69.4%, due to the first confinement. It recovered in the third quarter to almost reach its end-2019 level (71.6%), then fell by 0.2 points at the end of the year, to 71.4%, due to the second lock out.

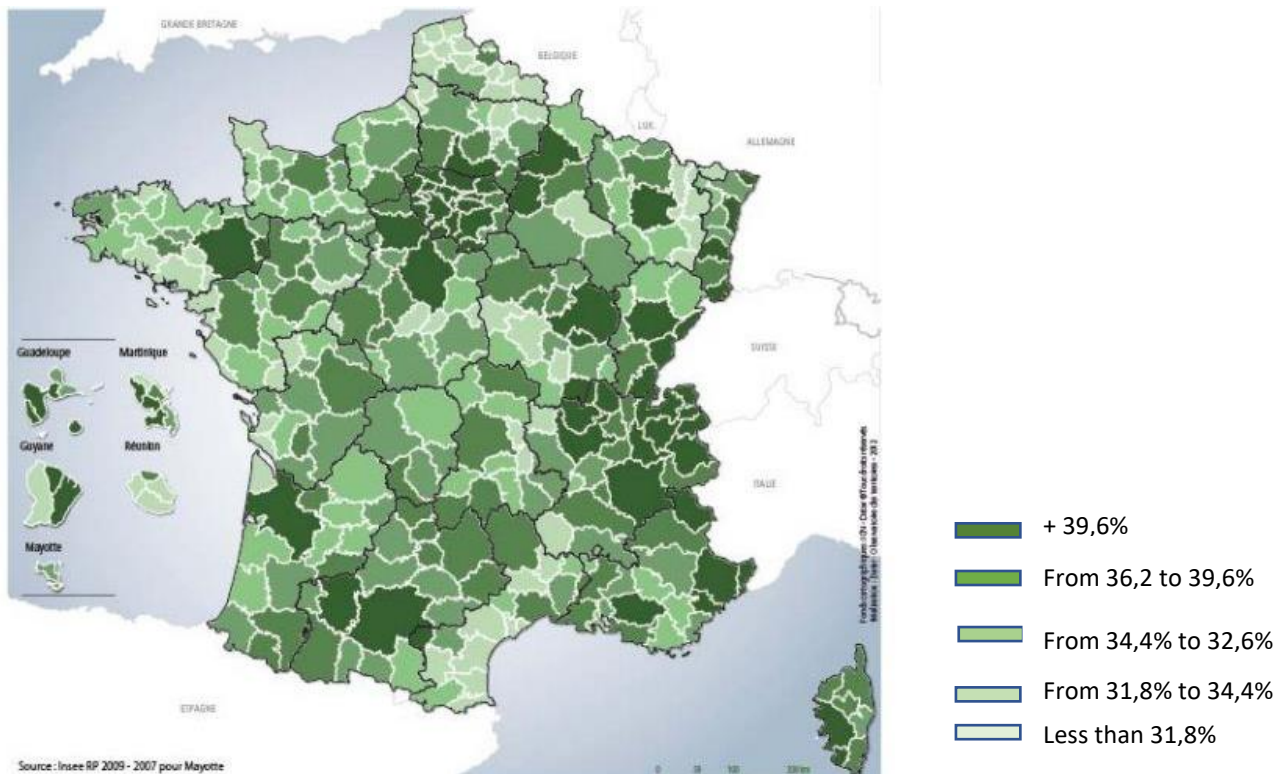
In 2019, the participation rate fell slightly by 0.2 percentage points, after a near-systematic increase of 2.5 percentage points between 2007 and 2018.

The activity rate for men aged 15 to 64 years will fall by 0.8 points in 2020, reaching 74.5%, its lowest level since 2011. It remains significantly higher than that of women, which, at 67.6% in 2020, has lost 0.6 points over one year.



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Employment rate of people 50+ in France



The activity rate of 50–64-year-old will increase by 0.1 points in 2020, reaching 67.1%, unlike the other active age groups. Between 2007 and 2019, with an increase of 11.1 points, senior citizens have already supported the increase in the activity rate of all 15-64 year-old.

This increase is explained in particular by the gradual increase in the legal retirement age from 60 to 62 between 2011 and 2017.

In 2020, the drop in employment due to the health crisis was mainly due to the drop in employment and the non-renewal of fixed-term contracts (fixed-term or temporary).

Senior citizens, who have been in employment for longer and are more frequently on permanent contracts, have therefore been relatively protected and their activity rate has held up well. The health crisis had a greater impact on the activity rate of the under-50s. The activity rate of 15–24-year-old fell by 1.2 percentage points in 2020, to 35.6%, its lowest level since 1999. It had fallen between 1975 and the end of the 1990s, due to the increase in the length of education, and then rose slightly until the economic crisis of 2008-2009, when it fell again.

The activity rate of 25–49-year-old has decreased by 0.7 percentage points in 2020, to 87.1%. At these intermediate ages, the activity rate for men has eroded by 5.2 points since 1975, reaching 91.9% in 2020. The female activity rate, on the other hand, rose sharply, by 24.0 points between 1975 and 2008, before stabilising: +0.4 points between 2008 and 2019, -0.8 points in 2020, to 82.5%. The activity rate of women aged 25 to 49 varies according to the number and age of their children. In 2020, it reaches 86.5% for those without children and 65.5% for mothers with three or more children, i.e. a gap of the same order as in 2019 (Figure 3).

According to the Employment survey, in 2018, 27.1 million people were in employment as defined by the International Labour Office (ILO) in France excluding Mayotte. Women represent 48.3% of total employment.



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In 2018, France is among the European countries **where the weight of the tertiary sector is the highest: it is 4.7 points higher than the European Union (EU) average.** The weight of industry, and to a lesser extent that of agriculture, is on the other hand lower, being respectively 3.9 points and 1.5 points below the EU average.

The following table shows the distribution of the population by age, gender and sector of activity in 2018

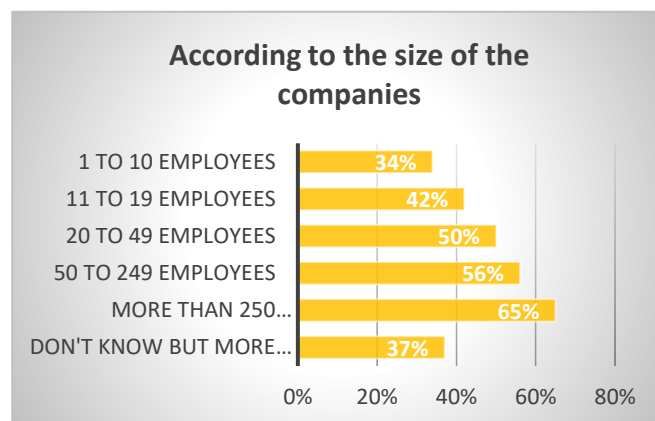
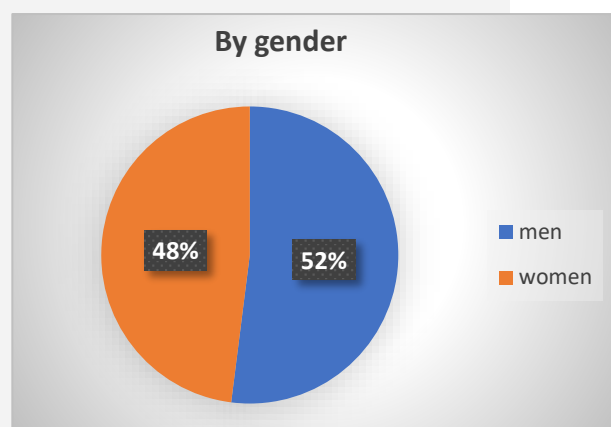
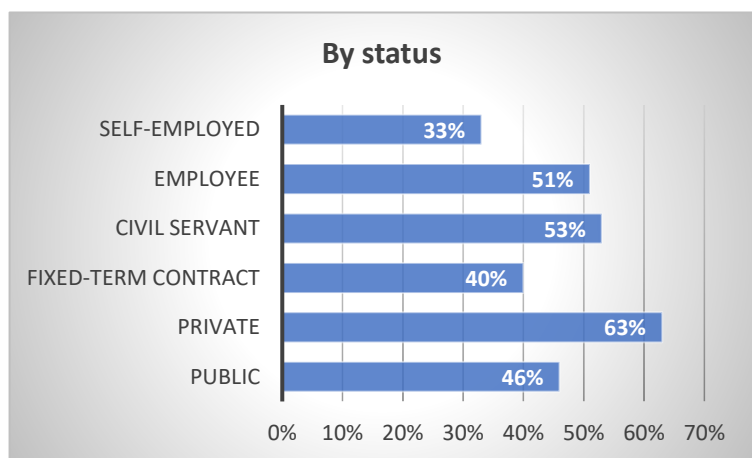
	Age in %			Gender in %.		Altogether	
	15-24	25-49	50 and more	women	men	In thousands	in %.
Agriculture	2,7	1,8	3,6	1,4	3,5	670	2,5
Industry	14,0	13,5	12,9	8,0	18,3	3 616	13,3
Construction	6,7	6,9	6,1	1,6	11,4	1 808	6,7
Higher education	73,7	76,4	76,2	87,8	65,1	20 640	76,1
Trade	20,1	12,7	10,6	12,4	13,0	3 444	12,7
Transport	4,6	5,2	5,6	2,7	7,7	1 432	5,3
Accommodation and catering	8,9	3,7	3,0	3,9	3,9	1 058	3,9
Information and communication	2,2	3,5	2,3	1,9	4,1	827	3,0
Finance, insurance, real	2,9	4,9	4,5	5,4	3,9	1 244	4,6
Services mainly for businesses	8,5	10,6	9,2	9,7	10,3	2 713	10,0
Public administration	5,3	8,6	11,0	9,9	8,3	2 463	9,1
Education	4,0	7,2	7,8	10,1	4,4	1 938	7,1
Health	4,9	7,5	7,2	11,0	3,6	1 940	7,2
Residential care, social	6,0	7,1	8,4	12,9	2,3	2 020	7,4
Services to households	6,3	5,2	6,6	7,8	3,8	1 560	5,7
Unspecified activity	2,9	1,3	1,2	1,2	1,7	388	1,4
Alltogether	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	27 122	100,0

Source: Insee, Employment survey.

The tertiary sector accounts for a huge share of French workers. It is the most developed area for women's employment in France.

How people in employment are trained?

The following charts show: Annual access rate to training for work-related reasons of employed persons



Source: Insee, Adult Education Survey 2012.

Jobseekers' training entries in the 2nd quarter of 2021.

In the second quarter of 2021, in the employment center, there were about 321,200 training entries among registered / jobseekers.

The number of training entries increases by 67% compared to the second quarter of 2019.



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Table 3 - Characteristics of non-degree courses taken for professional reasons by employed or unemployed persons

1. Farmers
2. Craftsmen, traders and entrepreneurs
3. Executives and higher intellectual professions
4. Intermediate occupations
5. Employees
6. Workers

in % of total

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Group courses, workshops or training	75	51	51	65	67	74
Seminar, workshop, conference	20	39	38	19	10	4
On-the-job training	5	7	9	15	22	22
Private lessons	0	3	2	1	1	1
Duration						
1 - 3 hours	5	12	14	18	16	9
4 - 20 hours	78	69	61	57	61	57
21 hours or more	17	19	25	25	24	34
Who decides?						
The employer or an organisation related to the professional activity	35	40	58	73	79	83
Personal initiative	43	57	39	24	19	17
Other persons or institutions	21	3	2	2	2	1
Mandatory training	9	15	36	54	59	61
Motivation						
Doing your job better	89	80	82	83	82	74
Improve career prospects	24	34	30	32	38	45
Avoid losing your job	9	10	5	10	14	25
Finding a job, changing jobs or professions	3	7	6	6	9	15
Starting your own business	3	9	3	2	2	5
Acquire knowledge/skills on a topic of interest	92	82	78	75	67	63
Obtaining certification	24	19	5	11	12	36

Reading: 61% of workers in training for professional reasons have followed compulsory training.

Scope: Metropolitan France, persons aged 18 to 64, training courses started less than one year before the date of the survey.

Source: Insee, Adult Education Survey 2012.

The rate of access to training increases with the level of initial training



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- ✚ Because of the link between the occupation and the level of education required to practice it, it's the most highly educated people who undertake the most vocational training. Occupations that require high levels of initial training are often accompanied by a high level of continuing education. Thus, among employed persons, 66% of graduates with more than two years of higher education attended at least one vocational training course during the year, compared with 25% of persons with no qualifications.
- ✚ Managers and professional are ones who take the most training: 68% of them had access to training for professional reasons during the year, compared with 37% of manual workers. For the same size of establishment, managers and intermediate professions also benefit more often than employees or workers.
- ✚ The differences in access to training between men and women depend on their level of qualification. While among managers and intermediate professions the same proportion of men and women access vocational training, among blue collar and white-collar workers, the participation of women is significantly lower than that of men.
- ✚ Access to training decreases with age. Even when they are still in employment, older people attend fewer training courses for professional reasons than younger people, the same applies to the unemployed compared to those in employment, but their training courses are longer. Training is more beneficial to managers and people working in large establishments. The access rate of adults to training increases with their level of qualification.

2) Deficits in key skills (not only people over 50, but also younger people, in order to compare and gain knowledge about age-related changes),

In France, only 32% of adults have taken a job-related training course in the last 12 months (12% for low-skilled adults), compared to more than 55% in some European countries such as Denmark, Norway and Finland, as well as in New Zealand. (Credits: Reuters)

French companies are facing a **skills gap** and the problem could get worse. According to an OCDE report published on Thursday 14 December 2019, this phenomenon concerns several **sectors related to digital or education and training**. Despite a recovery in activity and a business climate favorable to companies, French unemployment remains particularly high among young people and older people, who sometimes face long-term unemployment. The lack or underutilization of skills could be an important factor in explaining the persistence of this unemployment, which is much higher than in many European countries.

For the international organisation, one of the main problems is that while the level of education in France is close to the average of developed countries, skills tests show that 'the share of young adults with low basic skills is higher than in most other OECD countries'. In addition, the experts point out that the provision of training for adults is 'limited, especially for the low-skilled'.

Source : <https://www.oecd.org/fr/>



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3) Deficits in key competences of people over 50 (direct target group of the educational material created)

The examination of the skill levels of the adult population is also alarming. According to figures from the PIAAC adult skills assessment, of the 24 countries participating in the survey, "**France ranks among those with the lowest digital literacy skills**". This low skill level of the French adult population is largely explained by the results for the 45-65 age group. "If we exclude this group of older people, the gap between France and the EU average almost disappears. The lower level of qualification of older people is explained by "an age effect, i.e. the deterioration of skills, linked to ageing (all the more marked as participation in adult education programmes is low), and by a cohort effect, linked to the fact that the level of education of older people is lower".

The reduced access of the over-50s to continuing training is observed in all European Union countries (Guillemard, 2001). However, in a national context of already low access to continuing training, this decline is reflected in France by one of the lowest rates of continuing training for senior citizens in Europe.

4) The educational needs of the target group.

A shortage of IT skills

Among the fields studied, the researchers of the international institution have identified several specific areas where the shortage is particularly acute. These include IT and electronics, mechanics or teaching and training, management, but also more transversal skills such as verbal communication or complex problem solving. On the other hand, there is a surplus of sales and marketing or consultancy skills, the authors of the report note.

The mismatch between supply and demand is also highlighted in the document. It is measured in terms of qualifications (the highest level of education achieved) and in terms of fields of study. The survey results are particularly telling in this respect:

- 35.1% of French employees were in jobs for which they were not sufficiently qualified;
- 23.4% of the employees were in a job for which a higher level of qualification is normally required, i.e. they were underqualified for that job;
- 11.7% of employees work in a job that requires a lower level of qualification. In other words, they are overqualified.

The level of skill mismatch in France is close to the EU average, but France has one of the highest levels of under-qualification.

Why don't employees want to train?

The main reasons given were, in order of importance: Lack of time (55%) Lack of interest "I'm **not** interested" (47%) Lack of information on training (36%)

5) Training opportunities available in France.

France is one of the European countries with the lowest rate of access to training for people aged 50 and over. According to CEREG, the annual volume of training decreases with age in France. While young people aged 15 to 29 can benefit from 20 hours of training per year, people over 50 can only claim 14 hours of training per year. To remedy this situation, measures have been taken.

1. Period of professionalization, which is open to any employee on an open-ended contract or a fixed-term contract in a structure for integration through economic activity. The aim of this period of professionalisation is to enable older workers to benefit from training leading to qualifications or certification, in order to help them remain in employment.



2. The validation of acquired experience or VAE also favors older workers. This system, which is open to anyone with at least three years' experience in a given field, allows older workers to have their experience recognized in order to obtain a diploma, a certificate of professional qualification or a title.

3 Specific provisions of the CPF for senior citizens

All employees in France have a Personal Training Account (or CPF) allowing them to train in order to improve their skills. The protocol agreement on unemployment insurance of 28 March 2017 includes specific provisions concerning the CPF for senior citizens: people aged between 50 and 54 at the date of the end of their employment contract and registered with Pôle emploi, can benefit from additional hours on their CPF, up to a limit of 500 hours.

4. The skills assessment: it allows: to analyse one's personal and professional skills, aptitudes and motivations, to define one's professional project and, if necessary, a training project, to use one's assets as a negotiating tool for a job, training or career development.

source: <https://www.seniorsavotreservice.com/>

Knowledge of these schemes is also very unequal between those who have taken a training course in the past year and those who have not: almost two thirds of those who have taken at least one training course have heard of the CPF, compared with 43% and 45% respectively of those who have not taken any training.

Source: <https://www.insee.fr>

6. Differences in the education of the over-50s and the younger generation.

- ✚ In order to adapt to the various changes that affect their person, but also their physical and social environment, older adults, like all living beings, can learn. Even if cognitive operations slow down, they remain operational in the context of normal ageing. Learning is most often informal and unconscious, but it is learning in the sense that the learning process corresponds to the adaptation of the individual to a new situation (Piaget 1967, p. 10).

Source : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-savoirs-2011-2-page-11.htm>

- ✚ Access to vocational training diminishes with advancing age, depending on the sector of activity, the size of the company, but also the level of initial training and the socio-professional category (Gossiaux & Pommier, 2013). Thus, young employees, whether workers or managers, have more access to vocational training than their older colleagues; but the oldest managers take part in as much training, or even more, than young workers.
- ✚ The reasons given to explain this phenomenon are diverse. On the part of the working population, they are partly related to the rather negative representations they have of the evolution of their capacity to learn as they age (Marquié *et al.*, 1994). They refer to a '*reluctance on the part of older people to go back to school*' (Santelmann, 2004) or testify to a lesser appetite for training on the part of the less well-trained, which is self-sustained by their lack of knowledge of the potential benefits of vocational training at the end of their career (Gossiaux & Pommier, 2013).
- ✚ On the employers' side, the reasons given are the mark of a constant negative representation of the learning and training capacities of older employees since the 1950s (Burney, 2004; Defresne *et al.*, 2010).
- ✚ Finally, in the French vocational training system, they result from the priority given to the social treatment of unemployment and young people with educational difficulties over the development of lifelong learning (Santelmann, 2004). They also stem from age-



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selective practices in the selection-orientation-training process of vocational training centers (Gaudart & Delgoulet, 2005). Finally, they refer to the weak impact of training on social promotion (Micaudon, 2000) and on the return to employment for older unemployed people (Gaudart & Delgoulet, 2005).

- ✚ More often than not, it is combinations of conditions relating to the workforce itself, employers (more broadly the labour market) and the vocational training system that contribute to the lower access of older workers to training.

Source : revue-gerontologie-et-societe

- ✚ Family responsibilities and cost are the main obstacles mentioned when people say they have given up training. And for those who do not aspire to training, it may be a form of self-censorship, linked to such difficulties, as well as to the feeling of not being up to standard.

Source : <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques>

7. Conclusions, recommendations :

Based on the projections made, as shown in the following table:

Figure 3 - Labour Force Projections

Labour force projections			
	2020	2040	2070
Number of workers (in millions)	29,6	30,4	31,2
Share of women (%)	48,3	48,2	48,1
Activity rate of 15-64 year old (%)	72,1	74,6	75,0
Activity rate of 15-24 year old (%)	36,2	36,9	36,9
Activity rate of 25-49 year old (%)	88,4	88,3	88,4
Activity rate of 50-64 year old (%)	68,0	75,7	76,9
Number of active persons in relation to the number of inactive persons aged 60 or over ¹	1,9	1,6	1,4

- 1. Ratio calculated on the total population that includes people living in mobile homes or residing in communities.
- Scope: France excluding Mayotte, household population, persons aged 15 to 64.
- Source: Insee, working population projections 2016-2070, central scenario.

We must adapt vocational education to the needs of the market

Faced with skills shortages and mismatches, the OCDE makes several recommendations. While the organisation recognizes that many efforts have been made to improve the attractiveness of vocational education and to try to enhance apprenticeship, the experts recommend "adapting the content of vocational education curricula to make them more relevant to employers' needs". They also recommend that teachers should 'constantly monitor developments in business practices'. Finally, the experts suggest extending vocational education to more sectors, 'including emerging sectors', without giving further details.

The report is also not kind to the guidance services in schools. While the authors acknowledge that these services "have been adapted to be more in tune with the world of work", they regret



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that "information on career guidance is often scattered and not linked to labor market needs as identified by other actors".

source: <https://www.latribune.fr/economie/france/formation>

We need to develop more digital training opportunities and use the following levers to encourage the 50+ to train:

- ❖ **Motivation**
- ❖ **Self-confidence**
- ❖ **Peer learning**



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Annex :

List of data sources / literature :

<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques>

Employment: labour shortages expected in the digital sector

<https://www.seniorsavotreservice.com/>

<https://www.latribune.fr/economie/france/formation>

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-savoirs-2011-2-page-11.htm>

OCDE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Insee, working population projections 2016-2070, central scenario.

Revue-gerontologie-et-societe

Qualification ou compétences: en finir avec la notion d'emplois non qualifiés from Paul Santelmann

<https://www.manpowergroup.fr/wp-content>

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