

FRANCE

The active guidance policy (before HE entry)

The active guidance policy carried out by the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, to make sure the largest part of the population can access higher education and succeed, is one of the priorities of the French Government currently.

This policy is based on a scheme for information and active guidance: in their final year of secondary school before their *Baccalauréat*, all pupils who plan to go on studying at university can benefit from a guidance assistance provided by institutions, combined with advice and recommendations, to enable them to make an informed choice.

Active guidance is a global approach divided into five sequences :

- information (provided during secondary school) ;
- guidance advice (counselling) ;
- pre-registration (at the end of secondary education) ;
- admission ;
- access to other study tracks if necessary.

Every university makes a presentation of its higher education courses (on its own web site, directly in secondary school, sometimes they offer the possibility to attend university courses for secondary school pupils), in close collaboration with higher education institutions.

The rate of high school students asking for guidance counselling constantly increases. The number of guidance beneficiaries increases too : from the 2011 academic year onwards, every pupil in his/her 6th year at secondary school will benefit from a guidance counselling. A special effort will be made to focus on students with disabilities and students preparing for the vocational *Baccalauréat* diploma.

Focus on the “Climbing ropes for success” scheme

The “Climbing ropes for success” (ie : « *Cordées de la réussite* ») scheme takes part in the implementation of the active guidance policy. This scheme aims at ensuring a smoother transition towards higher education for young people who do not plan to go on further studying, because of particular constraints due to their social or local backgrounds. For this purpose, a network of institutions connected with each other is set up, via partnerships between one or several higher education institutions (universities, *grandes écoles*) on the one hand, and on the other hand, secondary schools (including secondary schools with preparatory classes for the *grandes écoles*). The purpose is to enhance information dissemination about higher education courses, together with job opportunities provided, and to support these young people along their whole learning paths (tutoring, academic support, cultural support, student boarding or student accommodation, etc.)

At the beginning of the 2011 academic year, 312 projects were labelled « Climbing ropes for success”; they were 254 in 2010, 142 in 2009 and 100 the year before.