

# **Disciplinary Barriers between the Social Sciences and Humanities National Report on France**

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## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AES: Social and Economic Administration (*Administration économique et sociale*)
- BEP: Vocational Studies Certificate (*Brevet d'études professionnelles*)
- BTS: Higher Technician Certificate (*Brevet de technicien supérieur*)
- CAP: Vocational Aptitude Certificate (*Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*)
- CNRS: National Scientific Research Centre (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*)
- CPGE: Preparatory Class for the *Grandes écoles* (*Classe préparatoire aux grandes écoles*)
- DEA: Advanced Studies Degree (*Diplôme d'études approfondies*)
- DES: Specialised Studies Degree (*Diplôme d'études spécialisées*)
- DESS: Higher Specialised Studies Degree (*Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*)
- DEUG: General University Degree (*Diplôme d'études universitaires générales*)
- DEUST: Scientific and Technical University Degree (*Diplôme d'études universitaires en sciences et techniques*)
- DNAT: National Diploma in Arts and Techniques (*Diplôme national d'arts et techniques*).
- DNSEP: Higher National Diploma in Arts (*Diplôme national supérieur d'expression plastique*)
- DNTS: National Higher Technician Diploma (*Diplôme national de technologie spécialisé*)
- DRT: Technological Research Diploma (*Diplôme de recherche technologique*)
- DUT: University Institute of Technology Degree (*Diplôme universitaire de technologie*)
- EPIC: Public Sector Industrial and Commercial Establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère industriel et commercial*]
- EPSCP: Public sector scientific, cultural and professional establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel*]
- EPST: Public Sector Scientific and Technological Establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère scientifique et technologique*]
- INED: National Demographic Research Institute (*Institut national d'études démographiques*)
- INRA: National Agronomics Research Institute (*Institut national de la recherche agronome*)
- INSERM: National Medical and Health Research Institute (*Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale*)
- IRD: National Development Research Institute (*Institut français pour le développement*)
- ISIC: Information and Communication (*Information et communication*)
- IUP: University Institute for Professional Studies (*Institut universitaire professionnalisé*)
- IUT: University Institute of Technology (*Institut universitaire de technologie*)
- MIAGE: Masters Degree in computer studies applied to management (*Maîtrise de méthodes informatiques appliquées à la gestion*)
- MSG: Masters Degree in management sciences (*Maîtrise de sciences et gestion*)
- MST: Masters Degree in science and technology (*Maîtrise de sciences et techniques*)
- PCEM1: Preparatory Class for Medical Studies (the first year of studies validated by a national exam with a *numerus clausus*)
- PCEP1: Preparatory Class for Pharmacy Studies (the first year of studies validated by a national exam with a *numerus clausus*)
- SICA: Information, Communication and Arts (*Sciences de l'information, de la communication et des arts*)
- STS: Higher Technician Section (*Section de techniciens supérieurs*)

## INTRODUCTION

In this national report, we aim to analyse the main characteristics of the French higher education and research systems and their impact on the barriers to interdisciplinarity between the Humanities and the Social sciences in tertiary education and research.

In order to do this, we describe the historical emergence of the higher education system in France, paying particular attention to the two main characteristics of this sector: a) the strong level of centralisation and direct state control over the content of degree courses and academic careers, and b) the weight of the disciplines in the French academic tradition.

It is also important to note another important feature of the French HE system: its double objective of tertiary education and research. Public-sector research in France takes place in two kinds of institutions. Firstly, the national research institutes like the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* - CNRS [National centre for scientific research], the *Institute national d'études démographiques* - INED [National institute of demographic studies], the *Institut national de recherche agronome* - INRA [National institute of agronomic research], etc., which employ full-time research staff. Secondly, in universities and other HE institutions, which employ academic staff who are expected to devote (at least) half of their working time to teaching and administrative duties and the rest to research. These two activities are so strongly interwoven in the French HE system that it is impossible to talk about one without mentioning the other. This is particularly the case since most of the national research institutes have contractual agreements with specific universities and may be based on collaboration between some staff employed directly by the research institutes and some staff employed by the universities. Thus, while this national report is mainly focussed on teaching within the HE sector, it is important to highlight research activities as well – at least those being carried out by university staff. These “part-time” research activities have a direct impact on doctoral training.

The report is structured in 8 thematic chapters, although to fully understand the national characteristics described in each chapter, it may be necessary to refer to data and information presented in other chapters. In so far as it is possible, we have attempted to make any obvious differences between the French case and the situation in the other STREP partner countries as explicit as possible.

## **I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE HE AND RESEARCH SECTORS IN FRANCE**

The barriers to interdisciplinary teaching and research in France are difficult to grasp without some understanding of the history of the higher education (HE) and research sectors on the contemporary characteristics of this field. This chapter is therefore divided into two parts: one focusing on the HE sector and the other highlighting research activities and their interactions with teaching and doctoral training programmes.

### **I.1. Historical Perspectives on Disciplinisation in the HE and Research Sectors**

Most of our historical and contextual analysis of the French HE system draws on the work of the French sociologist Christine Musselin, who has undertaken a series of research projects on the structural characteristics of the French HE and research sectors and has developed several comparative studies on this question over the past 15 years (Friedberg and Musselin 1989, 1992; Musselin 1997, 2001, 2003).

According to Musselin, it is necessary to analyse the hiatus between the existing HE Laws in France, which have promoted the development of pluridisciplinary university structures since the end of the 1960s, and the actual mechanisms of the HE sector, which have remained strongly discipline-based, at least up until the middle of the 1990s (Musselin 2001). Her recent work has attempted to show that France is only just beginning to move towards the creation of universities, as opposed to discipline-based “faculties”, and that this move is directly related to changes in the relationship between the state and the national academic community. As late as the 1990s, it was generally held that France stood out from the rest of the Western world in so far as it had no equivalent to the universities that existed elsewhere in Europe or North America. In his book entitled *La République des universitaires, 1870-1940*, the historian Charle even spoke of the “impossible French University”.

Musselin claims that the term “The Republic of the faculties” offers the best description of the structure of the HE system in France throughout almost all of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The roots of this system which was implemented at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, can actually be found as far back as 1808, in the structures created by Napoleon under the guise of the “Imperial University”. Despite repeated attempts to reform the imperial model, particularly under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic, Musselin argues convincingly that the basic premises of the Napoleonic model survived in France up until the Faure reform of 1968. Indeed, even after the official suppression of the old university “faculties” in the wake of the May 1968 student movement, Musselin claims that it took more than 30 years for France to produce autonomous university institutions that were capable of self-governance and of some degree of autonomy, both vis-à-vis the state and vis-à-vis what she calls “disciplinary corporatism”. This long and drawn-out “quest for universities” to cite the title of a book she co-authored in 1989 (Friedberg and Musselin 1989) is central to our understanding of the disciplinary process and the possibilities for interdisciplinary teaching and research in France today.

As Musselin and others have stressed, even the very first universities that were created in France in the Middle Ages were rapidly submitted to the power of the crown. Higher education has long been seen as a legitimate arena of public intervention in France and universities were expected to conform to a series of nationally defined norms and rules with regard to the content of their courses, the organisation of examinations, their administrative status and so on (Musselin 2001, p.24). Even during the French revolution, the national

character of the HE system was never questioned, although the old university faculties were abolished and more vocational professional training schools were established in direct competition with the universities.

With Napoleon's rise to power, the whole of the education system (including secondary and tertiary education) was reformed to create the "Imperial University". However, contrary to the *Lern und Lehrfreiheit* principles adopted by von Humboldt at approximately the same time in Germany, the Napoleon model restricted the role of universities to two limited fields: "In law and medicine, training of the future professionals; in the humanities and sciences, the right to award degrees" (Musselin 2001, p. 25). In fact, the humanities and science faculties were exclusively composed of the number of professors required to sit on the Baccalaureate exam boards in each academy<sup>1</sup>. When the Baccalaureate was recognised in 1808 as the first university degree, most of the academics' time was taken up with administrating examinations and juries in each of the disciplinary fields. The "Imperial University" system thus reproduced the founding characteristics of the first French universities of the Middle Ages: identical rules applied to the whole of the national territory, with a state monopoly on the content of teaching and examination procedures and restricted access to certain professions on the basis of nationally defined university curricula.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Baccalaureate became obligatory for access to any form of higher education and France was divided up into different "academies", each having a series of "faculties" in five different disciplinary fields: Theology, Medicine, Law, Sciences and Humanities. In theory, the Faculties were identical, irrespective of their geographical location and all corresponded to a national model within a given disciplinary field (Musselin 2001, p. 26), although those located in Paris were by far the most prestigious. Furthermore, a series of national rules and regulations were elaborated for the career patterns of all academic staff. According to Musselin, the creation of nationally centralised institutions for the management of the recruitment and advancement of academic staff – which remain in force, in the form of the "*Conseil national des universités - CNU*" (see below) – marks a change from the Middle Ages model of universities and remains one of the founding characteristics of the French HE system to this day:

The consequence of this measure was to institutionalise two factors which have become the founding characteristics of the French system. On the one hand, it marks the beginning of the state-corporatist co-management of the university system because, in addition to the Minister of Public Instruction [*le Grand Maître*], a national Council of Public Instruction, composed exclusively of academics, was nominated by the government in order to include representatives from each discipline. Secondly, it not only introduced a centralised and state-controlled system for managing academic careers, **it also organised this system along disciplinary lines** (Musselin 2001, p. 28) (our emphasis).

Musselin therefore argues that, by reinforcing the institutional separation between the disciplines in a given geographical location (academy) and by creating centralised and hierarchical structures for the management of academic careers by discipline, the inheritance of the "Imperial University" effectively "signed the death of universities in France" on two levels. Firstly, no mechanism was established for collaboration between the different discipline-based "faculties" located in the same Academy. Secondly, the institutional barriers

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'academy' refers to the division of France into several geographical regions, each with a 'Rector', the representative of the Ministry of Education at local level.

between disciplines were reinforced by the creation of centralised and vertical institutions responsible for the recruitment and promotion of academic staff on a disciplinary basis:

Each family of disciplines could thus adopt its own pattern of internal regulation, impose its own rules and take away from the faculties, then from the Universities (when they were created) the freedom to manage their academic staff (Musselin 2001, p. 29).

Thus, at least up until the 1968 Faure reforms, the French HE system was profoundly marked by this “double centralisation”: that of the state and that of the disciplines. The interests and the internal logics of the different disciplines made it impossible to create the idea of a University as an autonomous, federative institution for producing inter-disciplinary knowledge.

Up until today, the French HE system is thus characterised by the uniformity of a strongly national system, aimed at providing access to all pupils with a Baccalaureate and offering the same quality of teaching in all the regions of France – through low registration fees, the central approval of national curricula, tenure for academics and funding almost exclusively from the state. This system is characterised by the abstract nature of course content, its poor adaptability and very limited job opportunities for graduates: “With the exception of degrees in law or medicine, university training only opens the doors to careers in teaching or in the civil service.” (Musselin 2001, p. 53). As in many other EU states, other HE training and research institutions developed in parallel to the universities. However, contrary to the situation in Germany, for example, France has two distinctive characteristics. On the one hand, research activities were also developed outside the universities, in a series of publicly funded research institutions (CNRS, INSERM, INRA, etc.). Secondly, the *Grandes écoles* and other multidisciplinary vocational institutions became **more** prestigious and **more** selective than the universities themselves (Musselin 2001, p. 54).

One of the main objectives of the 1968 Faure reforms which abolished the old “faculties” was to promote “interdisciplinary competences”, based on what Musselin calls “the myth of transversal co-operation” (Musselin 2001, p. 58). However, coming in the wake of the May 1968 social movements in France, the adoption of this principle proved rather complicated to put into practice. On the one hand, political tensions led to the creation of two or three different universities in each of the large cities and thus a return to the old “faculty” system. Secondly, whereas all academics were previously automatically members of the University Senate, the 1968 Law introduced the notion of representative democracy to the HE sector and led to the election of representatives from amongst the tenured academic staff. In a particularly heated political context, the “democratisation” of the decision procedures within French universities actually led to a situation where debate and positions of principle played a greater role than the negotiation of solutions (Musselin 2001, p. 61). The “anomy” of the decision-making bodies of the universities continued well into the 1980s. Members of the elected bodies did not see themselves as partners in a collective project, but rather as representatives of political and/or disciplinary interests.

The 1984 Savary reform aimed to improve the governability of French universities by increasing the size and number of the decision-making bodies. Since the Faure reform, French universities had experienced dramatic increases in student numbers. From 160 000 students registered in the mid-1950s, the universities had four times more students by the beginning of the 1970s (and 10 times more by the end of the 1990s). Although this spectacular increase

was a totally foreseeable consequence of changes made at the secondary education level, no concerted attempt was made to prepare the universities for such a change. Indeed, the belief in the desirability of maintaining identical, national, disciplinary curricula irrespective of student numbers was repeatedly affirmed throughout this period (Musselin 2001, p. 68). The proposal to introduce selective admission procedures for access to a university degree was abandoned in the wake of the May 1968 student movement.

The most significant developments in the French HE system over the past 20 years are related to the introduction of a new kind of policy implementation process, commonly known as the “contractualisation” process (Musselin 1997).

### *1.1.1. The contractualisation of the HE and research sectors*

In French, the term “contractualisation” is used to describe a public policy elaboration process, whereby the state enters into a contractual relationship with public sector institutions responsible for the definition, operationalisation and evaluation of public policy initiatives in different domains. The term was first coined in the 1967 Nora report on the relationship between the state and the nationalised industrial sector (Commissariat général du Plan 2004, p. 19). The term has been used in relation to the HE and research sectors since the first attempts – laid down in the 84-52 Law voted in on January 26<sup>th</sup> 1984 – to make public sector research activities more responsive to national public policy priorities. The 1984 Law attempted to make universities define their own research priorities and was tied into a new process of national accreditation of research centres at the local level. The Scientific Councils in each university were required to define a list of research centres whose activities were seen as central to the research policy of the establishment. These centres were then evaluated through the national research evaluation bodies (see I.3.3. below) and received targeted funding for the duration of the “contract” with the state.

Through a ministerial decree dated March 24<sup>th</sup> 1989, this process was applied to negotiations with individual HE institutions, through the introduction of so-called “establishment contracts”, negotiated once every four years with universities and other HE institutions. This initiative was introduced in a context of rapid expansion of student numbers.<sup>2</sup> Universities were thus encouraged to plan their teaching programmes and to negotiate their budgets and staff costs in accordance with their local development plans. For the first time in the history of the French HE sector, Ministry of Education representatives actually made visits to each university and negotiated directly with their elected representatives.<sup>3</sup>

The four year time-scale is explained by the fact that the Ministry of Education divides the country up into four different “zones” and negotiates the contracts with all the HE and research institutions located in the same “zone” once every four years. This produces a contractualisation process in “waves”. All the institutions located in the same zone are involved in negotiations with the Ministry in the same year and this is supposed to foster joint development projects between institutions located in the same geographical area. It makes joint projects between institutions that are not located in the same “zone” virtually impossible.

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<sup>2</sup> Between 1989 and 1995, student numbers increased by an average of 9% per annum (Commissariat générale du Plan, 2004, p. 21).

<sup>3</sup> The tradition in France had previously been for the university presidents to be ‘summoned to Paris’ to be told of the results of the decisions taken at central level concerning their institutions.

For the brief period of 1993-1994, the Ministry decided to exclude negotiations about staffing levels from the contractualisation process. This decision was motivated by concern about the rising cost of HE in the national budget and led to massive student demonstrations across the country.

From 1995 onwards, the Ministry of Education extended its contractualisation project to cover both teaching and research activities. The bilateral contracts thus became trilateral, in so far as they also included the national public research bodies, like the CNRS. This policy decision only really became fully effective in the whole of France after the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1998 ministerial decree. Contracts now focus on the negotiation of the financial and staff requirements of each university in order to put their own research and teaching priorities into effect. These priorities are still supposed to correspond to the main objectives for the HE and research sectors defined by the relevant Ministries. For the first time, the Ministry also laid down specific evaluation criteria for the previous “contract”. Universities are expected to carry out an internal evaluation of their performance and this is coupled with an external evaluation process operated by Ministry staff and a body of national experts.

Since 2002, the contractualisation procedure has provided the framework for a national policy of “mapping” HE teaching and research training activities, with the explicit aim of avoiding overlap between institutions located in close geographical proximity to each other, particularly in relation to the types of degree programmes they offer.

Most of the evaluation reports on the contractualisation procedure have been extremely positive. They stress the role of the contract negotiation process in increasing the autonomy of individual universities in France: “Although the Faure Law of 1968 officially put an end to the faculty system in France, autonomous university structures have only really come into existence since the introduction of the contractualisation process” (Commissariat général du Plan 2004, p. 26). In 2002, the Ministry even formalised the role of the so-called “establishment advisors”, the academics – usually ex-university presidents – who play a mediating role between the Ministry and the university presidents at local level.

Criticism of this procedure has focussed on three main issues: the partial nature of most of the contracts, the unsatisfactory evaluation procedures, and the need to consider the local environment of the universities.

## **I.2. Higher education institutions**

In France, the education system is seen as having a central role to play in relation to the question of citizenship and social integration. Although the official age for entering the education system is age 5, in practice children start school much earlier: almost 100% of 3-year olds attend school on a full-time basis.

The main school-leaving qualification in France is the Baccalaureate, which is organised along three streams: the so-called “general” Baccalaureate in a variety of subject areas (humanities and languages, maths and sciences, economics, etc.); the “professional” Baccalaureate and the “technical” Baccalaureate. In theory, children should reach the Baccalaureate when they are about 18 years old, but the primary and secondary levels of the education system make it possible for pupils who have not reached the required level of success in their studies to “re-sit” one or more years. In practice, this means that pupils may well be aged 19 or 20 by the time they sit their “Bac”. Not all French children continue their

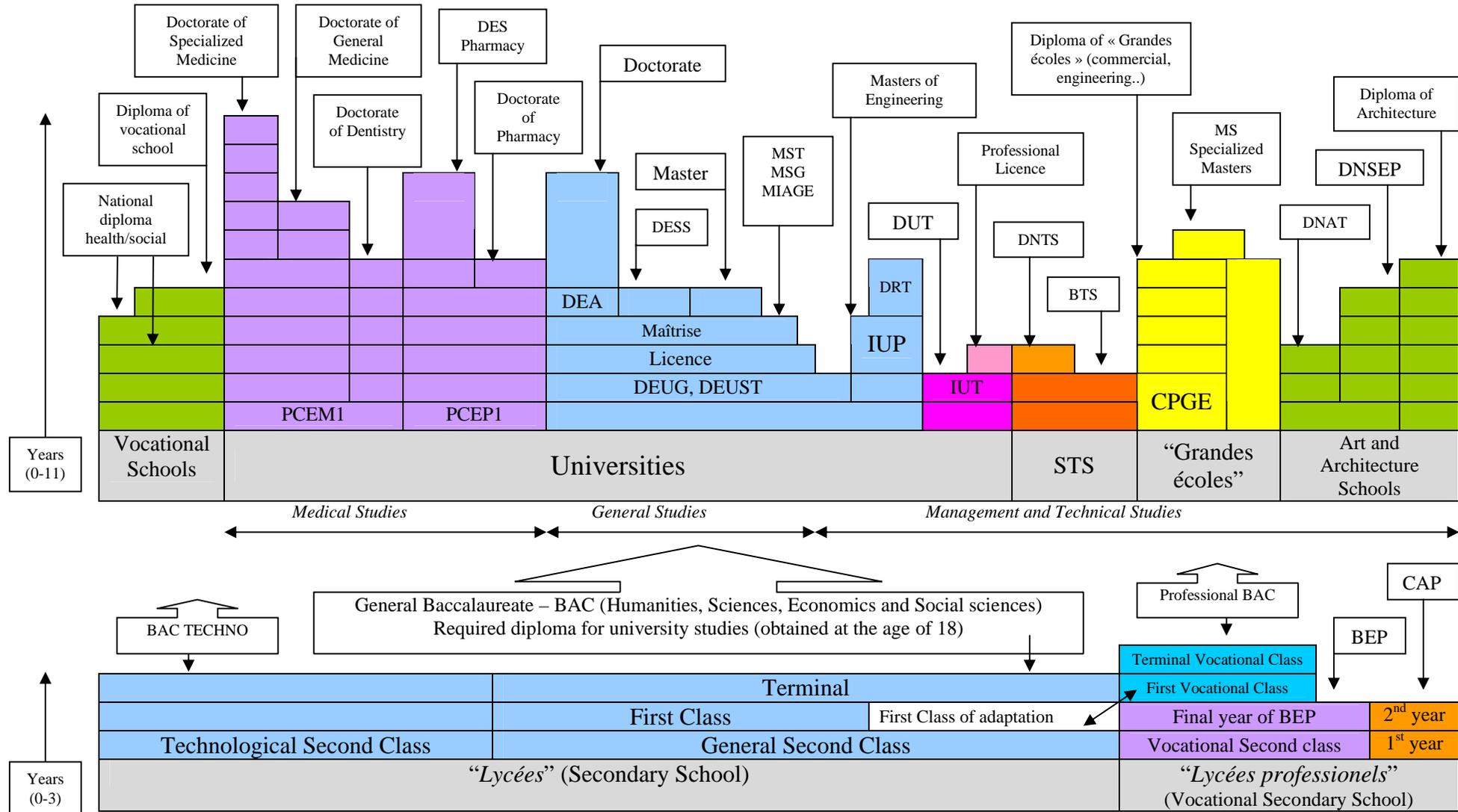
studies and reach Baccalaureate level. However, this is the case for the vast majority. Even those pupils who are not intellectually gifted and who are advised to take more vocational courses at age 15-16 can move back into a Baccalaureate programme (usually either a “professional” or “technical” Baccalaureate) at a later stage of their studies.

Within a highly centralised, largely state-funded education system, over 70% of each age cohort continues their secondary education to Baccalaureate level. At the beginning of the 1990s almost 100% of 19 year olds in France were still in the education system and in 1995 42% of 20 years old were in HE (Theulière 2004, p. 7). This is a much higher rate than in most other EU member states and is reflected both in the diversity of the training and education on offer and on the direct relationship between educational credentials and occupational status on the labour market in France.

Youth unemployment levels in France are traditionally high and it is generally believed that obtaining some level of post-Baccalaureate qualification provides the best protection against this. HE training courses are accessible to any student who has a Baccalaureate. French universities generally exercise little control over student recruitment at undergraduate level, whereas the other HE establishments like the prestigious “*Grandes écoles*” as well as the less prestigious Higher Technical Sections (*STS*), Engineering Schools, Teacher Training Institutes (IUFM) and Business Schools (see chapter II) are allowed to select their future students, and competition for admission is quite severe.

The Baccalaureate is the qualification required to enter any kind HE institution in France. There is no direct link between the kind of Baccalaureate a student has passed and the particular field of HE that he or she can enter. However, the most prestigious HE institutions and the vocational degree courses may often require students to have passed the most prestigious Baccalaureate (maths and science) with distinction.

**Table 1. The French Educational System, from Secondary School Level to HE**



**Table 2. The Evolution of Student Numbers in the French HE Sector, 1990-2001**

Type of Institution	Number of Students					
	1990-1991	1995-1996	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Universities (including the IUT and other vocational training institutes)	1 182 784	1 485 583	1 424 395	1 419 635	1 426 939	1 404 041
- <i>Students in medical and general disciplines</i>	1 091 131	1 356 247	1 280 035	1 270 160	1 274 094	1 251 225
IUFM (Teacher Training Institutes)	16 500	86 068	81 602	81 981	80 184	84 009
IUT (University Institutes of Technology)	74 328	103 092	114 587	117 407	119 246	118 060
STS (Higher Technical Sections)	204 920	236 382	246 550	248 832	248 849	246 870
Health and social work schools (outside universities)	74 435	90 658	83 716	86 795	93 386	97 706
Engineering Schools and training programmes	57 653	79 780	87 795	91 182	95 208	98 196
- Within universities	17 325	26 244	29 773	32 068	33 599	34 729
- Outside universities	40 328	53 536	58 022	59 114	61 609	63 467
Commerce and Business Schools	19 472	28 342	34 598	38 798	42 030	45 237
<i>Grandes écoles</i> and their preparatory classes	68 392	72 497	74 012	73 781	73 834	74 162
<i>Ecoles normales supérieures</i> (elite institutions for teacher training)	2 675	3 051	3 246	3 209	3 159	2 968
Veterinary schools	2 073	1 985	2 206	2 320	2 634	2 569
Others schools and training programmes	105 481	121 288	118 454	122 105	128 440	138 544
<b>Total<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1 717 060</b>	<b>2 179 390</b>	<b>2 126 801</b>	<b>2 136 570</b>	<b>2 161 064</b>	<b>2 159 556</b>
- <i>Public sector</i>	1 492 997	1 939 530	1 874 326	1 872 990	1 882 860	1 870 742
- <i>Private sector</i>	224 063	239 860	252 475	263 580	278 204	288 814

Source (Theulière 2004, p. 8)

<sup>4</sup> Without counting twice the number of students enrolled in IUT or in other vocational training programmes within universities.

France has what is usually described as a “mass higher education system”<sup>5</sup>, characterized by a high level of diversity, both in terms of types of HE institutions and in terms of the routes of access into the different branches of the system.

The Higher Education (post-Baccalaureate) system has five main streams: universities (which account for HE in the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, law, medicine, pharmacy, etc.), Institutes of Technology (IUT), Higher Technical Sections (STS), Preparatory Classes for the *Grandes écoles* (CPGE) and Teacher Training Institutes (IUFM). To these, one should add a number of schools providing vocational training in a various specialized areas (engineering schools, business schools, social work schools, etc.). Access to these is selective and may require students to obtain a post-Baccalaureate qualification (such as the two-year DEUG [*Diplôme d’enseignement universitaire général*] degree) before being eligible for admission.

In 2002, there were 1870742 students in public HE institutions and only 288814 students in the private sector (Theulière 2004, p. 8).

Universities cannot legally select students at all. They have to admit all the students who apply to the first-year programme of study of any undergraduate degree course they offer. Any student with a Baccalaureate in any combination of subjects is entitled to a university place on the course of his/her choosing (Mallet et al. 2002, pp. 126-7).

Students are however restricted in their choice of university courses in so far as they are normally required to register at the university situated in the geographical area where they or their parents live. Although universities are not legally permitted to restrict access to first-year courses, it is common knowledge that an unofficial *numerus clausus* operates mostly on a “first-come, first-served” basis in some institutions and/or for some undergraduate courses (Charlot and Pottier 1990, p. 33). In addition to the general, free-access degree programs, universities can also offer selective and restricted vocational degree programs, usually at post-graduate level. In general, however, universities cannot control their student numbers.

Even if the entry requirements are lower at universities than in other sections of the HE system, selection tends to take place once students are registered at university. Up until the reforms linked to the Bologna process, the French HE system was organised in “cycles” and was characterised by a relatively high failure and/or drop-out rate within and particularly between “cycles” (Frickey and Primon 2003). Each “cycle” corresponds to one or more nationally recognised diploma or qualification and operates on a credit system. In order to obtain a DEUG (*Diplôme d’enseignement universitaire général*), the qualification that marks the end of the first “cycle”, a student had to obtain 32 national credits (about 800 hours of taught courses or 120 ECTS). In theory the DEUG represents two years of study, but in practice students may take up to four years to obtain this diploma (Mallet, Balme and Richard, 2002)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> This section is based on a report written by one of the authors for ATHENA Panel 1a. See Le Feuvre, N. (2001). Women's and Gender Studies in France. In Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies [ATHENA] (Ed.), *The Making of European Women's Studies*, Utrecht: Utrecht University Press: pp. 178-208.

<sup>6</sup> Only 45% of students manage to finish their first cycle within two years and only 70% finish it within three to five years.

Some disciplines, like medicine and pharmacy, have an examination at the end of the first year and access to the second year is limited by a national *numerus clausus*. The more the students advance in their studies the more selective the admission to the next level of studies gets. Therefore, free access to the first “cycle” of university studies does not mean that the students enrolled in a specific training program will leave it with a diploma in their pocket.

Once a student has a DEUG, he/she may decide to leave university either to look for a job or to undertake a further period of professional training at another HE institution. Alternatively, he/she may decide to stay on at the university and prepare a second “cycle”. In this case, a further year of study (fourteen national credits or 60 ECTS) is necessary to obtain a *Licence* (the minimum qualification required to undertake, amongst other things, teacher training at an IUFM). Yet another year of study leads the student to the *Maîtrise* level, which includes the production of an extended research dissertation, which marks the end of the second “cycle”. Following the *Maîtrise* student may be eligible for admission to the third “cycle” and can choose between a DEA (doctoral programme one-year foundation course) or a more vocational DESS. Both of these choices are subject to relatively strict selection procedures. The DEA operates as an entry requirement for registration as a doctoral student.

Since the Sorbonne-Bologna process was signed in 1998, France has attempted to align its HE qualifications with the European 3-5-8 model<sup>7</sup>. Although the two-year BTS, DUT and DEUG qualifications have not been scrapped, they are now supposed to be more fully integrated into a three-year degree programme. Another recent innovation is the creation of more vocational degrees (*Licences professionnelles*) within universities. These aim to improve the employment opportunities for students who have previously obtained a university diploma (DEUG) or who have successfully completed a two-year technological training course (BTS, DUT). The term “Master” has been adopted for all intermediate post-graduate degrees and it is the first qualification to be offered at both the universities and the “*Grandes écoles*”. The old DESS are now known as “Professional Masters” (*Master professionnel*) and the old DEA are known as “Research Masters” (*Master Recherche*). The “Doctorate” marks the successful completion of a PhD dissertation. In theory, students with a “Professional Masters” should now find it easier to access doctoral training programmes than was the case before the implementation of the Bologna process. Professional and work experience and periods of study or training in other European countries can count towards all these degree programmes.

The growth of higher education over the past twenty years has been spectacular: there are currently more than two million post-Baccalaureate students in France, of which almost two-thirds study in universities (Lixi and Theulière, 2004)<sup>8</sup>. The recent explosion in student numbers has been largely concentrated in the “middle-range” institutions, with relatively little change in the number of students entering the most prestigious levels of the HE sector, i.e. the *Grandes écoles* and their preparatory classes. However, since 1995, universities have seen their numbers decrease by about 8% per year, whereas the *Grandes écoles* and other HE institutions offering shorter vocational training courses have seen their student numbers marginally increase over the past ten years. For the *Grandes écoles*, this tendency has been stable from the beginning of the 1990s and since 1997 the annual growth rate has been around 4%. For Institutes of Technology (IUT) and Higher Technical Sections (STS) the number of

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<sup>7</sup> The 3-5-8 model refers to the number of years of study required to obtain different types of higher education qualifications: 3 for a BA or BSc degree; 5 for a Masters and 8 for a Doctorate.

<sup>8</sup> In 2002, the exact number of post-Baccalaureate students was 2159556 and the number of university students 1404014.

students enrolled rose from 280 000 in 1991 to more than 360 000 in 2002 (Theulière 2004, pp. 9-12).

Another recent tendency is the growing proportion of women amongst the post-Baccalaureate students in France. According to Clotilde Lixi and Maël Theulière, by 2001 women represented more than 55% of the total student population and almost 60% of all students registered at universities (Frickey and Primon 2002; Lixi and Theulière 2004, p. 23). Women students are however unequally represented among the different fields of study; they represent 71% of students in the social sciences and humanities [*Lettres et sciences humaines*], but only a minority of students in “hard” natural sciences (Lixi and Theulière 2004, p. 22).

The main HE institutions outside public sector universities are the *Grandes écoles*, the University Institutes of Technology (IUT) and Teacher Training Institutes (IUFM). The *Grandes écoles* stand at the pinnacle of the French HE system. They are specialised interdisciplinary institutions giving high-powered, vocational courses and access is severely limited by competitive examinations taken in a *lycée* or university, usually one or two years after the Baccalaureate. The majority grew up during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their mission was to train elites for the armed forces, public service, the higher ranks of teaching and research and private enterprise. They are grouped into four categories: commerce, veterinary medicine, sciences and humanities (Halls 1976, p. 221). Altogether the *Grandes écoles* represent little more than 10% of the students in HE institutions in France (Theulière 2004, p. 12).

The University Institutes of Technology (IUT) were set up in 1963 to provide short (two-year) degree courses to train higher-grade technicians for business and industry. To date, there are more than one hundred IUTs all around the country (Mallet *et al.* 2002, p. 136). In 2002, there were scarcely 360 000 students enrolled in the University Institutes of Technology and the Higher Technical Sections (STS) (Theulière 2004, p. 8). Other technical institutions that were integrated into the HE sector in 1968 were the *Ecoles nationales supérieures d'ingénieurs* (ENSI). They were described as the first French technological universities.

Most teacher training in France takes place in specialised institutions (IUFM) to which students may apply on a competitive basis, after obtaining a university degree [*Licence*]. Primary school teachers require a national diploma for which there is a *numerus clausus*, but once qualified they are guaranteed a tenured job by the State. The same is true for the lower echelons of secondary school teaching. In 2002, there were 84 000 students enrolled in the different teaching training institutes around the country (Theulière 2004, p. 8). However, training for the highest echelon of the teaching profession, the *Agrégation*, takes place in universities. In this case, students follow taught courses in their chosen discipline and sit the highly competitive national exams. The *Agrégation* is one of the most prestigious qualifications in the French HE system, it has high academic standards and offers tenured positions in the most prestigious secondary schools and a comparatively reduced teaching load. It also qualifies people to apply for permanent positions within HE institutions without having to complete a doctorate. The *Agrégation* is only available in the disciplines taught in secondary schools.

### 1.2.1. University structures and funding

There are 82 public sector universities in France, which account for over 65% of all HE students. If the students enrolled at the University Institutes of Technology are left out, university students represent 58% of the total student population. The universities offer degrees in the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, law, medicine, pharmacy, etc. University registration fees are low in comparison with other European countries: approximately 150 € a year for the first-year undergraduate course in the humanities or social sciences (Mallet et al. 2002, p. 137) and it is not unusual for students who fail to obtain a place on their chosen selective course at another HE institution to register with a local university for a year before re-submitting an application to their chosen selective institution the following year.

Public sector universities have the legal status of national scientific, cultural and professional establishments, which means that they have pedagogical, administrative and financial autonomy. However, the curricula for each of the national degree programmes offered at a given institution are examined every four years and have to be approved by a body of Ministry of Education advisors. Each institution may also offer local university diplomas or degrees, but receives no state funding for students enrolled on such courses. While the universities do have some autonomy, much of their resources come from the state and tenured academic staff are paid directly by the Ministry of Education and have civil servant status.

The French HE system is almost exclusively funded by the state, via the Ministry of Education. In 2002, the HE budget (BCES) was 17 810 M€, of which 14 018 M€ came from the State, the rest from other partners (regional councils) and from student fees (Ministère de l'Education nationale 2003).

**Table 3. Funding of HE Institutions in France, 2002**

<b>1. Funds Managed Directly by the State</b>	Value
Staff costs	5 222.70 M€
Student grants, student social services, etc.	1 580.01 M€
Running costs directly paid by the Ministry (central administration, national exams, etc.)	13.11 M€
Investments paid directly by the Ministry (buildings and maintenance)	170.50 M€
<b>2. Funds Managed Directly by the Universities</b>	
Funds allocated to the HE institutions to cover running costs	1 196.72 M€
Funds allocated directly to the HE institutions for investment and research	552.90 M€

Source: Commissariat général du Plan 2004, 54.

French HE institutions only have relative financial autonomy, since a large part of their budgets are beyond the direct control of the individual HE establishments. In 2002, the funding of the HE sector was as shown in Table 1. According to the Ministry's own calculations, in 1999, the contractualisation process still only accounted for approximately 10% of the annual budget (excluding research funding) of the universities (as compared to

just 5% in 1990). By 2002, this proportion had risen to 33% (Commissariat général du Plan 2004, p. 55).

Since the 1984 reform, which was first introduced only in relation to university-based research activities, before being extended to include teaching activities in 1989, each HE institution prepares and signs a four-year “contract” with the Ministry of Education (Mallet et al. 2002, p. 62; Musselin 1997). This “contract” between the state and the universities defines the activities that the university will undertake during this period and specifies the budget that the Ministry is willing to allocate to them. Universities are thus required to establish priorities in terms of course development, student life, links with industry, research, building and maintenance, international relations, library facilities, etc. Resources are allocated on the basis of student numbers and with regard to the specific priorities developed by particular institutions. The universities therefore have relative freedom in establishing their four-year budget and this process of contractualisation has reinforced the role of the university presidents.

The four-year contract is established on the basis of a two-fold internal and external evaluation procedure. The evaluation takes place approximately 1 year before the end of the previous contract when the results obtained are measured against the objectives set four years previously. In addition, the external assessment has been reinforced since the process of contractualisation was adopted and currently the results of these assessments are taken into account before the “habilitation” or accreditation decision is given by the state for a limited period of time.

Part of the university’s resources come from different public or private sector partners: local enterprises, research institutions, regional Councils (*collectivités territoriales*) or the European Union. There are differences in the wealth of the different types of universities. The state pays more per student to the natural sciences and medical universities than to those in the humanities and social sciences or even law and economics. These differences are further increased by the resources that the universities obtain through external research contracts, which pay more in the “hard” science and medical field than in the other disciplinary areas.

### *1.2.2. Disciplines and the National Council of Universities*

As we have already seen, the French higher education system is organized along strongly codified disciplinary lines. The disciplines constitute the key element not only for the organization of degree courses, but also for the structural definitions of the sector in terms of staff recruitment, evaluation and promotion procedures. The disciplines are much more relevant than the separation between disciplinary fields, such as the social sciences and humanities, for understanding the structural characteristics of the HE system in France.

In France, the Ministry of Education is responsible for defining the disciplines, through its institutional body, the *Conseil national des universités* – CNU [National Council of Universities] (Journal officiel de la République française 1992, 1999, 2003; Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche 2003b). In order for a new field of teaching and research to become a discipline in its own right, the Ministry of Education needs to publish a decree and, simultaneously, to set up a new CNU section. The CNU acts as the “gate-keeper” institution to academic jobs in France. Once a person has submitted and successfully passed a PhD or *Habilitation* thesis, they cannot apply for an academic position

until they have been “qualified” to so do by the relevant disciplinary (or, more rarely interdisciplinary) section of the CNU. The CNU is also responsible for academic promotions.

The CNU is composed of 11 subject areas that are in turn divided into sections (**see Appendix 2**). Each of these sections corresponds to a discipline. The Ministry recognises five main subject areas (*grandes disciplines*): 1) law, economics and management; 2) Humanities and Social Sciences; 3) Sciences and Technology; 4) Pharmacy; 5) Medicine and Dentistry. In the Alsace and Lorraine region of France, Theology is added to these.

These subject areas are then divided into disciplinary sub-groups. The following four sub-groups pertain to the Humanities and Social Sciences: 1) Law and political science; 2) economics and management; 3) literature and foreign languages; 4) social sciences (including philosophy and art). Within these sub-groups, an autonomous CNU section represents each discipline. For example, sociology is located in the subject area “humanities and social sciences”, within the sub-group IV and is identified as the disciplinary section number 19 “sociology and demography”.

Thus, most of the social sciences and humanities disciplines belong to the same disciplinary sub-group. There is, however, a clear separation between law, political science, economics and the rest of the social sciences and humanities. Some social science and humanities fields are also included in the sub-group entitled “interdisciplinary studies”. It is interesting to note that the “interdisciplinary studies” sub-group only covers five subject areas (out of a total of 117): Education Studies, Epistemology and History of Sciences and Techniques, Regional Cultures and Languages, Information and Communication Sciences, and Sports Studies (STAPS). Of these five interdisciplinary sub-groups, the first three potentially build some sort of bridge between the social sciences and humanities, whereas the latter two integrate the “hard” sciences and the social sciences or the “hard” sciences and the humanities.

The members of the CNU disciplinary sections are all tenured academics. Their peers elect two thirds of the members and the Ministry of Education nominates the remaining members. Half of the members are senior lectures (or full-time researchers) and half are full Professors (or full-time research directors), who must be “qualified” by the same CNU section that they represent. The elections are organised every four years on a national basis. Academic trade unions or independent groups can submit a list of candidates and the elections are based on proportional representation. In order to vote in the CNU elections, all academic staff have to register in advance for just one disciplinary section.

The CNU is a centralised decision-making body, attached to the Ministry of Education, which not only controls the disciplinary order in the French Higher Education system, but also manages the recruitment and promotion procedures for academic staff. This procedure is described in a more detail in chapter 5.

### 1.2.3. Evaluation of higher education institutions

The numerous national evaluation bodies either fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Research or relatively independent organizations (see **Appendix 4**).<sup>9</sup> Some of these bodies evaluate HE institutions as a whole and do not focus on particular disciplines, whereas others, like the National Council of Universities, are organised along disciplinary lines. The complex relationship between higher education and research in France is immediately visible in the objectives of the research evaluation boards, since they might assess research centres that belong to one of the national public research bodies (CNRS, INSERM, INED, INRA, etc.) and who employ full-time research staff (but who may also have some university-based academic staff members on a part-time basis) or they might be called upon to assess the so-called “mixed” research units [*Unité mixte de recherche – UMR*], which group together full-time research staff paid by one of the national public research bodies and university academics paid by the state (who do both teaching and research). Furthermore, the staff of the national public research bodies may also be called upon to do some teaching in universities, particularly at post-graduate level. In this case, they are paid for their teaching activities on top of their research salaries (whereas university academics receive no extra remuneration for taking on research activities on top of their teaching and administrative duties).

The evaluation bodies under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education are the *Comité national d'évaluation – CNE* [National Committee of Evaluation] and the *Conseil supérieur de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche – CNESER* [National Council of Higher Education and Research]. The CNE evaluates all the public scientific, cultural and professional establishments (EPCSCP), including the universities and other HE institutions, on the basis of their four-year contracts. The CNE also publishes a yearly report on Higher Education and Research and, once every four years, it sends a report on the higher education and research sectors to the President of the Republic. The CNESER is consulted by the government on higher education and research policy and is supposed to maintain “national cohesion” with regard to HE. The CNESER is also involved in evaluating the four-year contracts between the HE institutions and the Ministry and it makes statements on the allocation of the resources between different institutions.

Besides these central evaluation bodies, several other institutions are involved in policy negotiations for the HE and Research sectors. These middle range bodies are: the *Conférence des Présidents d'université – CPU* [Conference of University Vice-Chancellors], the *Conseil national des universités – CNU* [National Council of Universities] and the *Mission scientifique des universités – MSU* [University Scientific Mission]. Only the latter two are actually evaluating instances, as the CPU is a consultative structure.

The CPU is an advisory body to the Ministry of Education. Its role is to take position on any question concerning French universities or other HE institutions. It also represents these institutions outside France, at EU level, for example. The CPU includes six sub-committees. The first of these committees deals with teaching activities (degree and training programmes, continuous education, graduate employment, etc.) and the second works more specifically on

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<sup>9</sup> This section is based on Godelier, M. (2002). *L'état des sciences de l'Homme et de la société en France et leur rôle dans la construction de l'espace européen de la recherche*. Paris: La Documentation française. Rapport au Premier Ministre.

doctoral training and PhD programmes. The other committees cover issues such as: university funding, academic staff, student life and external relations. The sixth committee works exclusively in an advisory capacity on the legislative measures envisaged by the Ministry of Education or Research.

As we have already seen, the National Council of Universities (CNU) is in charge of the “qualification”, recruitment and promotion of academic staff. It therefore focuses on individuals and this disciplinary based procedure is explained in more detail in chapter 5 of this report. It is interesting to note at this point, however, that evaluation of senior lecturers or professors rarely takes their teaching or administrative activities into account. It is almost exclusively based on their research and publications record. This is partly because CNU members have no objective means of evaluating the teaching activities of academic staff, since there are no evaluation procedures in operation at university level.

The University Scientific Mission (MSU) is the last important piece of the French HE evaluation system. The MSU is “a hybrid structure, dependent on the Ministry of research and the Ministry of education” (Godelier 2002, p. 135). Its objective is to develop university-based research and doctoral training programs. One of its main missions is to prepare the four-year contracts in partnership with the universities and other HE institutions tied to the “contract” policy. This preparation demands the assessment of research units, doctoral training schools (*écoles doctorales*) and their programmes and the various other scientific projects of the HE institutions. This work is conducted in collaboration with the managing staff of the universities and leads to a financial proposal for the four years to come, specified by units, schools and projects. In order to establish the four-year contract, the MSU uses two types of evaluation procedures; for the “mixed” research units (UMR) associated with the CNRS or another public research body, the MSU simply replicates the assessment results given by these bodies; whereas the university-based research units are evaluated by two experts chosen by the MSU and selected from a public list.

This evaluation body is important in a sense that it confirms the existence of an independent research activity carried out by the academic staff in the universities without any connexions whatsoever to the national public research bodies (EPST). These research activities are assessed and therefore nationally recognised. This is particularly important in the fields of study that are under-represented within the CNRS or the other EPST. The MSU assessment has also direct consequences for development and funding of university-based research. Besides these “part-time” research activities carried out by the independent units, the universities also count a large number of the “mixed” research units affiliated to the CNRS or to another national public research body. As we have already seen, specific assessment bodies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Research or the CNRS evaluate these units.

### **I.3. Research institutions in the social sciences and humanities**

Contrary to the situation in many other EU member states, universities do not have a monopoly over public research activities in France. They share this activity with a large number of public sector establishments involved in particular thematic areas of research (Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 13) Thus, research activities in France are divided between different types of public sector organisations. On the one hand, national public research bodies employ full-time research staff and other professional groups, such as research technicians, administrative staff, etc. On the other hand, university-based academics have the dual status of *enseignant-chercheur* [teacher-researcher]. On top of their

teaching and administrative duties, they are expected to participate in research activities and may be members of various kinds of research units, although they are under no obligation to join a research collective and, in some disciplines, it is quite usual for university academics to carry out their research activities on an individual basis. However, since research funding is usually allocated to research units rather than to individuals, those disciplines that require some kind of research infrastructure are more likely to be organised around formal, collective research structures.

### 1.3.1. Research structures

#### 1) Higher education research institutions

These include universities and the *Grandes écoles*. They can be divided into two sub-categories:

- a) The 200 or so HE establishments that are directly responsible to the Ministry of Education, the so-called EPSCP - Public sector scientific, cultural and professional establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel*], these include: 85 universities, 12 Institutes or Schools outside universities, 14 national Institutes (such as the *Collège de France*), 14 French establishments abroad and 4 *Ecoles normales supérieures*.
- b) Numerous engineering schools, some of which are autonomous, others administratively part of an EPSCP.

Only the first three categories of the EPSCP staff are directly involved in research activities (see Table 4). The research staff potential in the EPSCP is therefore about 51500 tenured academics, of whom 82% are members of officially recognised research units, centres or laboratories: about 18800 of these belong to “mixed” research centres with the CNRS (see below), 1800 to “mixed” centres with other public research bodies and 21528 to university-based centres that are recognised by the Ministry of Research. It is generally considered that tenured academics spend 50% of their working time on research (the other 50% being split between teaching and administrative duties). To this potential, one should also add the 64170 students who are currently registered for a PhD. This brings us to a total of 106000 persons directly involved in university-based research activities, or 85000 “full-time equivalent” persons.

**Table 4. Research Personnel in the EPSCP, 1999-2000**

	Numbers	%
University Professors	18734	22.9
University Senior Lecturers	32711	40.0
University Assistant Lecturers <sup>10</sup>	1460	1.8
Medical Professors, Lecturers, Assistants	4118	5.0
Secondary school teachers on secondment to an EPSCP	13186	16.1
Language Assistants	1027	1.3
Fixed-Term Research and Teaching Staff (usually PhD students)	10573	19.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>81809</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 14

<sup>10</sup> This category of tenured academics is currently being phased out.

**Table 5. Disciplinary Backgrounds of Personnel in the EPSCP, 2001**

	% of EPSCP Research Personnel
Astronomy and Universe Sciences	3%
Biology, Health, Medicine / Life Sciences	16%
Chemistry	7%
Computing and Related Sciences	14%
<b>Humanities</b>	<b>28%</b>
Mathematics	6%
Physics	7%
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>17%</b>
Other	2%
Total	100%

Source: Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 15

## 2) Public research bodies

The second category of public sector research institutions is composed of three different sub-groups:

- a) The nine different EPST - Public Sector Scientific and Technological Establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère scientifique et technologique*]
- b) About 15 different EPIC – Public Sector Industrial and Commercial Establishments [*Etablissements publics à caractère industriel et commercial*]
- c) Several research foundations, almost exclusively in the field of health and medicine

Of the nine EPST, the CNRS [*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*] is by far the largest, since it accounts for about two-thirds of research staff in public sector establishments outside universities (see Table 6). The CNRS covers approximately the same disciplinary fields as university-based research, with the exception of medicine (which is covered by the INSERM). However, CNRS research staff are spread out rather differently between the disciplines than university-based research staff: under 20% work in the social sciences and humanities, whereas the “hard” sciences account for over 50% of the CNRS research staff (as against 37% of university-based research personnel). The CNRS funds 141 autonomous research centres, 113 associate centres and 1002 “mixed” centres (i.e. co-funded with other EPST or EPSCP institutions).

Within the social sciences and the humanities, public research institutions thus employ approximately 29000 employees, of whom 25300 are full or part-time researchers or research directors and 3898 are administrative and technical staff (ITA and IATOS) (Godelier 2002, p. 13). These public-sector employees work in different research units, which are either specific to a particular national public research body (*Unité propre de recherché - UPR*) or are attached to a particular university, or, in the case of the “mixed” research units (UMR) are attached to both a national public research body and to a particular university or EPSCP.

The CNRS has a Department of Social Sciences and Humanities (*Département des sciences de l'Homme et de la Société*), which covers the 453 research units working in this field. Of these units, 26 are autonomous CNRS research units with full-time researchers employed by

the CNRS; 355 are “mixed” or associated research units combining full and part-time researchers who may be employed either by the CNRS or by the universities and other HE institutions; 71 are research groups (*groupement de recherché - GDR*), i.e. “virtual” research networks set up by the CNRS to foster interdisciplinary collaboration around a particular theme.

**Table 6. Research Personnel in the EPST, 2001**

	Research Staff	Administrative and Technical Staff
CNRS Centre national de la recherche scientifique	11328	14641
INSERM Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale	1056	2845
INRA Institut national de la recherche agronome	1680	6677
IRD Institut français pour le développement	758	803
INRIA Institut national de recherche en informatique et automatique	315	476
INRETS Institut national de la recherche sur les transports et leur sécurité	144	262
LCPC Laboratoire central des ponts et chaussées	123	441
CEMAGREF Centre national du machinisme agricole, du génie rural, des eaux et des forêts	76	536
INED Institut national d'études démographiques	50	107
Total	16430	26788

Source: Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 16

**Table 7. Disciplinary Backgrounds of CNRS Personnel, 2001**

	% of CNRS Personnel
Astronomy and Universe Sciences	3%
Biology, Health, Medicine / Life Sciences	30%
Chemistry	14%
Computing and Related Sciences	10%
<b>Humanities</b>	<b>12%</b>
Mathematics	3%
Physics	15%
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>7%</b>
Other	-%
Total	100%

Source: Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 15

In addition to these structures, there are 1038 independent university research units in the social sciences and humanities (607 in the social sciences and 431 in the humanities), 24 research units with a social science focus within the INSERM national public medical research body and six more similar units within other national public research institutes.

There is a quite clear division of labour between the universities and the national public research bodies within particular disciplines. On the one hand, some disciplines only continue to exist because the CNRS supported their creation and development. On the other hand, the CNRS plays only a very minor role as far as research activities in the traditional disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, such as French or foreign literature or art studies (Godelier 2002, p. 14). Thus the CNRS and the universities often act in complementary ways. According to Maurice Godelier: “when the CNRS plays a determinant role for a given field of study, universities play an insignificant role; when the CNRS plays an important role, universities play a secondary role; when in turn the CNRS plays a secondary role, universities play an important role and when the CNRS plays no role at all, universities have the determinant role” (Godelier 2002, p. 15). The CNRS plays a determinant role for disciplines like anthropology, some thematic areas of sociology, philosophy, history, musicology, etc. It has an important role in linguistics, the sociology of work and organizations, archaeology, cognitive anthropology, history of law and some fields of political sciences, etc. The CNRS plays a secondary role in research focusing on literature and the arts and it is largely absent from education studies. Conversely, universities play a determinant role in promoting research activities in the history of western societies, philosophy, geography, etc.

The CNRS is currently in the process of reducing the number of its specific research units (either by bringing existing units together in a federative structure or by disbanding existing units) and multiplying the “mixed” units, in association with other institutions. Another recent trend within the CNRS has been to decrease the total number of the research units in the social sciences and humanities, by grouping small or medium sided research centres into larger units (Godelier 2002, p. 14). Universities are thus accounting for an increasing proportion of the public sector research activities in France and the so-called “mixed” research units are far more numerous than the autonomous units within the CNRS. It could be claimed that university-based research is more flexible and more successful in integrating young researchers and doctoral students. However, there is still a strong idea of a hierarchy between the different research units and there is no doubt that the full CNRS research units or the ones associated with the CNRS occupy the top positions in this hierarchy.

In the same vein, efforts have been made to group the different research units on a single university campus (or even in different universities in the same town) under the same roof. For this purpose several *Maisons des Sciences de l'Homme - MSH* [Mankind Science Houses], have been created all around the country. This aims to develop cooperation between the research teams located in the same geographical area and to promote more interdisciplinary research activities.

However, as in the case of the interdisciplinary universities, bringing discipline-based research units under a single roof is by no means a guarantee of them working together. In order to encourage inter-disciplinarity, the national network of the MSH has funded a series of interdisciplinary research programmes, which also aim to foster exchange and collaboration between the MSH around the country.

### *1.3.2. The disciplines in research activities*

Thus, although research activities in France still tend to be mainly discipline based, there is undoubtedly more cross-disciplinary collaboration in research than there has been to date in teaching. As Godelier has stressed, the social science and humanities research units often benefit, financially speaking, from working within the same institutions as the “hard” sciences: “it seems that the way the hard sciences are organised, the budgets they get, the research contracts they obtain from local authorities and other partners, serve in a way to carry the research groups specialised in the social sciences and humanities” (Godelier 2002, p. 14). This observation is all the more interesting since current policy measures aim more to grouping the social sciences and humanities together in specific research centres than to promoting inter-disciplinarity across the “hard” / “soft” divide.

### *1.3.3. Evaluation of research in the social sciences and humanities*

The Ministries of Research and Education are the main funding bodies for public research in France. In 2003, the research budget (BCRD) was 9171 M€ compared to 9031 M€ in 2002 (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale 2003). The state attributed 879 M€ to the social sciences and humanities, 3,6% more than the previous year. More than half of the research in the social sciences and humanities is conducted in public funded research institutes (EPIC), which in turn largely contributed to the research budget.

As we have seen, the main financing body is the CNRS, which contributes 39% of the total budget. The other public research bodies accounted for 15% of the budget (127M€). Over 40% of the research funding comes from the Ministry of Research, of which 22% is paid in the form of direct support for university-based research activities and doctoral training programmes.

Just as the CNU defines the disciplinary boundaries for the HE sector, so the *Comité national de la recherche scientifique – CN* [National Committee of Scientific Research] delimits the disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields for the research sector. This national body is an integrated part of the CNRS and it has two main missions: an advisory role on research policy and an evaluation role in relation to research activities and researchers.

The National Committee is composed of several elements and combines diverse tasks which are divided between different councils and committees in the HE sector. It has 40 disciplinary sections, each of which has 21 members, one interdisciplinary section and 5 interdisciplinary commissions. Eleven sections (section 21 and sections 31-40) come under the remit of the CNRS Social Sciences and Humanities department, as do two interdisciplinary commissions: section 45 entitled “Cognition, language, information technology: natural and artificial systems” and section 46 “Continental environment: logics and functioning of the ecosystems”. The eleven CNRS sections focus less on a single discipline than the sections in the CNU classification, but they are still tightly connected to disciplinary structures and make only timid connexions to neighbouring disciplines. For example, section 32 “Ancient and Medieval Worlds” includes subjects areas like archaeology, history, languages, religion and the arts, whereas section 36 “Sociology – Norms and Rules” includes subjects areas such as sociology, demography, political science and some aspects of law, etc.

With the exception of the interdisciplinary section 41, which has a purely advisory role with regard to research management, the sections are responsible for the recruitment and assessment of researchers within their own disciplinary group. The National Committee also has a Scientific Council in charge of the general orientations of the research policy and of the division of the resources between the departments. Furthermore, each department of the CNRS has its own scientific council composed of 24 members, half elected and half nominated. There are eight departments in the CNRS. In addition, the National Committee includes six committees responsible for the specific research programmes. All in all, the National Committee is composed of almost 1000 persons (Godelier 2002, p. 134).

The main research evaluation boards are the National Committee for Research Evaluation (CNER) and the Higher Council for Research and Technology (CRST), which fall under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Research, and the National Committee of Scientific Research of the CNRS (Goujon and Casella 2002). In addition to these, the research conducted in the independent university units has its own assessment bodies and procedures as explained in the previous section.

The CNER evaluates the results of the national research and development (R&D) policy. It assesses research organisations and programmes on its own initiative or at the request of the Ministry (Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003). The CNER is largely independent of the Ministry of Research, but it has very limited resources in terms of budget and staff. The Higher Council for Research and Technology (CRST) is the main research policy consultative body. It also makes an annual research policy evaluation statement. It has to approve the annual research and development budget, the creation of any new research institutes (EPST) and all national research programmes. The Ministry also consults the CRST on the annual report made by the National Committee of Evaluation (CNE). The Ministry may also consult the CRST on matters such as reforms affecting the employment conditions of research staff or the status of research institutions. The CRST is composed of representatives of economic, social and cultural life as well as representatives of the main trade unions and the regional committees of research and development.

The National Committee (CN) of Scientific Research, integrated into the CNRS, has several missions. It plays a role in the CNRS recruitment procedure as it evaluates the candidates applying for tenured positions within the CNRS and ranks them in order of preference. However, the CN does not actually recruit researchers; it is the CNRS who does this through its disciplinary sections. The National Committee also assesses the scientific activities of the researchers and therefore controls their careers. Furthermore, it examines the propositions for the creation of new research units and evaluates the existing research units' activities. The CN has the power to maintain or disband a research unit and its activities or to transform the unit. The National Committee also evaluates the different priority programmes launched by the CNRS and makes funding proposals for these.

## II. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFINITIONS OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Structural divisions between the social sciences and humanities are probably less relevant for understanding the French HE system than the weight of the disciplines in its organisation. A clear distinction between the social sciences and the humanities only really survives as the frame for organising university departments (Godelier, 2002 p. 6) and the term “Human and Social Sciences” [*Sciences humaines et sociales - SHS*]<sup>11</sup> is most frequently used to refer to all the “soft” sciences in France.

Thus, the notion of “Human Sciences” corresponds to the oldest disciplines such as philosophy, classical languages (Greek and Latin), history or literature, whereas the term “Social Sciences” relates to the more recent disciplines like sociology, Geography, political science, economics, etc. According to Godelier, it is obvious that: “All the Humanities are Social Sciences and all the Social Sciences and Humanities are historical sciences in a double sense: they all help us to understand the past and present realities of human experiences” (Godelier 2002, p. 7).

As we shall see below, the structural classifications used in the French HE system do not really divide the humanities and social sciences, but correspond to the disciplinary boundaries within this broader category.

### II.1. Higher education

The Ministry of Education uses a six-fold system to describe universities and University Institutes of Technology (IUT), according to the fields of study they offer (see **Appendix 1**) and uses this classification to define the nationally-defined staff-student ratios: 1) Law and Economics (1:31); Humanities and Social Sciences (1:29); Interdisciplinary without medicine (1:26); Interdisciplinary with medicine (1:19.5); Natural and Health Sciences (1:12) and, finally, the National Polytechnic Institutions (INP) and the University Institutes of Technology (Mallet et al. 2002, p. 372).

This classification is the result of the 1968 higher education reforms, where the old faculties and schools were reorganised into modern university departments. Most of the universities set up during this period simply reproduced the previous disciplinary boundaries, by combining two old faculties, for example. The most frequent combinations are the natural sciences and medicine or law and medicine. It is much less frequent to find law and the humanities within the same institution. Contrary to these older universities, almost all the universities formed after the 1970s are interdisciplinary and they now represent the majority in France (Mallet et al. 2002, p. 372).

However, in practice, this often means that the different disciplines are simply housed under the same roof. It does not necessarily mean that there is true cooperation between them or that they offer joint degree courses. It is also interesting to note that the Ministry’s classification is sometimes quite arbitrary and several universities within the same town can sometimes offer courses in the same discipline. For example, both Toulouse I (a law and economics

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<sup>11</sup> The rather sexist term of “*Sciences de l’Homme et de la société*” [Sciences of Mankind and Society] is unfortunately still used in many French publications and research institutions.

university) and Toulouse II (a humanities and social science university) offer courses in sociology, although only Toulouse II grants a full degree in this discipline (see **Appendix 3**). Furthermore, these universities may even share their academic staff as some teachers may well undertake activities in both institutions.

As shown in **Appendix 3**, any given discipline may be located in different departments or faculties, depending on the institution where it is taught. The universities we used as case studies demonstrate the unsystematic way in which different disciplines may find themselves linked together by the internal administrative structures of the universities. In some cases, the number of faculties or departments is small and each of these is interdisciplinary to a certain extent (e.g. Perpignan, Versailles Saint Quentin en Yvelines). In other cases, each discipline or group of similar disciplines may have its own departmental or faculty structure (e.g. Bordeaux III, Toulouse I).

The University of Toulouse II provides an interesting example of the internal decision-making processes that lead to the variety in the internal organisation of disciplines in each institution. Up until 2000, there were 13 “departments” in this university, each corresponding to a single disciplinary field or to a group of “sister” disciplines (e.g. sociology and ethnology). Under recommendations from the Ministry of Education, it was decided to decentralise some of the student administration procedures to a more local level. Given the staffing levels at the University, this was impossible to accomplish without bringing several disciplines under a single administrative structure.

Negotiations about which discipline should be re-grouped with which other disciplines lasted for over two years. In the end, final decisions were based more on administrative considerations (the number of students registered) than on purely academic criteria, since it was felt that each of the new “Faculties” (*Unités d’enseignement et de recherche – UFR*) should have about the same number of staff and students. Thus, geography and history, two disciplines that are considered to be very close to each other in the French academic system, notably because the teaching degrees and qualifications in this field always cover both disciplines, were separated into two different administrative structures, despite the fact that students registered to take a degree in history are still encouraged to follow courses in geography...

## **II.2. Research funding**

As it should have become clear from the preceding sections, research staff in the public research bodies and in universities are directly paid by the state – they are civil servants. As such, they are free to develop research activities of their choice, within the limits set by the annual budget allocated to their research centre or unit. However, additional funding may be obtained through the various research programmes that may be funded by the public research bodies, by the ministries of education and research or by other public or private sector initiatives.

For example, since 1997, the CNRS has initiated about 20 different interdisciplinary research programmes which account for approximately 7% of the budget allocated to its autonomous or associated research centres. In 2000-2004, there were 7 new CNRS research programmes, covering the following thematic areas: Social Issues in Life Sciences (basically research on ethics); Information, Communication and Knowledge; Environment; Energy and Sustainable

Development; Nanosciences and Nanotechnology; Astrosciences. As this list shows quite clearly, few of these programmes are open to research projects from the humanities and social sciences.

In addition to the CNRS research programmes, in 2001 the Ministry of Research allocated 122M€ to a series of so-called Concerted Incentive Action Programmes (*Actions concertées incitatives – ACI*) in a number of trans-disciplinary fields: health sciences, information technology, engineering, astronomy and the humanities and social sciences. This programme aimed at supporting university-based and other public sector research bodies in developing multi-disciplinary and collaborative research projects. The programme provides funding for research and for doctoral training (PhD grants and post-doctoral stipends). Some parts of these programmes are reserved for “young researchers” (usually aged below 35, although this age limit may be extended to 40 in the life and social sciences), who submit their own individual research projects under each of the programme headings. According to a recent research evaluation report, support for “young researchers” represents about 10% of the ACI budget and about 1% of the CNRS programme budget (Comité national d'évaluation de la recherche [CNER] 2003, p. 43).

French academics may also apply for additional research funding under the EU R&D programmes or under specific private-sector industrial or business funded research programmes. No systematic data is available on the number of public-sector research bodies funded in this way. More detailed information is, however, available about the role of regional councils in funding various research projects. Each regional council in France negotiates a four-yearly “State-Region Development Plan”, which usually includes a research dimension.

According to its particular political priorities, the region can put out calls for research on questions of local interest. In some cases, these programmes require collaboration between regionally based public research bodies and local business communities. The selection criteria usually include scientific excellence, socio-economic impact and local development issues. Most of the regional research funding is usually allocated to the “hard” sciences and to projects with a direct impact on the local economy. It has been rather difficult for research centres in the humanities and social sciences to access this particular form of funding. However, under the decentralisation processes currently being implemented in France, it is likely that the regional councils will play an increasingly important role in defining the research agenda in years to come (Filâtre 2003; Filâtre and Manifet 2003).

### III. THE DISCIPLINISATION PROCESS IN FRANCE

There is no official, formal procedure for the creation of a new “discipline” within the French HE sector. Or, if such a procedure does exist, no one working in HE or at the Ministry of Education was able to describe it to us<sup>12</sup>. In fact, with the exception of the old ministerial decrees stating that a new CNU section has been formed, we were unable to identify or locate any official documents on the disciplinisation process or on the creation of a new discipline. The negotiations that take place before the final decision to create a new discipline rarely give rise to official documents and, in any case, due to lack of space, the Ministry only keeps files for a period of 10 years and all the existing CNU sections were created before 1995.

It is interesting to note that although the CNU has been subject to a number of reforms throughout the 1990s, the disciplinary order has remained intact. Significant changes have occurred in the rules concerning the selection of the CNU members, the composition and number of its members, the adoption of proportional representation in CNU elections. During each reform, the disciplinary divisions of the CNU sections have been questioned, sometimes the titles of a few sections have been changed, but the overall framework has been left unchanged.

Nevertheless, the creation of a new discipline would seem to be preceded by long and complex processes of negotiation between Ministry of Education representatives and those academic staff who are proposing this creation. This bottom-up process can emerge from a wide range of theoretical or practical concerns. Often a new discipline is born out of recurrent battles among the specialists of an existing CNU section, who disagree over some particular theoretical or methodological aspect of their discipline or over the criteria used to qualify, recruit and promote members of the discipline.

This would seem to have been the case for the CNU sub-section n° 71 called “Information and Communication Sciences” which was created as the result of internal struggles between the members of the already existing sub-section 27. This section was composed of computer scientists and applied mathematicians. With the growing demand for computer scientists to teach in universities, a number of new lectureships and professorships were created under section 27. This increase in resources led to conflict about the selection and promotion criteria of staff in this field, the mathematicians insisting that a strong CV in pure mathematics be used to select the future members of the field. The computer scientists felt that, since their field of expertise was now the driving force of the field, proof of expertise in computer sciences should be the main selection criteria. Since the mathematicians held a majority position within section 27 of the CNU, the computer scientists’ relative lack of recognition led to the creation of a national lobby, with a view to challenging the existing disciplinary categories. This lobby was successful in obtaining support from the Ministry for the creation of a new interdisciplinary CNU section specialised in computer sciences. Such support was obviously linked to political concerns about France’s position as a nation in the field of information technology, seen as a major economic concern at the time.

However, not all the creations of a new discipline necessarily stem from disagreements within an existing CNU section. A new discipline can also be born as a result of specialists from

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<sup>12</sup> In the course of this project, we interviewed several Ministry of Education representatives by telephone and also contacted the main academic trade unions. None of our interviewees could provide a detailed description of the formal, official procedure for creating a new discipline.

neighbouring disciplines who have a common interest to defend or who share an object of study or use the same methodological approaches, coming together to defend their interests.

Driven by various motives, academics organise themselves in working groups or lobbies where they first debate the need for a new disciplinary section. The discussions can take place within the existing structures, like the CNU or local recruitment boards (*Commissions de spécialistes*) or during more informal gatherings, such as academic conferences. Once the lobby is formed and its members agree on the priorities to be defended, the academics submit their request to the Ministry of Education or to its relevant administrative services. The Ministry in turn consults other influential academics and specialists in the field. This passage from local to central level and back to local level clearly reflects the two-dimensional decision-making process at work in the French HE system, described by Musselin (Musselin 2001). On the one hand, academic discipline based groups have the power to initiate change and the capacity for autonomous action. On the other hand, and despite this relative freedom, they are dependent on the centralised state decision-making bodies that can either validate or invalidate their demands. The Ministry is dependent on the academic community, both as a source of change and as a source of expertise on the changes envisaged. At the end of the day, however, it is the Ministry who creates and defines the disciplines and in this sense the autonomy of academics is quite limited in the highly centralised French system.

The largely unregulated character of the disciplinisation process may offer the possibility for collective lobbies to take the initiative to create new disciplines and to set up new CNU sections. If the lobby is lucky enough to be heard by the Ministry of Education and if its own objectives happen to be compatible with the Ministry's current concerns, the strategy may well prove to be successful. However, the success of such a strategy obviously depends on the power relation within a given field and on the ability and the strength of the lobby to draw as much attention as possible to its cause. It is also a question of timing: an unsuccessful attempt to create a new discipline at one point in time might be warmly welcomed some years later, if it fits into the policy objectives of the day.

It is obvious that networking plays a strong role in this decision-making process. Not all the lobbies manage to catch the Ministry's ear and the different lobbies have diverse means of putting pressure on politicians and administrative staff. It is certainly easier to get negotiations started if the lobby members already have contacts in the central boards of the HE or research sectors. These "inside contacts" may also offer valuable advice and knowledge on the way to conduct a successful lobby and may help to clarify the quite obscure rules of the disciplinisation process.

Thus, the rather opaque character of the official disciplinisation process provides ample space for bottom-up initiatives. However, this loose framework may also turn out to be a severe obstacle for less powerful lobbies, particularly those deprived of direct access to the decision-making bodies at the Ministry of Education. This relatively flexible system means that any changes to the disciplinary order will depend more on the political agenda of the day than on the scientific arguments put forth. It also hampers interdisciplinarity overall, since, as we have already seen, the disciplines continue to weigh extremely heavily on the HE sector as a whole in France.

## IV. CASE STUDIES IN DISCIPLINISATION

In this section, we present one “successful” (Education Studies) and one “unsuccessful” (Gender Studies) example of transforming an inter-disciplinary field of teaching and research into a new, fully-fledged “discipline”.

### VI.1. Education Studies

As a field of teaching and research, Education Studies has history that can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This field existed within the French HE system long before receiving recognition as official academic discipline. The expression “*science de l’éducation*” was apparently first used in 1812 by Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris in his book entitled *L’esprit de la methode d’éducation de Pestalozzi* and was further developed in 1816 in his book *Esquisse on comparative education*. The author’s objective was to invent education studies as a science and to see pedagogy included in the classification of human knowledge.

However, when Education Studies were first included in the university curriculum in 1883, they developed in a rather different direction. The long institutionalization process did not start with the creation of full professorships for experts in Education Studies, but rather with a series of optional courses in a number of humanities faculties. According to Jacqueline Gautherin, fourteen courses in Education Studies or pedagogy were created between 1883 and 1914 and most of them were taught by professors from other fields, such as philosophy (Gautherin 1991). The first optional courses were given at the Sorbonne, in Paris, followed, in 1884, by other universities like Bordeaux, Nancy, Lyon and Montpellier, then Toulouse (1887), Rennes (1907) and Caen (1910). At the Sorbonne, the optional courses led to the creation of a chair, in 1887, and this became the very first academic position directly in Education Studies.

However, the initiative for the optional courses did not really come from the professors themselves, or from their students. During the 1883-1884 period, which set the foundations for this new discipline, these initiatives came principally from the central state administration and their objectives were clearly defined in relation to the national system of primary and secondary education. The courses were supposed to prepare primary and the secondary school teachers for their future professional tasks and they came in addition to the general teacher training programme. This “preparation” did not aim to transform educational practices and involved little analysis of educational institutions. In fact, the courses had a more ideological objective; they were to justify and defend the educational politics of the day and to reinforce the social cohesion of the nation around secular instruction.

The newly institutionalized Education Studies did not survive the First World War. They were gradually eliminated from the faculties. For example, under the influence of Emile Durkheim and his followers, the Sorbonne chair was eventually made into a professorship in sociology. According to Eric Plaisance and Gerard Vergnaud, this fading was partly due to the fact that new disciplines, like sociology and psychology, gradually emerged as competing areas of expertise (Plaisance and Vergnaud 2001). The other reason for the disappearance of pedagogy from university courses was its low esteem among academics in the humanities. Pedagogy was not considered to be a legitimate object of scientific research; it was reserved for teacher training institutions and seen more as a practice than as an academic field. Thus, Education

Studies became at best a secondary side-activity of sociology and found little institutional support in French universities.<sup>13</sup> Even though the courses in Education Studies disappeared in their initial format, some sporadic teaching still survived in some HE institutions. Thus in 1920 the Sorbonne created an “Institute of Pedagogy” and, in 1945, a “Practical School of Psychology and Pedagogy” was set up in Lyons. However, these training programs did not lead to an official diploma, since up until the 1960s there was no official recognition of Education Studies as a discipline and no degree available in the field.

Things started to change at the beginning of the 1960s and the academics involved in the field began to prepare collective projects around a specific degree in Education Studies. The first attempt was formulated in Bordeaux, in 1962 by Jean Château who suggested the creation of a specific curriculum leading to a *Licence* [degree] in “pedagogy”. The content of this degree was strongly oriented towards psychology and included four subject areas: the history of educational institutions, child and adolescent psychology, the philosophy of education and pedagogy. This proposal was not radically different from the training programmes that already existed in the field of pedagogy. It did not, for example, include any sociological or economic study of education, and its novelty rested mainly on the fact that a specific degree was still lacking in France at that time. The new degree was to be offered by the psychology department of the Humanities faculty, although it was mainly aimed at primary school teachers and other education professionals.

Jean Château invited his peers to discuss this project. A couple of months later, Maurice Debesse proposed another project in Paris. This put less stress on psychology and was aimed at a wider public, including not only teachers, but also school psychologists, headmasters, schools inspectors, etc. Neither of these proposals was successful. In Paris, the philosophy and psychology sections of the Sorbonne rejected the proposed degree programme, which never received ministerial backing. The fact that the collective efforts focussed on a specific degree in Education Studies shows how the academics’ mentalities were changing at that time: the field was ready and asking for a new disciplinary status, with its own specific curriculum, whereas the humanities faculties had a long tradition of resisting attempts to modify their curricula<sup>14</sup>. This setback did not bring to an end the ongoing discussion and debates among the peers and the proposal was not abandoned for good.

The institutional conditions had changed quite radically by the mid-1960s. The Fouchet HE reform of 1966 triggered off a wide debate in France on the higher education course structure. It provided the opportunity for more frequent consultations with the Ministry and the time was now more fertile for the creation of new disciplines. The “old” projects elaborated by Jean Château, Maurice Debeses and Gaston Mialaret were reworked and their content and student population were redefined.

This time the diploma was no longer in “pedagogy” but in “psycho pedagogy” and this addition of psychology gave a new scientific legitimacy to the project. The Psychology section at the Sorbonne formulated an official request for a *Licence* in psycho pedagogy and another concerning a *Maîtrise* (Master) in the same discipline followed.

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<sup>13</sup> In 1902, a Council member of the Humanities Faculty at the Sorbonne used the expression “province de la sociologie” [province of sociology] to describe the field of pedagogy.

<sup>14</sup> This was notably the case with attempts to set up autonomous degrees in sociology or in psychology. These disciplines were seen as mere appendices to philosophy, the only legitimate discipline recognised in the field within the humanities faculties of the era.

These new requests received a more positive response from the Ministry of Education. In November 1966, the Ministry set up a special committee with the objective of creating a curriculum in pedagogy in French universities. The members of the commission (which included Château, Debeses and Mialaret) decided to call the new degree a *Licence* in “Education Studies”, instead of “pedagogy” (or psycho pedagogy), as suggested by the Ministry. In so doing, they wanted to mark a clear distinction between this new academic discipline (with its own scientific research practices and theoretical approaches) and any other training programme that might be based on the concrete practices of primary or secondary school teachers. There was an obvious effort to differentiate Education Studies from the traditional field of pedagogy. According to Gaston Mialaret, the committee members also thought that the notion of “pedagogy” might meet with more resistance from academics in the humanities faculties and preferred to follow the Swiss example and adopt the term “Education Studies” instead (Fromont et al. 2000, p. 17).

In 1967, in the context of a general reform of the French HE sector and its training programs, a Ministry of Education decree officially created a national university curriculum leading to a *Licence* and to a Masters in “Education Studies”. The same year, the degree programme was introduced in the humanities faculties of three universities (Paris, Bordeaux, Caen). Throughout the 1970s, degrees were set up in eight other universities across the country and in the 1980s five more degree programmes were initiated (Plaisance and Vergnaud 2001).

It is important to stress that, simultaneously with the creation of the first degree programmes, an “Education Studies” section of the Consulting Committee of Universities (*Comité consultative universitaire - CCU*), the precursor of the CNU, was set up, thus confirming and validating the new disciplinary status of the field. Up until that date, the philosophy section had controlled the recruitment and promotion selection procedures for the academics that had specialized in “Education Studies”.

At present, the field of “Education Studies” has its own CNU disciplinary section (n° 70), which is responsible for the qualification, recruitment and promotion of its academics. Over the past five years, the section has received an average of 300 applications for Senior Lectureship qualifications and about 45 applications for full Professorship qualifications each year. In 2000, 37% of the Senior Lectureship candidates and 30% of the Professorship candidates were successfully qualified in this CNU section (Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, pp. 33-4).

#### *IV.1.1. Education Studies at undergraduate and postgraduate level*

Specific degrees and departments in Education Studies were thus first created by ministerial decree in 1967. Since that date, the number of Education Studies departments has more than tripled in France: in 1976, there were only eight independent departments, whereas in 2000 their number had increased to 29 (Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, pp. 44-5). These departments vary in size: the largest has more than 1500 students, the smallest less than 140 students. In total, the departments located in the Parisian universities account for approximately 3700 students. The other important centres are in Lille, Lyons, Bordeaux and Toulouse.

According to the central administration of the Ministry of Education, there were 440 tenured academics in Education Studies in 2000: 124 full Professors and 316 Senior Lecturers

(Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, p. 40). These positions were distributed amongst universities and other HE institutions (mainly the IUFM teacher training institutions). Women represented 25% of the full Professors and 41% of Senior Lecturers. In total, 42 full Professorships (34%) and 104 Senior lectureships (33%) were in the universities located in the Paris region. The IUFM teacher training institutes (IUFM) accounted for 13% of the academic staff in the field, with 11 full professorships and 45 Senior Lectureships. Furthermore, in 2000 more than one third of the Education Studies academics occupied a position outside the 29 university departments in Education Studies (Plaisance and Vergnaud 2001, p. 16). Within universities, these academics were either working in the University Institutes of Technology (IUT) or in Continuous Education (*formation continue*) services, whereas outside the universities they were mainly working in teacher training institutes (IUFM) or at the National Institute of Pedagogical Research [*Institut national de recherche pédagogique – INRP*], a specialised public research unit.

In 1998-1999, there were 21659 students enrolled on the different university courses in Education Studies. However, in addition to the students majoring in the field, this number also includes students taking the discipline as a minor or as an optional course. There were only 15283 students enrolled on a national degree programme in “Education Studies” and the postgraduate vocational DESS degrees in this field only registered 811 students. In 2000-2001, there were 14030 students enrolled in Education Studies courses: 9616 in *Licence* degrees and 4414 in Masters degrees, plus 515 students in graduate vocations DESS degree programmes. In addition, there were almost 700 students preparing a doctoral thesis in Education Studies. Therefore, after the rapid progression of student numbers between 1990 and 1997 (from 12000 to 15000), the field has experienced a drop in student numbers more recently. It is interesting to note the difference in the number of students on the *Licence* and the *Maîtrise* degrees. This variation is largely due to the fact that the students in Education Studies often leave the university after they have obtained their *Licence* degree and enter the teacher training institutes (IUFM) where they continue their studies.

Mature students make up an important part of Education Studies students. A large proportion of the students are primary or secondary school teachers. In the early 1990s, at least 65% of the “Education Studies” students were in employment at the time of their studies (Plaisance and Vergnaud, 2001, p. 14). These students do not necessarily aspire to obtaining degrees in order to improve their employment opportunities. They tend to undertake training in order to improve their daily professional activities, rather than with a view to their own career development. Thus, “Education Studies” recruits both younger students, most of whom are potential candidates for the teacher training institutes and mature students on continuing education programmes.

In 2000, 32 French universities and other HE institutes offered a *Licence* degree in “Education Studies”, followed by a Masters degree. It is interesting to note that none of these institutions proposed a vocational degree (“*Licence professionnelle*”) in Education Studies. However, according to the AECSE study, 36% of the institutions planned to set up this type of vocational degree in the near future (Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, p. 42).

Relatively few of the students continue on to doctoral training: between 1990 and 1994, 422 doctoral thesis were submitted in Education Studies, i.e. approximately 85 PhDs every year (Plaisance and Vergnaud 2001, p. 35). Between 1995 and 1999, 488 new doctoral students in Education Studies were registered in the whole country (Association des enseignants et

chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, p. 45). The geographical concentration of the doctoral training corresponds to the location of the most important Education Studies departments. Thus, six universities accounted for 65% of the doctorates (the universities of Paris V, Paris VIII, Paris, X, Strasbourg II, Lyon II and Bordeaux). The majority of theses were submitted by male students, as women represented 45% of the authors, and men were also a majority among the authors of the “habilitation” thesis, 18 out of the total of 23 (Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, pp. 44-5). Four universities (Paris VIII, Paris V, Paris VII and Lyon II) produced more than 48% of the doctorates and almost 76% of the theses were submitted in ten French universities. Women represented 46% and men 54% of the new doctors in Education Studies (Association des enseignants et chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation [AECSE] 2001, p. 45).

A more detailed and qualitative analysis including all the theses submitted in the field of education, not only the ones qualified under the CNU section number 70, would probably give rather different results. The estimations for 1983 and 1984 showed that only 15% of the doctoral theses on some aspect of education led to their authors being qualified by the Education Studies section of the CNU (Plaisance and Vergnaud, 2001, p. 36). The other theses on education led to CNU qualifications in literature (17%), sociology and ethnology (16%) or psychology (13%). It is, therefore, important to remember that only a part of the teaching and research activities on aspects of education actually come directly under the Education Studies disciplinary field.

## IV.2. Gender Studies

Gender Studies has long suffered from a “lack of recognition” within French academia (Ezekiel, 1992).<sup>15</sup> The interdisciplinary nature of the field does not fit well with the strong disciplinary structure of French HE institutions. Difficult relationships between feminist academics and any kind of formal institution are no doubt a legacy of the women’s movement, but they do not provide a convincing explanation of the slow process of institutionalisation of Gender Studies inside French universities nor of the continuing marginalisation of this field within the academic community (Andriocci 1999).

As in most European countries “Women’s studies existed within the French higher education system well before taking the contours of a recognizable field” (Ezekiel 1994). The first courses within the universities were set up in the early 1970s and as Judith Ezekiel has stressed: “early work in Women’s Studies was movement-based and consistent with activist principles, almost exclusively collective. Participatory democracy was but one manifestation

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<sup>15</sup> Most of our analysis on the Gender Studies institutionalisation process in France is drawn from the EWSI reports by Le Feuvre and Andriocci, see: Le Feuvre, N., and Andriocci, M. (2001). *Employment and Women's Studies : The Impact of Women's Studies on Women's Employment in Europe. Background Data Report - France*. Toulouse: Rapport à la Commission européenne dans le cadre du projet " Employment and Women's Studies Integration " (EWSI) - HPSE-CT2001-00082, décembre, 60 pages + Annexes, Le Feuvre, N., and Andriocci, M. (2002). *Qualitative Data Report: The Impact of Women's Studies Training on Women's Employment in France, Rapport du projet EWSI - Employment and Women's Studies: The Impact of Women's Studies Training on Women's Employment in Europe*. Bruxelles: Contrat N° HPSE-CT2001-0082, DG Recherche, Bruxelles : Commission européenne, décembre, Le Feuvre, N., and Andriocci, M. (2003). *Comparative Data Report: Employment Opportunities for Women in Europe, Rapport du projet EWSI - Employment and Women's Studies: The Impact of Women's Studies Training on Women's Employment in Europe*. Bruxelles: Contrat N° HPSE-CT2001-0082, DG Recherche, Bruxelles : Commission européenne, mai.

of the radical character of French feminism and, subsequently, of Women's Studies" (Ezekiel 1992, p. 76).

The first Gender Studies seminar was set up at the University of Paris VIII in 1970. Other informal Gender Studies groups soon appeared in a handful of universities across the country (Association nationale des études féministes [ANEF] 1995; Le Feuvre 1995). However, the radical nature of the grass-roots women's movement was difficult to reconcile with the institutional constraints of the highly centralized French HE system. Furthermore, whereas theoretical debate is central to the French academic tradition, some parts of the grass-roots women's movement branded any attempt to theorize the various forms of male domination a "terrorist" action (Fougeyrollas-Schwebel 1997). The informal, collective and non-hierarchical values of the French women's movement thus led to a frequent voicing of fears of takeover by any kind of institutional structure, including universities. This fear led to heated debates about the legitimacy of Gender Studies activities within formal institutions, which can be seen to have hindered the development of formal Gender Studies structures within French universities.

The institutionalisation of Gender Studies in France has taken place within the traditional disciplines, rather than through an autonomous disciplinisation process. This state of affairs is less a matter of choice than of circumstance. The fact that many of the women who were active in the second-wave women's movement were also already members of a particular scientific community or academic discipline undoubtedly contributed to the development of a disciplinary slant in the institutionalisation process of Gender Studies in France. The early 1970s saw the creation of several informal feminist groups in a handful of French universities (Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Lyons, Toulouse, etc.), but few members of these groups were able or even inclined to introduce the issue of women's oppression into their academic teaching and research activities. The relationship between academic feminism and the grass-roots women's movement in France can thus be characterized by what Christine Delphy has recently called the "betrayal effect" (Delphy 2001). While feminist academics frequently suffer discrimination within the university system, because their work is seen as "militant" rather than "scientific", they are concurrently accused by militant groups outside academia of having "abandoned" and "perverted" the aims and values of the women's movement.

It is important to stress at the outset that the creation of autonomous Gender Studies qualifications or departments, let alone of a specific Gender Studies discipline, has in the past been almost unanimously rejected by feminist academics in France (Le Feuvre 1993). This can largely be explained by a rational preoccupation with their own career prospects and those of their students, particularly in terms of job opportunities within HE or public research bodies. In an organizational context where access to an academic career is totally structured along disciplinary lines and where Gender Studies does not have disciplinary status, the only viable strategy for protecting the career prospects of staff and doctoral students who develop an interest in feminist research is to integrate Gender Studies into as many of the traditional disciplines as possible. As we shall see below, this strategy has produced somewhat contradictory results over the past 30 years.

Gender Studies options and research have mostly been developed in disciplines such as sociology, history, social psychology, philosophy, literature, Anglo-American literature and civilization and economics. But it is important to emphasise that these disciplines have not provided a niche for feminist teachers and researchers. It is rather the latter who have fought to introduce the research questions inspired by their activism in women's movement within

their own academic disciplines (Andriocci 1999). It would be a mistake to suggest that even the most permeable disciplines have welcomed Gender Studies with open arms. Feminist teaching and research in France have negative connotations throughout the scientific community – as they do outside the academy (Andriocci 2000).

#### *IV.2.1. Gender Studies at undergraduate and postgraduate level*

At the beginning of 1990s, there were only five senior lectureships in Gender Studies (out of a total of 50000 academic posts in France, of which 12000 were in the humanities and social sciences – see Ezekiel, 1992), all based in traditional disciplines: one “*études féministes*” lectureship in sociology at the University of Paris VII, one “*études féministes*” lectureship in law at the University of Rennes II, one “*études féministes*” lectureship in contemporary history at the University of Toulouse II (all three since 1985), one lectureship in “*Histoire des Femmes*” at the University of Paris VIII and one “*études féminines*” lectureship in sociology at the University of Toulouse II (both since 1991). To date, only two of these tenured senior lectureships have survived: in contemporary history at the University of Paris VIII and in sociology at the University of Toulouse II (Andriocci et al. 2003). The others disappeared, because their incumbents retired or died and the lectureship was given to another specialist field within the discipline.

Although these figures serve to illustrate the low level of institutional recognition of Gender Studies in France, it should be stressed that almost all of the teaching in this field is undertaken by full-time academics who occupy tenured positions in the traditional disciplines and introduce some aspect of gender analysis into their courses. This makes it particularly difficult to reach a satisfactory estimation of the extent to which Gender Studies figures on the academic curriculum in France. It should also be noted that all academic posts in France are allocated to disciplinary departments and that there is no official recognition of Gender Studies as a discipline.

Almost all Gender Studies courses offered in France are optional and few universities or departments include details about their options in their prospectuses or on their diplomas. Only postgraduate courses with a gender dimension can be identified with any certainty in the national data provided by the Ministry of Education (Le Feuvre 1995). The largely unregulated character of French universities may offer the possibility for individual lecturers to take an initiative to set up courses in Gender Studies within their own departments. If they are lucky enough to find themselves surrounded by relatively sympathetic (or indifferent) colleagues and to convince their heads of the department, this strategy may well prove to be successful. Almost all of the optional Gender Studies courses currently available in France seem to have been set up under these kinds of institutional conditions. However, the success of such a strategy obviously depends on the power relations within a given department and on the ability of teaching staff to carve out a Gender Studies niche for themselves. They will usually face stiff competition from colleagues who are equally eager to focus their teaching in their own chosen field of research. In any case, the centralized four-yearly degree accreditation process limits the potential for innovation in the curriculum. The creation of the five specialist senior lectureship has often been the deciding factor in tipping the balance of power in favour of the creation of Gender Studies courses since the mid-1980s in France. However, it is important to stress that, whether they are related to the creation of a specialist lectureship or not, almost all the Gender studies courses that exist in France today are offered as options (usually to students from different departments within the same university), but are not part of the obligatory course content for a specific degree.

In 2003, it was estimated that about 151 modules or courses in Women's / Gender Studies were available to students in about 21 of the 27 academies in France. Most of these courses were optional and were concentrated in the following five academies: Paris and the Paris region, Lille, Lyon, Toulouse and Aix-Marseille. There was also at least one course available to selected students at Caen, Montpellier and Reims (one course in each, but with a full postgraduate vocational DESS degree in Reims), at Antilles-Guyane, Nice, Orleans, Strasbourg and Montpellier (2 courses), at Dijon and Grenoble (3 courses) and at Amiens, Clermont-Ferrand, Nantes and Nancy-Metz (4 courses) academies. Over half of these courses were at undergraduate level (78 courses). A quarter of the courses were aimed at students preparing a DEUG degree (34 courses) and the rest were at postgraduate level (39 courses). More than half of these courses (approximately 60%) centred on the following disciplines: sociology, anthropology and ethnology (20%), English, psychology, literature, history and politics. The remaining courses were mostly found in other foreign languages (like German or Spanish), in sports studies (STAPS), in education studies, in social and economic administration (AES) and in geography. Only 10% of the courses were explicitly inter- or pluri-disciplinary. Only ten universities (out of the total of 87) enable students to take at least one course in Gender / Women's Studies at each level of the HE system (Degree, Master, PhD) within at least one traditional discipline. These institutions were mainly universities of humanities and social sciences and half of them were in the Paris region. The University of Lyons II had continuous training paths in English, literature and psychology; the University of Paris VI in history and sociology, Paris VIII in philosophy, Paris IX in sociology and Paris XIII in history; the University of Bordeaux II offered continual training in sociology and Bordeaux III in geography, the University of Toulouse II in sociology, the University of Nancy as well as the University of Strasbourg II in sports studies (STAPS) (Association nationale des études féministes [ANEF] 2004).

Only four universities in the whole of France have been able to offer nationally recognised degrees with an explicitly Gender Studies focus (all at postgraduate level). The University of Paris VII and Paris VIII have offered a D.E.A. (*Diplôme d'études approfondies* – a postgraduate first-year doctoral program foundation course) in the humanities or the social sciences, with a specialisation in Gender Studies. Although both of these courses are interdisciplinary, the D.E.A. at Paris VIII was more humanities-based (with some sociology, history and politics), while the one at Paris VII was social science-based (with some humanities). However, in 1994, the Ministry of Education refused to renew the recognition of the Paris VII D.E.A. The Paris VIII D.E.A. was threatened with closure after a scathing evaluation report from the Ministry of Education experts in 1996, but has nevertheless continued to operate until now.

Up until 2000, there were no full professorships explicitly in Gender Studies in France. Since then, full professorships with a women's studies focus in women's history have been created at the Teacher Training Institute (IUFM) in Lyons and at the University of Paris VIII (in 2002) and in sociology at the University of Paris VII (in 2003) and at the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail (in 2004). This paucity of professorships places severe limits on the potential for doctoral supervision on this field, since Senior Lecturers with a doctorate who have not passed their *habilitation* thesis cannot (officially) supervise doctoral students in France. These difficulties are made all the worse by the fact that the majority of the full Professors who have provided formal or informal institutional support for doctoral students wishing to submit a thesis with a Gender Studies perspective up until now are currently reaching retirement age. Some of the Senior Lecturers who have specialized in Gender

Studies are finding that their career paths are hampered by the nature of their research which, despite often widespread international recognition, still tends to be branded as “militant” and therefore (implicitly) “unscientific” by the small minority of influential academics who control recruitment and promotion selection procedures within the French higher education and research sector. It is therefore unlikely that these professorships will be passed on to individuals with an active interest in the development of Gender Studies.

Despite the continuing lack of institutional support for Gender Studies, there are currently signs of an increase in the number of coordinated courses with a gender dimension, at least in certain disciplinary fields. While the existing leading centres of feminist teaching and research continue to attract large (and even increasing) numbers of students, other university-based networks such as the FUN group (*Femmes de l'Université de Nantes* – Women of Nantes University) and the *Centre d'études femmes du Nord Pas-de-Calais* (Northern Centre for Gender Studies) in Lille, have recently emerged as potentially active centres of Gender Studies in France. Like most of the other national centres, they organise regular public conferences, coordinate curricula across disciplinary and institutional boundaries, provide research supervision for Master and, more rarely, doctoral students and, usually, attempt to create and run resource and documentation centres for students and colleagues.

No new doctoral foundation course (D.E.A) specifically on gender issues has obtained ministerial recognition since 1995 (when the application to renew the accreditation of the “*Sexes & Sociétés*” DEA at Paris VII was refused by the Ministry evaluation experts).<sup>16</sup> The project to create new interdisciplinary DEA course entitled “*Masculin & Féminin*” in Lyons (in partnership with the Geneva University in Switzerland) was recently turned down by the Ministry of Education. However, in the same year (1999) a new one-year post-graduate vocational degree (DESS) entitled “Gender and Sexuality” was set up in the Law department at Reims University. Other DESS projects in fields related to gender issues in Montpellier and Lille were recently refused ministerial accreditation. The DESS course in “Gender and Social Policy” at the University of Toulouse–Le Mirail, created in 1993, received ministerial accreditation for the fourth time running in 2003.

It could be argued that the feminist community has failed to impose Gender Studies as an autonomous area of academic inquiry and has also been relatively unsuccessful in the pursuit of integration into existing academic institutions and research programs. And yet, the influence of French feminist academics on the international Gender Studies community has been remarkable over the past 50 years. This influence has nevertheless been exerted on a highly individual basis – via the handful of “big names” in French feminism who are renowned the world over. These women have never benefited from the same degree of intellectual respect and recognition in their home country as they have experienced abroad. Their influence on international feminist theory has somewhat miraculously survived in an institutional context which clearly militates against the kinds of collective organizations (gender research centres, specialized university departments, etc.) that have been at the heart of the Gender Studies institutionalisation process in many other European countries. The slow development of Gender Studies courses, the lack of even basic administrative support for the formal or informal Gender Studies teaching and research centres that have managed to exist in just a handful of French universities, and the statutory division between universities and research bodies (notably the CNRS), where many of the leading feminist theorists are in fact employed, have combined to produce a situation where the minimal conditions for the

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<sup>16</sup> On the pretext that there was already another DEA course “on women” in one of the other French universities. Needless to say, the evaluation experts did not have any background in Women’s Studies.

transmission of feminist knowledge to future generations have been difficult to obtain and even harder to maintain over time.

The underdevelopment of Gender Studies courses at undergraduate level tends to lead to a vicious circle whereby the lack of institutional support for research on gender means that few lecturers (and even fewer professors) specialize in the field. Not having any experience in gender research, few tenured academics are interested or committed to introducing gender studies into their curricula. Few students are introduced to knowledge about gender and gender inequalities during their university career. As a result, few specialize in the field and go on to the doctoral research on gender issues (not least because it is difficult for them to find a qualified, at best, or sympathetic supervisor and because the opportunities for doctoral grants in this field are severely limited). Even once an excellent doctoral thesis has been submitted, professional prospects for the graduates are limited because there are so far few higher education courses in gender studies that recruitment boards do not consider a research or teaching profile in gender studies to be a top priority. Because recruitment levels of gender specialists are low, the capacity within a given university to lobby for the creation of new gender studies courses or degree programs is weak and generally fails because the decision-making bodies within departments argue that they don't have enough tenured staff to teach them etc. etc. etc. (Le Feuvre 2001, p. 193). Taking what may turn out to be an extremely optimistic point of view, and despite the fact that we are somewhat sceptical about the implicit motives behind the recent drive to encourage applied degrees within the French university system, it may be that the combined effects of gender mainstreaming in national public policies and the push for more accountability from universities as to the vocational relevance of their qualifications could provide a more favourable climate for the development of Gender Studies in France than has been the case to date (Le Feuvre 2001). To be successfully administrated, the new equality policy initiatives will require the creation of a significant number of new jobs or the re-profiling of existing professional outlets. In this context, the equal opportunities rhetoric that academic feminists have been loathe to adopt in France in the past may well represent the most promising route to the development of Gender Studies degrees in France in the near future.

## V. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN FRENCH ACADEMIA

As we have already seen, the recruitment procedure for academic staff within the French HE system is highly centralised and codified. The Ministry of Education, through The National Council of Universities (CNU), controls this process. With the exception of law, economics and political science, access to tenured positions (Professorships and Senior Lecturerships) in most disciplines involves a two-stage procedure: a) the successful submission of a doctoral thesis for Senior Lecturerships or of a habilitation thesis for a Professorship; and b) registration on the list of “qualified” academics recognised by the disciplinary based National Council of Universities (CNU) (Journal officiel de la République française 1992, 1999, 2003). The majority of the members of the CNU sections are elected by their peers (tenured academics), whilst the Ministry of Education nominates a minority. They serve a four-year term of office and may sit for re-election (Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Éducation nationale et de la Recherche 2003b).

This disciplinary body of experts is responsible for not only the recruitment and the development of the lecturers' and the professors' careers, but also for the qualification of its future members. The qualification by the CNU is an obligatory condition for any academic recruitment procedure. Therefore, once a doctoral thesis has been submitted, the graduate student wishing to enter academia has to be qualified in at least one of the CNU's disciplinary sections. This qualification can be obtained once a year through centralised processes by submitting required documents to the members of the CNU section corresponding to the candidate's discipline. A doctoral thesis can also be qualified in several sections if it fulfills the criteria and is judged eligible by the members of the sections. Each disciplinary section has its own criteria for qualifying the candidates and they may vary from one discipline to another, but commonly the candidates are required to present a C.V., giving details of their academic publishing record, their teaching experience and their activities in local, national or international research networks. The report written by the members of the jury who accredited the candidate's doctoral or habilitation thesis is also required by the CNU.

A CNU qualification in a particular discipline is valid for four years. If the candidate has not been successful in getting an academic job within this period, he or she needs to be re-qualified by his/her CNU section. For Senior Lecturers wishing to apply for a full Professorship, a second CNU qualification is needed after the successful submission of a habilitation thesis. This second qualification gives the right to apply to full professorships when these are available (Journal officiel de la République française 1999).

However, the qualifications only give a restricted access to employment in the HE sector. In effect, a candidate who has obtained his or her qualification by the CNU section number 19 (Sociology) can only apply for jobs defined as Lecturerships or Professorships in that discipline. The University offering the job thus defines each new tenured academic position according to one or more of the CNU sections. The decision-making process is quite complex and involves the heads of department, departmental boards and the University Senate. The decision to allocate a new position to a particular disciplinary field effectively determines the profile of the potential candidates, since all candidates have to be “qualified” by the relevant section of the CNU (Robert 2003, p. 139).

Recruitment to academic positions takes place on a national basis twice a year. Academic positions are not advertised in national newspapers, as is the case in most of the EU countries, but in an internal Ministry of Education Newsletter (*Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation*

*nationale*). In February and in May, the Ministry calls for applications for all the academic positions available in every single discipline in every single HE institution in the country; these include new jobs created and positions made available through the geographical mobility or retirement of their incumbents the previous year. In order to apply for one of these positions, the future candidate must already possess the required qualification (doctorate or habilitation) and have been qualified by the relevant section of the CNU. Applications for the qualification have to be submitted at the end of the year preceding the job applications, as the CNU also only sits twice a year.

Qualified candidates are free to apply to as many institutions as desired, providing they have positions on offer in the disciplines for which they have been qualified. Competition for academic positions, particularly Senior Lectureships, has become increasingly fierce over the past ten years and it is not unusual for institutions to receive more than 100 applications for a single tenured lectureship. As well as the newly qualified candidates, job applications may come from academic staff already in a tenured position at another institution. Therefore, recruitment to a senior lecturership often requires several attempts and a fair amount of geographical mobility from the candidates. Obviously, since the recruitment campaign is conducted simultaneously in all of the French universities, candidates may often be called for interview in different institutions on the same day. If this is the case, they simply have to withdraw their application from one of the universities.

Each university department is responsible for organising a recruitment board [*Commission de spécialistes*], in accordance with the administrative guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education. These discipline-based recruitment boards are in charge of the recruitment procedure for one discipline in their institution (Journal officiel de la République française 1997). Each local board corresponds to one of the CNU disciplinary sections. The boards have between ten and twenty members, half of whom are Senior Lecturers and half full Professors. Their peers elect two thirds of the members locally for a four-year term of office and one third is nominated amongst the peers working in other institutions and belonging to the same discipline. Academics can serve on the recruitment boards in up to three different institutions at any one time. If the department wishes to recruit a full Professor, only the full Professor members of the Board can interview candidates and vote (Journal officiel de la République française 1998, 1999).

Although it only takes place twice a year, the recruitment procedure is extremely time-consuming and stressful, due to the tight time limits imposed by the Ministry. Once the president of the university has verified the administrative validity of the applications, the applications are divided up amongst the members of the recruitment board. A written report is provided on each application by at least two members of the board and unsuccessful candidates are entitled to receive a copy of this report on request. Within approximately ten days of receiving the applications, the board sits to select a variable proportion of the candidates for interview. Once they have been called for interview at a given institution, the candidates are required to send copies of their doctoral or habilitation theses and a selection of their academic publications to the institution within an extremely tight time-limit (usually under one week). They must also make travel arrangements (at their own expense) to the interview and deal with the frequent occurrence of being called for an interview at two different institutions on the same day, possibly at the same time. There is no coordination at a national level of the timetable of the different recruitment boards in a single discipline.

Once the selected candidates have been interviewed the members of the recruitment board rank up to five candidates for each position by vote. The University Senate (*Conseil d'Administration*) then has to approve the ranking from each recruitment board. The Senate can either validate or invalidate the whole list but it has no power to change the order decided by the recruitment board. As soon as the list is validated, the Senate proposes the first name on the list to the Ministry of Education. If the vacant occupation is not filled it can be published again on the second round of the recruitment campaign of the same year. Candidates are usually informed by phone of the results of each recruitment board and then, if they have been ranked in first position by at least one institution, they have to confirm in writing that they accept the position offered. Once the final nominations have been made, the successful candidates will not take up their new positions until the start of the following academic year. The newly recruited Senior Lecturers will usually serve a one-or two-year “probationary period” before being given tenure and civil servant status by the Ministry of Education. It is extremely rare for tenure to be refused at this stage.

### **V.1. The disciplinary nature of academic professional associations**

It should come as no surprise to learn that academic professional bodies are mostly discipline based. They have quite often very rigid criteria for the selection for their members. An analysis of the admission conditions to the professional associations (*sociétés savantes*) included in the Ministry of Research index shows that in many cases these societies are reserved for academics working in the HE sector and within the discipline concerned.

The French professional associations can roughly be divided into three groups according to the flexibility of their criteria for inclusion and exclusion of members. The most rigid ones can be found in disciplines like sociology, psychology, history, English, Spanish, law, economics and political science. These professional associations are only open to people working in the HE or research sectors. Some professional associations have even more severe selection criteria. The English Studies Association (*Société des anglicistes de l'enseignement supérieur*), for example, only accepts candidates working in universities or the *Grandes écoles* or in another HE institution.

Often the minimum requirement from a candidate is a PhD in the discipline, although some of the associations accept students who are still working on their doctoral thesis or with the first level post-graduate diploma (DEA). In the case of post-graduate students, their supervisors' recommendation is usually needed. Frequently, the administrative council of the association selects the new candidates after a vote and the recommendation of two members is a very widespread additional criteria. The French National Sociology Association (*Association française de sociologie*) even has a specific “recruitment and admissions” board, which deals with all membership applications.

However, not all of the professional disciplinary associations are as selective. In geography (*Société de géographie*), for example, personal interest in the subject area and the recommendation from two members are enough to be eligible. The associations that share a common interest with economic actors outside the academic world, like the French Association of Economic Sciences (*Association française des sciences économiques*) or the French Association of Marketing (*Association française de marketing*) are also open to a wider membership, e.g. business managers who are interested in the subject. Furthermore, the associations linked to interdisciplinary fields, like the Association of Researchers in Sports Studies (*Association des chercheurs en activités physiques et sportifs*) have more flexible

criteria and they accept members from outside the academic world, including undergraduate students.

There are also associations without any specific membership selection criteria, apart from interest in the subject area. These include the National Feminist Studies Association (*Association nationale des études féministes*) and the French Society of Social Sciences History (*Société française pour l'histoire des sciences et de l'Homme*).

## VI. THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

In France, disciplinary specialisation starts very early on. Although the official objective of first-degree programmes is to “provide access to a wide range of knowledge, emerging from various disciplines” (Mallet et al. 2002, p. 127), undergraduate curricula are in practice often organized around one main discipline. Thus, first-year students take two main disciplines and two optional subjects during the first semester of their 1<sup>st</sup> year course and may then continue with this multi-disciplinary combination during the second semester or choose to specialise in a single discipline for the rest of their degree programme. By year two, disciplinary specialisation becomes the norm and academic staff often recommend it, especially if students plan to carry on to the *Licence* or *Maîtrise* degree levels.

By the final year of undergraduate degree programmes (*Licence*), the curricula becomes focused on one discipline, except if students have decided to take one of the rare interdisciplinary degrees - like Sports Studies (STAPS) or Education Studies - that are available in some universities. All the students who have a DEUG diploma can access a standard *Licence* degree course. However, admission to the vocational degree programmes (*Licences professionnelles*) is restricted and selective. In turn, the *Licence* prepares students for post-graduate degrees and allows them to specialise further in their discipline or even in a narrower sub-field of the discipline.

Students carry this early disciplinary identity through all their academic years and once they enter post-graduate level PhD training programs, they are generally very poorly equipped for interdisciplinary approaches or methods. The most common pattern is for them to continue with a thesis in their “own” discipline with a supervisor affiliated to this same field of study and simultaneously work in a disciplinary-based research centre. The national PhD registration process requires students to identify their discipline. In theory, more than one discipline can be mentioned on the official forms, but this is rare in practice. This disciplinary “stamp” then follows the candidate through his or her post-graduate study years and very much defines his/her early professional identity.

The vocational post-graduate DESS degree programmes represent something of an exception to this disciplinary rule, since these are often interdisciplinary and prepare students for professional careers requiring diverse approaches and working methods.

In France the knowledge construction in the social sciences and humanities is not articulated in terms of collaboration with the public authorities or oriented towards “problem solving”. In effect, despite the central role played by the state, university-based research and teaching activities have traditionally been, and still are to quite a considerable extent, separated from the political decision-making process. Thus, the need for interdisciplinary approaches able to provide practical solutions to identified “social problems” is not seen as central or even as necessary for the development of knowledge. There are two explanations for this situation: the existence of the *Grandes écoles* and the particular professional culture of French academics.

In France, the role of advice and expertise in the political decision-making process is played by the *Grandes écoles* rather than by university-based academics. These institutions, created during the nineteenth century, which exist alongside universities, were originally set up to train elites for the armed forces, public service, the higher ranks of teaching and research and

private enterprise. Thus, the system of competitive examinations for access to the *Grandes écoles* fulfils the dual function of recruiting and training highly skilled managers for the private sector, as well as selecting the country's top administrative and political elite. The *Grandes écoles* are generally smaller in size than universities and they are also more tightly organized. The government usually appoints their directors and laypersons often play an important role on their councils, through links to public and private sector employers. Therefore, when the State needs expert advice on public policy issues, it is more likely to turn to the *Grandes écoles* than to the academic community within universities.

However, this system has often been viewed as unfavourable to the development of applied research, since the content of the entrance and qualifying exams in the *Grandes écoles* tends to emphasize prescribed, limited bodies of usually abstract and theoretical knowledge, to the detriment of independent and empirical inquiry. The entrance exams foster individual achievement leading less to intellectual or scientific creativity than to technical and administrative authority, thus "reinforcing the hierarchical, technocratic and non-participative nature of French government and society" (van der Graaff and Furth 1978, p. 53). The system as a whole, with *Grandes écoles* largely devoid of research facilities at the pinnacle of higher education, is somewhat unique among industrial nations. Although recent developments, particularly since 1968, have attenuated these characteristics, the process of change has been difficult and slow, and the separation between the state decision-making and policy evaluation processes and the university-based academic community is still very strong.

The second explanation for the weak participation of the universities in public policy debates stems from the particular professional culture of French academics who have traditionally rejected the involvement of outsiders in their area of expertise. The French academic community is very reluctant to sacrifice its autonomy and tends to reject any external influence on its research and teaching practices.

The resistance towards private sector research or teaching funding can be seen, for example, through the Ministry of Education's attempts to promote life-long education [*Formation continue*]. This educational objective requires firms to set aside substantial sums of money each year for staff training. However, French universities have been slow to tap into this new source of funding and distrust of the universities' alleged leftist and overly theoretical orientation has led many employers to channel the funds towards their own training organizations. Academic university-based staff are generally reluctant to sacrifice their autonomy by designing courses to meet the requirements of private firms and their employees (van der Graaff and Furth 1978, p. 63). It is interesting to note that the resistance towards state interference is quite widespread amongst French academics who have the reputation of being prone to collective action and see themselves as a source of resistance in the face of political power (especially when there is a Right-wing government). French academics still tend to reject state efforts to define national research priorities. They believe that only researchers can know which are the best research activities for the future. Thus, the hierarchical division between applied research and "pure" research is still very present in French university culture. There is no doubt that "pure" theoretical research occupies the top positions in this hierarchy. There is a general fear that political influence or market forces might "corrupt" scientific research endeavour and this belief has represented a significant barrier to the development of more cooperation between the universities and civil society (Goldstein 2003). It also explains the difficulty French researchers have experienced with the "applied" research objectives of the European Research and Development programs.

Moreover, French universities are probably less market oriented than universities in other EU member states (such as Great Britain, for example). The civil servant status of academics protects them from market forces, as does the “mass” HE system they are a part of. Attracting students (and student fees) has never traditionally been a priority for the academic community in France. Quite to the contrary, academic staff – particularly in the humanities and social sciences - strive rather to **reduce** their student numbers whenever possible (Andriocci and Le Feuvre 2004).

Nevertheless, some changes have occurred in the knowledge construction process in France in recent years. Universities are producing more and more applied research and vocational training. The Sorbonne/Bologna process has tended to increase the professionally and technologically oriented component of degree courses within the HE institutions. This process requires the universities to revise their curricula extensively, cutting back on programs with meagre employment prospects and developing new programs in fields that offer better career opportunities. It also opens a wider space for interdisciplinary approaches in the curricula. These types of professionalization attempts have, however, usually provoked widespread protest from students and teachers who object to the utilitarian orientation of reforms (Le Feuvre 2002).

Academics fear that many traditional fields of scholarship would face extinction in the face of “marketisation” and they remain opposed to the involvement of outsiders in their teaching programmes. François Dubet has argued that “the resistance of ‘pure’ and fundamental research to the demands of the capitalist market forces is one of the favourites fantasies of at least some academics” (Dubet 2003, p. 369). However, according to Dubet, this belief does not really reflect actual research practices in most disciplines. He claims that the separation between applied and theoretical research does not make any sense, since the majority of academics are both “experts” and researchers: they publish for a general public as well as for their peers. Dubet then argues that “the nostalgia for ‘pure’ research exists more as a form of rhetoric than as a real practice: one only needs to observe the weight of public or private funded research programmes [*appel d’offres*] among the scientific work produced and the role played by academics in the construction of the issues that these programmes address” (Dubet 2003, p. 370). Therefore, French academics are not, actually, as distant from the public decision-making process as they continue to claim.

Another recent area of reform has been the collaboration between business and universities. In a speech made on 18 May 1999, Claude Allègre, the then Minister of Education, Research and Technology, discussed the importance of working with industry. On 3 June 1999, the so-called Innovation Law, came into force which enables academic staff to work for up to six years in business (or start their own company) without losing their academic tenure or civil servant status.

## VII. INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Despite the repeated allusions, found in the public discourses, to interdisciplinarity and to its importance to for French higher education teaching and research, in practice there is very little interdisciplinary training available in France. All the public authorities concerned with the topic seem to agree on the central nature of interdisciplinary studies in the development of the higher education sector. Thus, in her speech the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004, Claudie Haignère, the then Minister of Research, emphasised the importance of pluridisciplinary approaches as the driving force of French public research. In the same vein, in his speech of October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003, Luc Ferry, the former Education Minister, highlighted the value of “students transversal competencies”, made possible through future interdisciplinary training programmes. However, none of the ministers gave any clear advice as to how these objectives should be reached, nor did they explain how these new courses could be integrated into the highly discipline-based structure of the French university curricula.

Furthermore, these speeches focused on interdisciplinarity in research, primarily as a means to promote the national and international mobility amongst doctoral students and academic staff and, secondly, as a means to develop more creative research activities. In the field of education, interdisciplinarity was mostly seen as a way to adapt the universities and their training programmes to the current demands of the employment market and thus better prepare the students for their future professional activities. Consequently, the debates surrounding interdisciplinarity in higher education often refer to the creation of new vocational degrees, such as the *Licences professionnelles*. They are less concerned with the promotion of interdisciplinarity within the traditional university curricula and degree programmes. In addition, it is interesting to note that, since the end of 2003, there has been no further mention of interdisciplinarity in the Education Minister’s public speeches. The subject seems to have disappeared from the current political agenda.

### VII.1. Interdisciplinarity in undergraduate degree programmes

Some interdisciplinary teaching does exist in the French HE sector and it is relatively concentrated in a handful of disciplines. It is obviously available in the five interdisciplinary fields of study recognised by the French Ministry of education: Education Studies; Information and Communication Sciences; Epistemology and History of Science and Techniques; Regional Cultures and Languages and Sports Studies (STAPS). These sections offer educational programmes from undergraduate to postgraduate doctoral training level. However, they only have limited staff resources and therefore courses are limited in number. For example, Education Studies has approximately 14000 students registered in 2000 and Sports Studies (STAPS) accounted for just 47700 students in 2004. In comparison, all the other humanities and social sciences represented more than 840000 students in 2004 (Ministère de l’éducation nationale, 2004, p. 157)

In addition to these fields of studies, some disciplines like Social and Economic Administration (AES), may have an interdisciplinary teaching content, although they do not belong to the interdisciplinary group in the CNU’s classification. Social and Economic Administration (AES) degree programmes combine teaching units from law, economics, management, sociology and sometimes political science. In 2004, 54000 students were registered on AES courses in universities all around the country, of whom 53000 were undergraduate students (31500 in first “cycle” and 21800 in the second “cycle”) and 800 were postgraduate doctoral students (Ministère de l’éducation nationale, 2004, p. 157).

Vocational degrees in the University Institutes of Technology (IUT) often also combine approaches from different disciplinary fields as they are based on a combination of traditional teaching carried out by academic staff and more practically orientated teaching performed by professionals working outside academe. However, these educational programmes are always linked to one principal discipline and attached to a disciplinary unit of teaching and research (UFR) within the university. Therefore the interdisciplinary nature of the teaching content is somewhat hidden from view and the degrees are not recognised as being interdisciplinary, but rather as a vocational diploma in sociology or in geography, for example. This is also true for the postgraduate DESS vocational degrees, which are always delivered with the mention of one main discipline, although their real subject matter might, and often does, concern several disciplines and fields of study.

With the “Sorbonne/Bologna” process and the current French higher education reform, French universities will be able to create new kinds of teaching modules and “disciplines” without actually asking for the official creation of a new discipline by the Ministry of Education. The “flexible learning paths” introduced by this reform may open wider routes for the development of interdisciplinarity and create new “*Licence*” and “*Masters*” degrees combining several disciplines. However, the reform is still under way. It should take effect all around the country by the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic year. It is, therefore, very difficult to judge its effective role in the development of interdisciplinarity. However, it is interesting to note that the partial results for the 2003-2004 academic year for those Academies which have already adopted the 3-5-8 system, are not very encouraging. There are only 1469 students registered for the new interdisciplinary *Licence* or Master’s degrees in humanities and social sciences and only 10 students enrolled in new interdisciplinary doctoral training programmes in these fields. The new interdisciplinary *Licence* and Master’s degrees in the “hard” sciences attracted little more than 4450 students (Ministère de l’éducation nationale, 2004, p. 157).

## **VII.2. Interdisciplinarity in doctoral training programmes**

The Doctoral Schools [*Ecoles Doctorales*] were created at the end of the 1980s and their objective is to organize doctoral training at local institutional level (Direction de la Recherche, 1999). Their main aim is to coordinate doctoral training and they tend to give post-graduate students a wider range of possibilities, by enabling them to participate in research projects carried out within the university as a whole and not just within their own research unit or department. Therefore, a majority of these schools federate diverse research teams and research units of the same institution, although they might sometimes bring together teams from different establishments who work in partnership. Doctoral Schools are interdisciplinary by nature. They are evaluated on a national basis and are an integrated part of the universities’ four-year “contract” with the Ministry of Education (Ghys, and Louis, 2003).

The Doctoral Schools offer interdisciplinary courses common to all doctoral students for example in working methods and in preparation of professional projects, and they also propose series of interdisciplinary seminars often organized around a general theme. Post-graduate students are automatically attached to one of the Doctoral Schools of their institution at the moment of their first registration in the doctoral training program and the choice of the school is mainly discipline based (i.e. the students are attached to the Doctoral School which contains their discipline). Doctoral students need to take at least 100 hours of training courses

during the first two years of their PhD registration and half of these have to be within their own Doctoral School.

In addition, the Doctoral Schools play the role of a controlling board regarding doctoral theses and, along with professors, they supervise this scientific production and make sure that the contract [*“La charte des thèses”*] between the doctoral student and his/her thesis director is respected. The Scientific Board of the Doctoral Schools is responsible for checking each year that the thesis is progressing according to plan and will be finished on time (normally a thesis should be completed within three years, but in practice in the humanities and social sciences, students are registered for an average 4.8 years). The Doctoral Schools also select students for the limited number of 3-year doctoral stipends that are allocated each year by the Ministry of Education. They generally select students from a range of disciplines, although grants especially targeted at interdisciplinary PhD projects now exist. Only a very small percentage of doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences (less than 30%) receive any financial support during the preparation of their PhDs.

Furthermore, the Doctoral Schools are in charge of the development of relations between the doctoral students and the external world outside the university, such as the labour market, local authorities etc. Their role is to help students construct their professional projects, to find out about diverse job possibilities available to them in the labour market and to discover the economic world of companies (Direction de la Recherche, 1999). With this aim in mind, the Doctoral Schools offer special regional training days [*Doctorials*], gathering students from “hard” sciences as well as from the humanities and social sciences, and allowing students to construct their professional projects with the help of representatives from the business and private sectors. These training days aim to build bridges between postgraduate students and the labour market and to facilitate the dialogue between universities and civil society. In addition, the Doctoral Schools also aim to make university postgraduate training better known to the private sector and the potential recruiters of doctoral students. Some schools also follow the professional development of their PhD graduates and edit a student yearbook.

In 2003, there were 314 doctoral schools recognized by the State in HE institutions around the country. They accounted for more than 70000 doctoral students (Direction de la Recherche). This same year, a student enrolling to a doctoral training program in the field of humanities and social sciences had quite a large choice of training centres, for example, in the field of Languages and Literature, there were 265 doctoral schools, in Philosophy and Arts 78, in the Social Sciences 88, in Economics and Management 123<sup>17</sup> (Direction de la Recherche).

### **VII.3. Interdisciplinarity in research programmes**

Among its priority programmes, the CNRS has 24 integrated interdisciplinary research programmes (PIR), divided into several main streams. The objective of these programmes is to develop interdisciplinary research in all fields of study and between all the disciplines. The CNRS department of Social Sciences and Humanities has made the development of interdisciplinary research one of its top priorities and it aims to bring together researchers from the social sciences and humanities and from the natural sciences, as well as to reinforce the cooperation within the social sciences and humanities.

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<sup>17</sup> The total of 554 schools is explained by the interdisciplinary nature of the Doctoral Schools. Some of them are counted twice or more because they offer postgraduate training for students in several disciplinary fields.

The department directly coordinates 7 of these interdisciplinary programmes and actively participates in 14 others. The programmes directed by the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities (SHS) belong to three main streams: a) “The living environment and its social concerns”; b) “Information, communication and knowledge”; c) “Environment, energy and sustainable development”. In the first group, the SHS department co-ordinates two programmes: “Human origins, the origins of language and the languages” and “Biomedical sciences, health and society”. In the second group, it manages three programmes: “Information society”, “Complex systems in the social sciences and humanities” and “The history of knowledge”. It also participates in three other programmes: “Cognition and information treatment”; “Robotics and artificial elements”; “Knowledge treatment, learning and new information technology”. Finally, in the third group, it directs two interdisciplinary projects: “Sustainable urban development”, a science programme entitled “Amazone” and contributes to three others: “Environment and climate of the past; history and evolution”; “The Impact of biotechnologies on agrarian ecosystems” and “Energy”.

The definition of these priority research programmes has important consequences as far as the allocation of tenured research jobs and recruitment possibilities within the CNRS are concerned. Each of these programmes also enables CNRS research units (including the “mixed” research units) to apply for targeted funding for PhD and postdoctoral students.

## VIII. THE IMPACT OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON DISCIPLINISATION

Although the France was one of the four founding countries (with Germany, Great Britain and Italy) the Sorbonne-Bologna process, implementing the principles of the European higher education area has not been easy. After the initiative launched in 1998, the Sorbonne-Bologna process triggered off significant debate in France. After long and often heated discussions between the Ministry and the academic and student communities, the declarations were finally adopted (Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche 2003a).

The creation of a new “Masters” degree in 1999 and of a vocational degree “*Licence professionnelle*”, were the first measures undertaken to bring France in line with the 3-5-8 pattern of HE degrees.

In 2002, an overall reform of the French higher education system was implemented. This reform aimed to make the French higher education architecture more compatible with the European university systems. It is currently being implemented on the basis of a new legal framework defined by a set of degrees published in April 2002 for the whole of the French HE sector. In November 2002, the Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research circulated national guidelines to all university vice-chancellors for the new degree structure, known in France as “LMD” (standing for Licence / Master / Doctorat) (Charlier and Moens 2003; Felouzis 2003; Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche 2003a).

The core principles underlying the new system can be summarized as follows:

1. the creation of a new degree structure in higher education based on four degrees: the “*Baccalauréate*”, the “*Licence*”, the new Master’s degree, which can be either professionally-orientated (“*Master Professionnel*”) or research-orientated (“*Master Recherche*”) and the doctorate;
2. the organisation of all the higher education studies into semesters and course units (modules);
3. the general use of the ECTS credit system in the design and the “quantitative” meaning of new degrees, according to the basic principle adopted at European level, i.e. a “*Licence*” equals 180 credits and a “*Masters*” 300 credits;
4. the delivery of the “Degree supplement” or detailed descriptive annex, describing the precise course content, to any student wishing to be internationally mobile;
5. the broadening of access to “life-long learning”, by making it easier for mature students to gain recognition for their work experience or even “life experiences” when applying to degree programmes;
6. the general principle of regular national assessment of all HE institutions and their degree programmes as a prerequisite for the accreditation of new degree programmes. The accreditation process guarantees the recognition of each national degree and plays a role in maintaining “national coherence” in the type of degree programmes available in different regions.<sup>18</sup>

The revision of the national degree system by the creation of the Master degree brings the French higher education system closer to the European educational pattern based on the

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<sup>18</sup> For further information, see Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche (2003a). *France. Implimentation of the 'Sorbonne/Bologna' Process, objectives 1998-2003*. Paris: Ministère de la Jeunesse de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche. Rapport de la Direction des relations relations internationales et de la coopération.

Bachelor degree (licence), the Masters degree (master) and the Doctorate (doctorat). The previously delivered degrees after five years of studies such as DEA, DESS and “homemade” MA delivered by the *Grandes écoles* are also redefined in the new Master model. Therefore, French higher education institutions are invited to work on an in-depth reform of their degree programmes, in order to provide a set of coherent flexible learning paths in fields of study. In this way, the reform introduces a quite new logic to the French higher education sector and should lead to significant course development.

It also changes the decision-making process regarding the disciplines, since the legal texts are considered only as “guidelines” that set up landmarks and objectives and do not curb the teaching teams’ innovative spirit into strict predefined norms, especially as far as course content is concerned. Thus, HE institutions should, in theory at least, gain more autonomy, but they also have to develop a culture of “accountability”, due to an intensification of the national evaluation procedures.

External assessments have to be carried out before the state decides to give “habilitation” (accreditation) to a new degree programme, for the duration of a single “contract”. In this context, the legitimacy and efficiency of the four-year contracts<sup>19</sup> are based on a permanent system of external evaluation of all institutions’ activities, whether these concern management, degree programmes, student services or research. While sticking to the principle of an “ex ante” authorization and the traditional course content, greater room is given in this new system to the efficiency criteria based on the teaching teams’ quality and on the analysis of results. Access to international contacts has also been introduced for the evaluation of Master and Doctorate degrees, in order to promote student mobility and academic cooperation and partnerships on an international level.

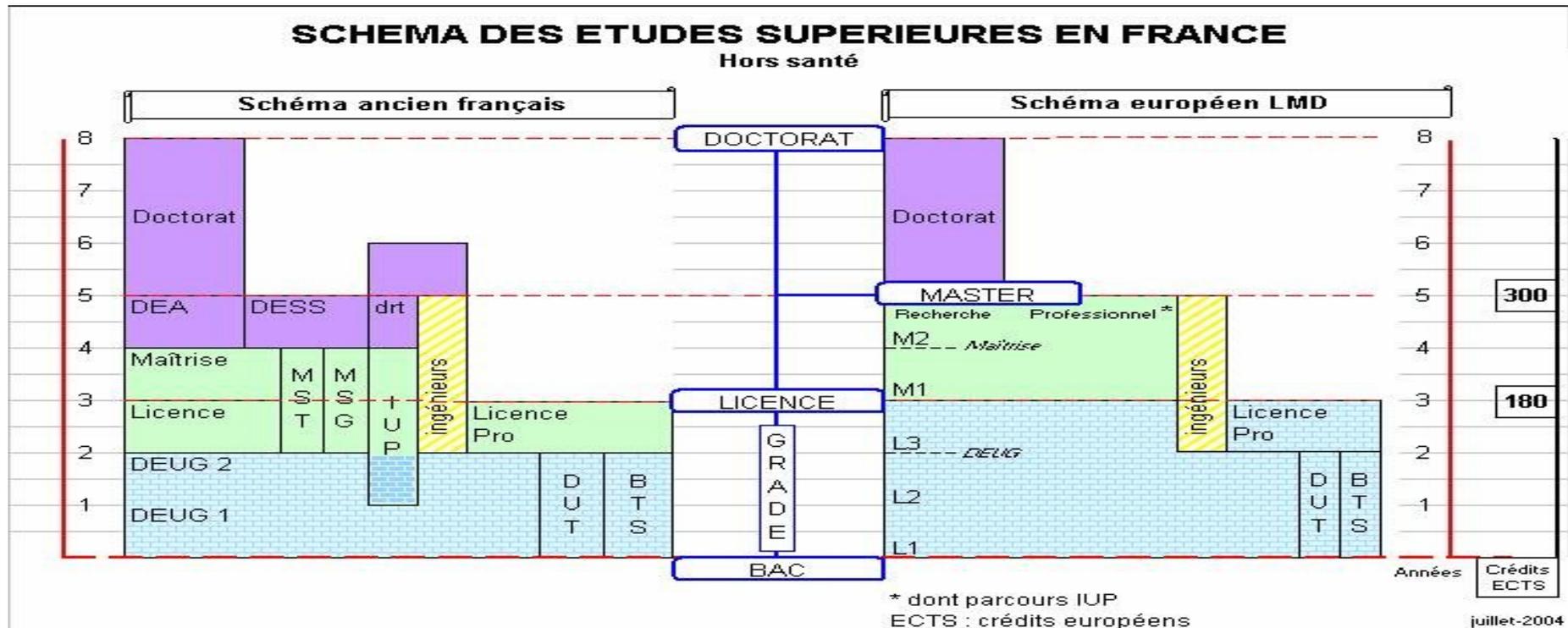
The intensification in the evaluation processes within the HE sector in France actually means greater freedom for the individual HE institutions, since the Ministry of Education now only provides national guidelines for the general “LMD” framework and gives universities more freedom in course development than was previously the case. Prior to the adoption of the Sorbonne-Bologna process, the state provided detailed guidelines for each and every degree programme taught. Thus, for example, although individual universities could define the precise teaching materials used on a given sociology degree course, they were obliged to stick to the national guidelines, which laid down strict norms. For example, a sociology degree course always included the same number of teaching hours, it had to include at least 40% of theory, at least 40% of methods and at least 1 optional course in demography, ethnology or anthropology.

Finally, the Sorbonne-Bologna process has also introduced some notion of “competition” between the different HE institutions, particularly those located in the same geographical area (Academy). Since individual universities are now free to define their own course contents, it is likely that a sociology degree from Paris VII will differ in content from a sociology degree from Lyon II or Toulouse II. This was barely the case previously. It is difficult to imagine how this new “national HE market-place” will function in practice, since it represents a significant change to the French academic tradition. The institutions are not only competing for excellence at an international level, they are also facing a national challenge.

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<sup>19</sup> These contracts were launched in the early 1990s and they bind the university, or another institution concerned by the contract policy, to the State once objectives for action are negotiated. See above.

## French Higher Education Training Paths (with the exception of Medicine) before and after the Bologna Process



Source: Ministry of Education

The left-hand side of this diagram shows the former French HE system with the two-year diploma D.E.U.G, the three-year “*Licence*” degree and the four-year “*Maîtrise*” degree, followed by the post-graduate vocational D.E.S.S diploma or the doctoral training program (from DEA to “*Doctorat*”). The short vocational training programmes (*Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie - DUT* and *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur - BTS*) can be completed by a professional *Licence* degree. The higher-level vocational degree taken at the IUP (*Institut Universitaire Professionnalis *) can be completed by a Technological Research Diploma (*Diplôme de Recherche Technologique - DRT*) or by a D.E.S.S. The DRT degree is also accessible for students graduating from Engineering schools.

The left-hand side of this diagram shows the new French system after the Sorbonne-Bologna reform, with the three-year “*Licence*” degree (general or professional) followed by the two-year Master degree (either vocational or research) and the three-year Doctorate degree. The DUT and BTS degrees still exist and can be completed by a vocational “*Licence*” diploma.

It is now up to the universities and higher education institutions, especially those affected by the new “contractualisation” policy developed by the Ministry of Education, to redefine and reorganize their educational offer in relation to the new Masters and Bachelor framework. The propositions presented by these institutions are and will be examined and new “accreditations” are and will be given on the basis of the assessment criteria defined by the decree of April 2002 and by the ministerial note of November 2002. Because of the national time schedule set for the next “waves” of four-year contracts to be negotiated with the State and institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, this reform should be made real all around the country by 2005-2006. However, since the different “waves” are defined in France according to geographical areas some Academies are already applying the new system.

The use of the European transfer credit system (ECTS) is the golden rule now in France and its legal principle is stated in ministerial notes sent to the institutions involved in the four-year contract process. With the use of ECTS, the notion of “flexible learning paths” is being promoted. In effect the core idea behind using ECTS in combination with a modular curricular structure is to guarantee greater flexibility for students, particularly as far as the combination of courses from different disciplines is concerned. Thus, for the first time in history, it will be possible for French universities to create new kinds of disciplines without actually asking for official creation of a “brand-new” discipline by the Ministry of Education. The “flexible learning paths” may thus enable students to become more familiar with the idea of trans-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary degree programmes, particularly at undergraduate level.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this report, we have attempted to provide an over-view of the French HE and Research sectors and to give some indication of the barriers that exist to the development of interdisciplinary collaboration in the humanities and social sciences.

In conclusion, we would stress the following points:

1. Up until the Sorbonne-Bologna process, French universities (and other HE institutions) had very little opportunity for innovation in course design. The Ministry of Education had to accredit each new degree programme a university wished to adopt and laid down strict national guidelines for both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. The idea behind this tight state control over course content was one of “national cohesion”, i.e. that students in any part of the country should be entitled to the same course content in a given nationally recognised degree. This was seen as a guarantee of the recognition of degrees from all universities as having equivalent status, particularly on the labour market. In practice, of course, there was an implicit hierarchy of universities in different disciplinary fields, but the national education policy aimed to reduce this hierarchy as much as possible.
2. Within this tightly controlled national HE system, there was little room for the development of interdisciplinary courses, particularly at undergraduate level. Since the mid-1980s, French universities have had to cope with a huge increase in student numbers, whilst funding, staff levels and buildings have remained relatively stable. The idea that universities should play a pro-active role in attracting students to particular courses was thus totally foreign to the French academic culture (Fourcade and Haas 2003), at least at before post-graduate level and certainly in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>20</sup> This attitude can be explained by the fact that student fees are relatively low in French universities, academics have tenure and they are not assessed on their teaching at all. Thus, bringing more students to the universities could only have negative effects on academic working conditions (larger classes, more exam papers to mark, more administration), without any material benefits in exchange. Furthermore, increased student numbers would reduce the time and energy available for the only activity that really has an impact on academic careers, research.
3. Interdisciplinarity was also discouraged by the career structures of academics. As we have seen, each discipline has its own national body, responsible for the assessment and evaluation of academic staff. The CNU sections act as “gate-keepers” to academe and their selection procedures are explicitly and exclusively disciplinary in nature. A student with an interdisciplinary profile in his or her PhD thus runs the risk of never being “qualified” by any CNU section, since each one of them could proclaim that the student was closer to the academic requirements of another section than its own (i.e. a PhD that combines some aspect of literature with a social science could be deemed “literary” by the social science CNU sections and “sociological” by the literature CNU sections. As a result, the student would never get the “qualification” necessary to

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<sup>20</sup> The “hard” science departments in some universities started to lose students to the more vocational HE institutions in the mid-1990s and they were perhaps the first to become aware of the necessity to make themselves more “attractive” to potential students.

apply for an academic post... and, in any case, there would not be many academic posts created with an interdisciplinary profile for him/her to apply to).

4. However, despite the rigidity of the disciplinary-based HE recruitment and promotion process, there are signs that the French government has been eager to promote more interdisciplinarity in research over the past 5-10 years. A number of inter-/trans-disciplinary research programmes have been set up by the Ministry of Research and by most important national public research bodies, like the CNRS. Within universities, the new “Human Science Houses” (*Maisons des sciences de l’Homme*) have also been given the aim of encouraging researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds to work more closely together. This is also the case with the new Doctoral Schools, which are supposed to provide inter-/transdisciplinary training programmes for PhD students. However, PhD students only have to follow 100 hours doctoral training during the first two years of registration, the rest of their time is spent working on their individual research projects, usually within disciplinary research units.
5. Since the Sorbonne-Bologna process was introduced in France (this is still an on-going process, but should be completed by the end of 2005), there are some signs that the attempts to promote more interdisciplinarity and a more “problem-solving” approach to research activities may be filtering down to the undergraduate levels of the HE system. One of the most important effects of the Sorbonne-Bologna process in France has been the scrapping of the old degree accreditation process. The Ministry of Education no longer requires universities to conform to a single, national model of course content, within existing disciplinary boundaries. Universities are now free to offer multi- / pluri- / trans- / inter-disciplinary courses to their students. Prior to the accreditation of these new degree programmes, they must show that these courses respond to a “need” and that there is a market for them (either in terms of potential student numbers and/or in terms of job opportunities for graduates). This is something of a revolution in France. However, the expertise needed to construct these new degree programmes is not readily available in most French universities, since French academics have not really had to concern themselves with the professional careers of their students until now. Most degrees offered in universities were seen as “foundation courses” or “general knowledge” bases for students who would move on to more vocational training programmes in other HE institutions after graduation. Knowledge about what happens to students when they leave university (with or without a qualification) is lacking and many academics resist the idea that they should be contributing to the needs of the labour market, rather than guiding students in their “pursuit of pure knowledge”.
6. The French HE and research sectors are thus in a state of flux and it remains to be seen to what extent the new opportunities will be used to defend the disciplinary foundations of the traditional university system or to what extent the “Europeanisation” of the HE sector will progressively lead to change and bring the universities more in line with the other, more vocational, HE institutions in the country.

**APPENDIX 1. CLASSIFICATION OF FRENCH UNIVERSITIES, UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY (IUT) AND NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTES (INP)**

***Universities of Law and Economics:***

Bordeaux IV, Grenoble II, Lyon III, Paris I, Paris II, Strasbourg III, Toulouse I

***Universities of Humanities and Social Sciences:***

Bordeaux III, Grenoble III, Lille III, Lyon II, Montpellier III, Nancy II, Paris III, Paris IV, Paris VIII, Paris X, Rennes II, Strasbourg II, Toulouse II

***Interdisciplinary Universities without Medicine:***

Aix-Marseille I, Aix-Marseille III, Arras, Avignon, Bretagne Sud, Cergy Pontoise, Chambéry, Clermont-Ferrand II, Corse, Evry, La Réunion, La Rochelle, Le Havre, Le Mans, Littoral, Marne la Vallée, Metz, Mulhouse, Nouvelle Calédonie, Orléans, Pau, Perpignan, Polynésie, Toulon, Valenciennes, Versailles-Saint Quentin en Yvelines.

***Interdisciplinary Universities with Medicine:***

Amiens, Angers, Antilles Guyane, Besançon, Brest, Caen, Clermont-Ferrand II, Dijon, Lille II, Limoges, Montpellier I, Nantes, Nice, Paris XII, Paris XIII, Poitiers, Reims, Rouen, Saint Etienne, Tours.

***Universities of Natural and Health Sciences:***

Aix-Marseille II, Bordeaux I, Bordeaux II, Grenoble I, Lille I, Lyon I, Montpellier II, Nancy I, Paris V, Paris VI, Paris VII, Paris XI, Rennes I, Strasbourg I, Toulouse III.

***INP and IUT:***

INP Lorraine, INP Grenoble, INP Toulouse, UT Belfort, UT Compiègne, UT Troyes.

## APPENDIX 2. DISCIPLINARY CLASSIFICATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITIES (CNU)

Division by main discipline, group and section.

<b>Law, Political Science, Economics and Management</b>	
<b>Group I</b>	
01	Private Law and Criminal Sciences
02	Public Law
03	History of Law and Legal Institutions
04	Political Science
<b>Group II</b>	
05	Economics
06	Management
<b>Humanities and Social Sciences</b>	
<b>Group III</b>	
07	Linguistics and Phonetics
08	Ancient Languages and Literatures
09	French Language and Literature
10	Comparative Literature
11	English and Anglo-Saxon Languages and Literatures
12	German and Scandinavian Languages and Literature
13	Slavonic Languages and Literatures
14	Roman Languages and Literature: Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Other Roman Languages
15	Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew Languages and Literatures and Other Languages
<b>Group IV</b>	
16	Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology
17	Philosophy
18	Arts: Plastic Arts, Arts of Spectacle, Music, Musicology, Esthetical Studies, Sciences of Art
19	Sociology, Demography
20	Anthropology, Ethnology, Prehistory
21	History and Civilizations: History and Archaeology of Ancient worlds and medieval worlds, history of art
22	History and Civilizations: History of Modern World, History of Contemporary World, History of Art or Music
23	Physical, Human, Economic and Regional Geography
24	Town and Country Planning, Urbanism
<b>Interdisciplinary studies</b>	
<b>Group XII</b>	
70	Education Studies
71	Information and Communication Studies
72	Epistemology, History of Sciences and Techniques
73	Regional Cultures and Languages
74	Sports Studies (STAPS)
<b>Theology</b>	
7501	Catholic Theology
7502	Protestant Theology
<b>Sciences and techniques</b>	
<b>Group V</b>	
25	Mathematics
26	Applied Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics
27	Computer Science
<b>Group VI</b>	
28	Dense Environments and Materials
29	Elementary Constituents
30	Transparent Environments and Optics
<b>Group VII</b>	
31	Theoretical, Physical, Analytical Chemistry
32	Organic, Mineral, Industrial Chemistry
33	Chemistry of Materials
<b>Group VIII</b>	
34	Astronomy, Astrophysics
35	Structure and Evolution of Planet Earth and Other Planets
36	Solid Ground: Geodynamic of Superior Layers, Paleobiosphere
37	Meteorology, Oceanography and Physic of Environment
<b>Group IX</b>	
60	Mechanics, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering
61	Computer Engineering, Automatics and Signal Treatment
62	Energetic, Proceed Engineering
63	Electronic, Optronics And Systems
<b>Group X</b>	
64	Biochemistry and Molecule Biology
65	Cellular Biology

66	Physiology
67	Population Biology and Ecology
68	Biology of Organisms
69	Neuroscience
<b>Pharmaceutics</b>	
<b>Group XI</b>	
39	Physical-Chemistry Sciences and Pharmaceutical Technologies
40	Sciences of Medicament
41	Biological Sciences
<b>Medicines</b>	
4201	Anatomy
4202	Histology, Embryology, Cytogenetics
4203	Pathological Anatomy
4301	Biophysics
4302	Science of X-Ray
4401	Biochemistry
4402	Physiology
4403	Cellular Biology
4404	Nutrition
4501	Bacteriology, Studies of Viruses, Hygiene
4502	Science of Parasites
4503	Tropical Diseases, Infect Diseases
4601	Epidemiology, Economy of Health and Prevention
4602	Medicine of Work and Professional Risks
4603	Legal Medicine
4604	Bio-Statistics and Medical Computer Science
4701	Haematology and Transfusion
4702	Cancer and X-Ray Therapy
4703	Immunology
4704	Genetic
4801	Anaesthetics
4801	Medical Reanimation
4803	Fundamental Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology
4804	Therapeutic
4901	Neurology
4902	Neurosurgery
4903	Adult Psychiatry
4904	Infant Psychiatry
4905	Functional Re-Education
5001	Science of Rheumatism
5002	Orthopaedic Surgery And Science Of Traumas
5003	Dermatology
5004	Plastic Surgery, Reconstructive Surgery and Esthetical Surgery
5101	Science of Lungs
5102	Cardiology and Vascular Diseases
5103	Surgery of Heart and Vascular System
5104	Vascular Surgery
5201	Gasterontology
5202	Digestive System Surgery
5203	Nephrology
5204	Urology
5301	Internal Medicine
5302	General Surgery
5401	Paediatrics
5402	Infant Surgery
5403	Gynaecology and Obstetric science
5404	Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases
5405	Biology of Development and Biology of Reproduction
5501	Nose Throat and Mouth
5502	Ophthalmology
5503	Stomatology and Facial Surgery
<b>Dentistry</b>	
5601	Infant Dentistry
5602	Dental Orthopaedics
5603	Prevention, Epidemiology, Economy of Health, Criminal Dentistry
5701	Paradontology
5702	Surgery of the Mouth, Pathology and Therapeutics, Anaesthesia and Reanimation
5703	Biological Sciences
5801	Conservative Dentistry
5802	Prosthesis, Denture
5803	Anatomic and Physiological Sciences, Biomaterials, Biophysics, Science of X-Ray

### APPENDIX 3. THE ORGANISATION OF DISCIPLINES IN FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

Examples from our Case Study Universities

UNIVERSITY OF BORDEAUX II	Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Dentistry	Faculty of Wine Studies	Faculty of Pharmacy	Faculty of Human Sciences	Faculty of Sciences and Modelling	Faculty of Sciences	Faculty of Sports Studies
Ancient Greek	X							
Anthropology					X			
Biology							X	
Chemistry							X	
Cognitive Sciences						X		
Demography					X	X		
Dentistry		X						
Education Studies					X			
English					X			
ISIC						X		
Mathematics						X	X	
Medicine	X							
Pharmacy				X				
Physics							X	
Psychology					X			
Sports Studies (STAPS)								X
Sociology					X			
Wine studies			X					



Scandinavian							X						
Serbo-Croatian					X								
SICA									X				
Slovak					X								
Sociology													
Spanish								X					
Sports												X	

<b>UNIVERSITY OF BORDEAUX IV</b>	<b>Faculty of Law and Political sciences</b>	<b>Faculty of Economic and Managerial Studies</b>	<b>Faculty of Social and Economic Administration (AES)</b>
Accounting and Finance	X	X	X
AES			X
Commerce		X	
Computer Sciences		X	X
Demography		X	X
Econometrics		X	
Economics	X	X	X
Economics and Management		X	X
English	X		X
German		X	X
History		X	X
Law / History of Law	X		
Mathematics		X	X
Political Science	X		
Psychology		X	X
Sociology		X	X
Spanish	X		X

<b>UNIVERSITY OF MONTPELLIER I</b>	Faculty of Law	Faculty of Economic and Social Administration	Faculty of Economics	Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Dentistry	Faculty of Pharmaceutics and Biology	Faculty of Sport Studies
AES		x					
Biology						X	
Dentistry					X		
Economics		X	X				
Economics and Management		X	X				
Law	X						
Medicine				X			
Pharmaceutics						X	
Political Studies	X						
Sports Studies (STAPS)							X

<b>UNIVERSITY OF PERPIGNAN</b>	Faculty of Law and Economics	Faculty of Literature and Social Sciences	Faculty of Sports Studies	Faculty of Sciences
AES	X			
Archaeology		X		
Biology				X
Catalan		X		
Chemistry				X
Classical Literature		X		
Computer Sciences				X
Economics	X			
Economics and Management	X			
Electronic Engineering				X
English		X		
Geography and Urban Planning		X		
Geology				X
History		X		
History of Art		X		
Law	X			
Mathematics				X
Modern Languages (LEA)		X		
Modern Literature		X		
Physics				X
Sports Studies (STAPS)			X	
Sociology		X		
Spanish		X		

<b>UNIVERSITY OF TOULOUSE I</b>	Faculty of Law	Faculty of Economic Sciences	Faculty of Administration	Faculty of Computer Sciences	Department of Sports Studies	Department of Mathematics	Department of Political Studies and Sociology	Department of History	Department of Languages and Civilizations
Accounting and Finance		X							
AES			X						
Commerce			X						
Computer Sciences				X					
Demography							X		
Econometrics		X							
Economics		X	X						
Economics	X	X	X	X					
English									X
German									X
History								X	
ISIC				X		X			
Law	X		X						
Mathematics		X				X			
Political Science	X		X				X		
Sociology			X				X		
Spanish									X
Sports Studies					X				

<b>UNIVERSITY OF TOULOUSE II</b>	Faculty of History, Arts Archaeology	Faculty of Languages, Literature and Foreign Civilizations	Faculty of Literature, Philosophy and Music	Faculty of Psychology	Faculty of Social Sciences	University Service of Sports (SUAPS)
Anthropology Ethnology					X	
Arabic		X				
Archaeology	X					
Art studies	X					
Catalan			X			
Chinese		X				
Classical Literature			X			
Dutch		X				
Economics and Management					X	
Education Studies					X	
English		X				
Geography					X	
German		X				
Hebrew		X				
History	X					
History of Art	X					
Italian		X				
Japanese		X				
Linguistics		X				
Mathematics					X	
Modern Languages (LEA)		X				
Modern Literature			X			
Music			X			
Occitan			X			
Philosophy			X			
Polish		X				

Portuguese		X				
Psychology				X		
Roman		X				
Russian		X				
Serbo-Croatian		X				
Sociology				X	X	
Spanish		X				
Sports						X
Swedish		X				

<b>UNIVERSITY OF TOULOUSE III</b>	Faculty of Mathematics Computer Science and Management	Faculty of Physics, Chemistry and Automatism	Faculty of Sciences	Faculty of Languages	Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Pharmacy	Faculty of Dentistry	Faculty of Sports Studies
Biology			X					
Chemistry		X						
Commerce	X							
Computer Sciences	X							
Dentistry							X	
Economics	X		X					
Engineering		X						
English				X				
German				X				
ISIC		X						
Life Sciences			X					
Mathematics	X							
Medicine					X			
Pharmacy						X		
Physics		X	X					
Physiology								X
Russian				X				
Sports Studies (STAPS)								X
Spanish				X				

UNIVERSITY OF VERSAILLES ST- QUENTIN EN YVELINES	Faculty of Sciences	Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities	Faculty of Law and Political science	Faculty of Medicine
AES		X		
Biology	X			X
Chemistry	X			X
Computer Sciences	X			
Economic Sciences		X		
Economics and Management		X	X	
Electronic Engineering	X			
Engineering	X			
English		X		
Geography and Urban Planning		X		
History		X		
ISIC	X			
Law		X	X	
Life Sciences	X			
Mathematics	X			
Medicine				X
Modern Literature		X		
Physics	X			
Political Science		X	X	
Sports Studies (STAPS)	X			
Sociology		X		
Spanish		X		
Water Engineering	X			

#### APPENDIX 4. FRENCH RESEARCH EVALUATION BOARDS

	<b>Research</b>	<b>Higher Education</b>
<b>Evaluation of institutes</b>	CNER – National Committee of Research Evaluation CNE – National Committee of Evaluation	CNE CNESER – National Council of Higher education and Research
<b>Recruitment and assessment of:</b>		
<b>- staff members</b>	For the CNRS: recruitment and assessment of staff and evaluation of research units (UPR and UMR): The National Committee of Scientific Research ( <i>Comité National de la recherche scientifique</i> )	For academic staff: CNU – The National Council of Universities
<b>- research units</b>	The research units which are not associated to CNRS are evaluated by the MSU	The research units which are not affiliated to CNRS are evaluated by MSU The mixed research units (UMR), affiliated to the CNRS are assessed by The National Committee of Scientific Research
<b>Strategy</b>	CSRT – Higher Council of Research and Technology ( <i>Conseil Supérieur de la recherche et de la technologie</i> )	CNESER CPU – Conference of University Presidents

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