

## **Current Strategy of French Universities for the Development of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Field of Sports**

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### **Abstract**

Our presentation deals with the strategy defined by the French universities to respond to the sport job market needs. The needs expressed by the employers of the sport and sport related sectors are quite clear:

- They search for young people with a good basic training in sport sciences and a strong previous experience in sport as practitioners or leaders. They intend to test them and give them a complementary training within the industry for a minimum period of one year.
  - They are also interested in further education for their employees who have usually low qualifications. But the courses have to be accessible to full time workers. A combination of e-learning, limited short sessions at the University and individual tutorship has been recommended as an ideal scenario. On the opposite, Universities (academics) are mainly interested in a “scientific education” with full time students. The position of Universities corresponds to academics individual interests. As in many other countries, the academic career in France is mostly related to the research activities. Negotiating with employers and running vocational training are seen as very time consuming activities, detrimental to a successful academic career. Three proposals have been tested to overcome those contradictions:
  - find significant support from academics ready to take the risky way of vocational education and training;
  - find extra resources to cover the supplementary costs of vocational training, mostly a support from employer’s organisations;
  - use those financial resources to recruit extra administrative staff to lighten the work load of academics.
- Following those orientations, a new higher education and training policy has been implemented in the sport sector in France. Nevertheless, if significant measures have been taken to strengthen the relationship between training providers and employers, the “academic culture” and academic interests generate strong resistances to that evolution.