



**Principle 6: Working conditions**  
***Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.***

**Educating students with disabilities is a key aspect of Thales's employment policy.**

Thales has pursued an active policy to promote the employment of people with disabilities since 1992, noting that:

- *few people with disabilities have access to higher education,*
- *universal access to education remains the best way to reduce inequalities.*

As a result, in the areas of secondary and university education, as well as continuing education and career transition training, Thales has instituted new measures including educational institutions and young people with disabilities to help these students better integrate into school and university settings.

Thales has signed a three-year cooperation agreement with the Université Pierre et Marie Curie de Paris (UPMC) to provide education and career counselling to students with disabilities.

Working with the university's disability liaison office, students receive individualised counselling to guide them in their university studies and future career choices, with opportunities to visit Thales sites, talk with operational staff and learn about Thales careers and job families. Students also have access to tutoring and personalised internships under conditions that meet their needs. One year into the partnership with UPMC, Thales is actively guiding 20 students with disabilities through their university studies.

Under the same partnership, Thales is also working on counselling and internships for dyslexic students.

Similar cooperation agreements are currently being finalised with the Université de Bordeaux 1 and the Université de Bretagne.

Working with the Toulouse local education authority, Thales is also behind an agreement bringing together many of the major stakeholders in education and employment. The agreement between the Toulouse regional education authority, the DIRECCTE<sup>1</sup>, the Toulouse PRES<sup>2</sup> and Thales aims to provide comprehensive services to students with disabilities to help them access higher education and career guidance. Up to 700 high school students in the Toulouse region and 300 university, business school and engineering school students could benefit from the programme.

Other businesses are expected to sign on to the project soon.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional directorate for business, fair trade, consumer affairs, work and employment.

<sup>2</sup> Representative body of French universities, business schools and engineering schools.



The agreement comes into effect at the start of the 2011-2012 academic year and includes three major commitments:

- *mobilise the necessary resources for students with disabilities to receive an education in mainstream classrooms*
- *improve the accommodations and modifications (material and human) needed to encourage students with disabilities to pursue and obtain scientific degrees*
- *establish close cooperation between secondary schools, higher education institutions and businesses so that the education that students receive leads to successful integration both socially and professionally within partner companies or higher education institutions.*

Thales is also helping to train adults who are transitioning in their careers due to disability. Six years ago, the company signed a national agreement with FAGERH<sup>3</sup> that aims to improve the training provided by France's professional rehabilitation centres in electronics, IT and software development. Measures include developing more effective technical resources (machines and training tools better suited to high-tech careers) as well as high-level diploma programmes.

In September 2011, the 2ISA centre, a professional rehabilitation centre in Millau, will launch an "excellence training" to allow people with disabilities to qualify as software development engineers. Thales, the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers and Cap Gemini have joined forces to develop the course, which will combine theoretical coursework with internships in Group units.

With improved training, people with disabilities will have much greater chances of finding a job.

Since signing the agreement with FAGERH, Thales units have welcomed 320 interns transitioning in their careers due to disability.

Finally, Thales is using its technological expertise to help educate students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

The **Portanum** system, developed by Thales engineers, helps people with impaired vision to read wall and flip charts. The system comprises a camcorder which is used to film an optimum image of the chart or whiteboard. This image is then transmitted via a Wi-Fi network to a computer, where it can be viewed by the visually impaired individual. Special software processes the images to provide students with clear information in a format that suits their individual vision. Portanum has already been deployed in collaboration with the APEDV<sup>4</sup> in primary and secondary schools in the Nice area, allowing visually impaired students to learn in mainstream classroom settings. This same system has also been installed in two rehabilitation centres for the visually impaired and three university lecture halls.

The **EyeSchool** system builds on Portanum technology to offer students interactive animation and audio read-outs of documents they receive from their teachers, and is the latest in a series of learning aids that will constitute the "**electronic schoolbag**" of the future. All the software developed by Thales can be downloaded free of charge at [www.portanum.com](http://www.portanum.com).

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<sup>3</sup> Federation of associations of managers and rehabilitation facilities for people with disabilities.

<sup>4</sup> Association of parents of visually impaired children.