

// Lifelong learning: the three pillars

Luxembourg now has a one-stop shop for business education. The Chambre de Commerce has launched the Luxembourg School For Commerce (LSC) to respond to what its says are changing needs in professional training, given recent changes in the labour market and the economic climate. The LSC brings together once separate training programmes into one organisation with three pillars: continuing education, vocational training and university study.



Luxembourg School For Commerce director Paul Emering

Steve Eastwood

Paul Emering, director of the new school, explains that the change is intended to emphasise the notion of 'lifelong learning'. "We want to offer a complete, comprehensive training offering to the public," said Emering. "One brand, one-stop shopping." The LSC's mandate is to meet the training needs of the economy, whether by preparing students with the skills needed by employers, or helping employers find their staff the training they need. "We are called the Luxembourg School For Commerce," said Emering, emphasising the "For Commerce" "This means also that all our effort has to be directed to the needs of businesses and the economy."

// Education on three levels

The LSC is taking over a continuing professional education programme previously run by the Chamber of Commerce Training Institute (IFCC). Emering says that the IFCC program had about 9,000 participants during 2008. The LSC is setting itself the goal of offering companies a programme which addresses the training and qualification needs of their employees and senior staff. The or-

ganisation will talk to companies and professional bodies to learn what is expected. The LSC qualifications will give access to regulated professions and can lead to diplomas recognised across Europe. The continuing education plan also contains a programme called LSC Entrepreneurship, which involves about 1,000 students, and is aimed at people starting a new business.

The Chamber of Commerce used to operate, under a legal mandate, vocational courses for secondary students through another training division called the Initial Professional Training Service (SFPI). These enabled Luxembourg students to spend part of their time in a company, learning the practical aspects of the job. The LSC is taking over this training area, which features 1,700 students enrolled in vocational training, earning qualifications for jobs in the manufacturing sector, retail, HORECA and services.

// Bridging the gap

Emering says part of his mandate is to help Luxembourg schools better prepare their students for the workforce. "We want to open companies to teachers in our school system so that they can see the economic reality outside the protected realm of the school, and to see ... that the qualifications they deliver are ... of value to companies," he said. He reports suc-

cess with organising visits to the schools and having teachers and students visit workplaces.

The new LSC will also be involved in providing university level courses, an area that wasn't directly under the Chamber of Commerce, taking over operational responsibility for the Luxembourg Business Academy. The Academy was created by the University of Luxembourg in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and offers students academic training company management. Since 2007, the academy has offered a masters in "Entrepreneurship and Innovation" that sees students spend 6 months in the university and 6 months with a company.

// The choice of English

The decision to use an English name for the new institution may shock some in the Luxembourg education system, Emering concedes, but the choice was deliberate. "The English name gives training the same degree of visibility as other initiatives promoting Luxembourg to improve its competitive position," the LSC explained in a press release. "In recent years, Luxembourg took various initiatives to promote itself, we already have Luxembourg for Business, and we have Luxembourg for Finance," said Emering. "So when we say Luxembourg School For Commerce that means that the school is also something very important."

The LSC will be based in the Chamber of Commerce building in Kirchberg, using the 4 room conference centre and the 36 modern classrooms of the 6,500 sq. metre Training Centre.

by Mike Gordon