

2024



The Luxembourgish Education System

An Overview



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale,
de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse



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INFORMATION WEBSITES

Ministry of Education, Children and Youth
www.men.lu

Ministry of Research and Higher Education
www.mesr.public.lu

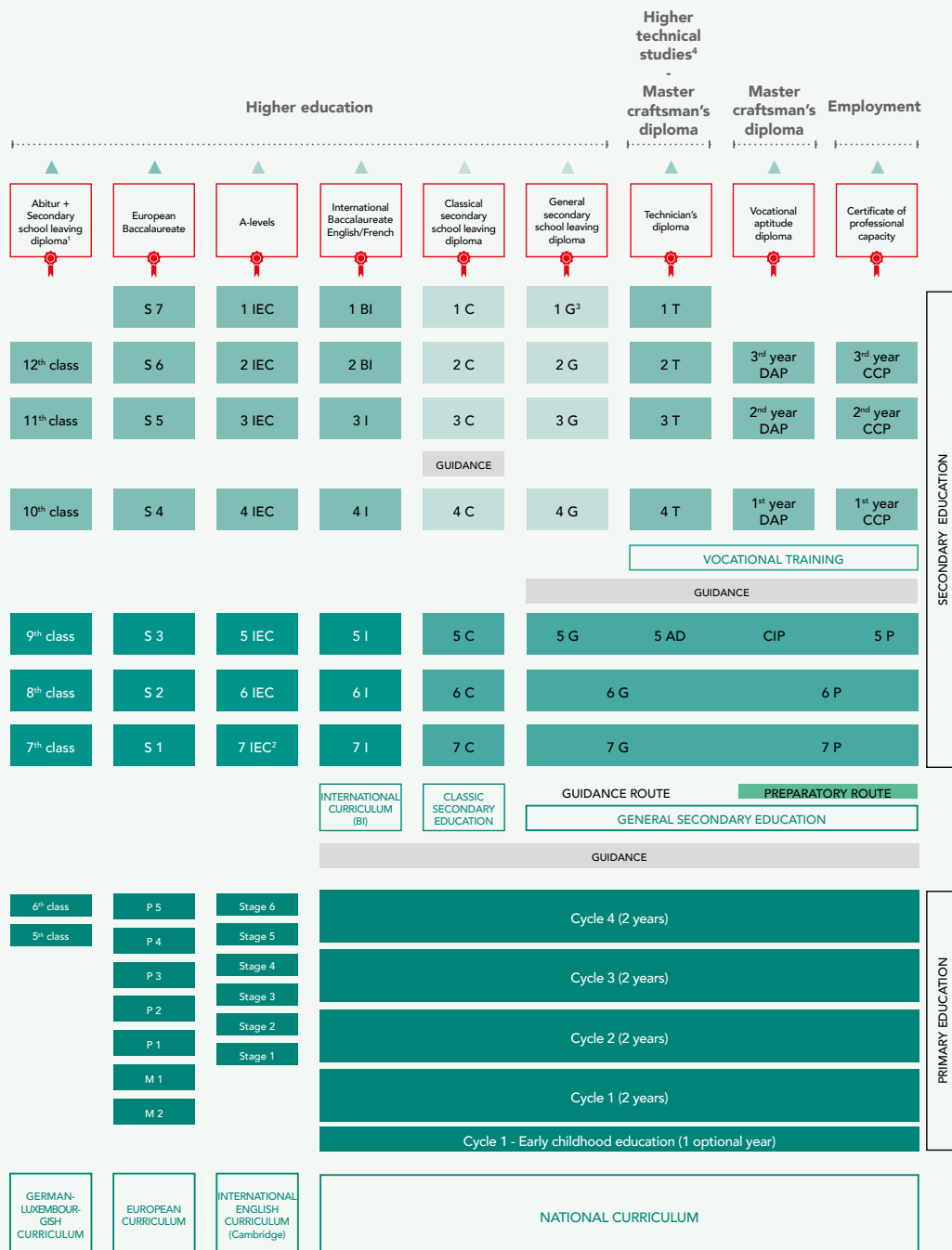
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THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN LUXEMBOURG 2023/2024



¹ Classical secondary school leaving diploma and general secondary school leaving diploma.

² International English Classes.

³ Also a "15GED" class added to the subject area educator.

⁴ Via preparatory modules.

Luxembourg schools also offer adults the possibility to take the DAES (Diplôme d'accès aux études supérieures), which is equivalent to the Luxembourgish secondary school leaving diploma (Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires) and gives access to higher education.

About the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Because of its small population (more than 660,000 inhabitants at the 1 January 2023 (STATEC), in an area of 2,586 km²), it is easy to forget that the Grand Duchy is a sovereign state in its own right. It is a founding member state of the European Union, which it presides on a rotating basis.

Although the population is small in terms of numbers, it is extremely diverse: more than 47% of residents are foreigners, of more than 170 different nationalities; 80% are nationals of a European Union member state.

Cross-border workers from France, Belgium and Germany also play a key role in the Luxembourg economy: more than 228,000 come in to the Grand Duchy each day to work.

Immigration and cross-border mobility are reflected in the working population, 74% of whom are foreigners (47% cross-border workers and 27% foreign residents).

Diversity goes beyond passports: it is reflected in the languages spoken¹, people's socio-economic origin, their migration experience, family and social histories, and their talents.

As a result of strong political determination, Luxembourg's education system has considerably evolved in recent years, in keeping with developments in Luxembourg society and an international environment that features digitalisation and globalisation.

This brochure provides an overview of the organisation and current functioning of the education system. It is intended for use by anyone, whether in the Grand Duchy or elsewhere, wanting to find out about the subject.

¹ In 2023, the language most widely spoken at home by nearly 68% of pupils enrolled in public education was not Luxembourgish. Almost 42% of pupils in public education do not have the Luxembourgish nationality.

A. CHILDREN UP TO 4 YEARS OLD

The structures for very young children operate according to the general objectives and educational principles determined at the national level by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth.





1. Education and childcare facilities

Several types of facilities look after children, from a very early age up to 12 years old. Collective education and childcare facilities may, as appropriate, be called *crèches* (early child care provision, nursery), *mini-crèches* or *foyers du jour* (daycare centres), *maisons relais* (childcare centres), or *foyers scolaires* (school childcare centres).

There are collective education and childcare facilities operating under a convention with the government, and commercially orientated private collective education and childcare structures.

Parental assistants take care of children in their home, during the daytime or overnight.

2. The childcare service voucher scheme

Under the childcare service voucher scheme (*Chèque-service accueil, CSA*), the government provides financial aid for out-of-school childcare. It applies to children under 13 years old or those still in elementary school. The child's parents must be resident in the Grand Duchy, otherwise at least one parent must work in the Grand Duchy and be a national of a European Union member state. The CSA scheme is a system that provides free and reduced-price childcare.

3. Free plurilingual education

During 20 hours per week of free supervision in a collective facility under the CSA scheme, children from 1 to 4 years old are introduced to French and Luxembourgish in a playful way suited to their age. Value is also placed on the child's mother tongue.

4. Optional schooling from the age of 3

Elementary education is organised in four learning cycles (see page 5).

Cycle 1 corresponds to pre-school education. The first year (for children aged between 3 and 4), also called early childhood education (*éducation précoce*), is optional. One of its purposes is to continue the playful discovery of French and Luxembourgish started during plurilingual education.

B. CHILDREN FROM 4 TO 11 YEARS OLD





1. Schooling

School attendance is compulsory for all children from the age of 4 (before 1 September of the current year).

There are almost 170 public elementary schools in the Grand Duchy, spread throughout all the 100 municipalities in the country, and about a dozen private schools. There is no charge for pupils attending public schools, and textbooks as well as transport are provided free of charge.

1.1. Public elementary school offering the national curriculum

The school year begins on 15 September and ends on 15 July.

Organisation in cycles

Elementary education is organised in four learning cycles:

- Cycle 1 corresponds to pre-school education; it is for children aged 4 and 5 (or, optionally, from the age of 3 years).
- Cycles 2 to 4 correspond to elementary (primary) education.
- Cycle 2 is for children aged between 6 and 7.
- Cycle 3 is for children aged between 8 and 9.
- Cycle 4 is for children aged between 10 and 11.

Learning

Learning is based on skills, i.e. on the capacity of the child to use acquired knowledge in order to achieve a result.

In principle, each cycle has a duration of two years. In exceptional cases, pupils may cover one cycle in one year or take three years to acquire the skills bases.

In Cycle 1, language learning focuses on the development of oral skills in Luxembourgish (the main language of communication), the introduction of spoken French, and placing value on the language spoken at home.

In Cycles 2 to 4, pupils learn to read and write in German. German is the teaching language for all subjects (except French). The exposure to Luxembourgish which begins at *crèche* prepares children for learning German, since the two languages are very closely related.

Familiarisation with French continues in Cycle 2, but only for oral skills. Learning written French starts in Cycle 3.

Assessment

At the end of each term, an intermediate report (*bilan intermédiaire*), explained and commented at an individual meeting with the teacher, informs the parents of their child's progress in relation to the desired outcomes. At the end of each learning cycle, the educational team draws up an end-of-cycle report (*bilan de fin de cycle*): this certifies that the pupil has acquired the skills necessary for moving on to the next cycle.

The orientation procedure

At the meetings during Cycle 4, the parents and the teacher discuss their views on the route the pupil should take after having completed elementary education (to general secondary education, classical secondary education, European education, etc.). At the end of the cycle, they make a joint decision (*décision d'orientation commune*). This is based on the pupil's academic results, the results of the *Épreuves communes* (tests at national level) taken by all pupils in the Grand Duchy and the results of the tests carried out by the school psychologist (these are optional).

In the event of disagreement, an orientation commission (*commission d'orientation*) meets in order to make a decision.

1.2. Public schools offering international curriculums

European education in approved European schools

Six public schools across the country offer a European curriculum from the primary classes upwards (French-, English- and German-language sections). They are open to all pupils, and there is no charge for enrolment. Pupils may then continue into secondary education leading to the European Baccalaureate.

International English curriculum (Cambridge)

One school offers classes taught in English following the Cambridge Primary curriculum while also introducing pupils to the national languages (Luxembourgish and either French or German).

1.3. Private schools

There are a number of private schools that apply either the same curriculum as the Grand Duchy's public schools or another curriculum, while being subsidised by the government.

In addition to these schools, there are pre-school and primary classes at the two European Schools in the Grand Duchy; they are primarily intended for the children of staff at the European institutions, who are not required to pay fees.

1.4. Support for foreign pupils

The Ministry of Education, Children and Youth's School Integration and Welcoming Service (*Service de l'intégration et de l'accueil scolaires*, SIA) welcomes families who have recently arrived in Luxembourg, offers information and counseling for the pupils and their parents on all questions related to the Luxembourgish school offer and provides an individual monitoring for two years, on a voluntary basis.

There are four stages in welcoming newly arrived pupils to Luxembourg:

1. **appointment:** appointment request made by the family (before arriving in Luxembourg: possibility to contact the SIA);
2. **support:** the SIA assists the family with an intercultural mediator if necessary;
3. **guidance:** orientation suggestion towards an adequate class;
4. **monitoring:** monitoring of the pupil during two years.

Children newly arrived in the Grand Duchy and/or pupils who do not master any of the country's languages when they start elementary school in the Grand Duchy are offered language support classes (*cours d'accueil*),

Many of the activities, particularly those aimed at Portuguese-speaking pupils, are designed to promote the language and culture of their first

mother tongue and to help them integrate into the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to organise language discovery activities directed at all the pupils in their class.

To facilitate communication, parents, teachers and the school authorities have the possibility of calling on the services of intercultural mediators (*médiateurs interculturels*) provided by the ministry.

1.5. Support in elementary education for pupils with special needs

Special measures are set up to help children experiencing difficulty in keeping up with the normal pace of class work.

Locally, specialised teachers for pupils with special needs provide support for class teachers and educational teams in implementing adapted teaching.

At the regional level, each of the 15 directorates for elementary education has a support team for pupils with special needs that advises teachers.

The teams are also able to offer specialised external intervention. In each of these directorates, an inclusion commission at the request of either the parents or the teacher or a representative of the daycare centre (with the parents' consent) defines what action should be applied to the pupils who need assistance.

If the solutions at the local and regional levels are not sufficient, it is possible to apply to one of the competence centres (*centres de compétences en psychopédagogie spécialisée*). These centres operate at the national level.

It is the National Inclusion Commission (*Commission nationale d'inclusion, CNI*) which proposes, on the basis of a dossier and a specialised diagnosis, that one or more of these centres should be responsible for a child or a young person. This cannot take place without the parents' agreement.

The competence centres

- *Centre pour le développement des apprentissages Grande-Duchesse Maria Teresa* (CDA, Grand Duchess Maria Teresa Competence Centre for Learning Development)
- *Centre pour le développement intellectuel* (CDI, Competence Centre for Intellectual Development)
- *Centre pour le développement moteur* (CDM, Competence Centre for Motor Development)
- *Centre pour le développement socio-émotionnel* (CDSE, Competence Centre for Socio-Emotional Development)
- *Centre pour le développement des compétences relatives à la vue* (CDV, Competence Centre for the Development of Vision-Related Skills)
- *Centre pour enfants et jeunes à haut potentiel* (CEJHP, Competence Centre for Children and Young People with High Potential)
- *Centre de logopédie* (CL, Centre for Language and Hearing Therapy)
- *Centre pour enfants et jeunes présentant un trouble du spectre de l'autisme* (CTSA, Competence Centre for Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder)

2. Outside teaching hours

Outside classroom hours and during school holidays, children may be looked after either by a parental assistant or by a collective education and childcare facility, generally located near the school, and sometimes even in the same building.

For school-age children (from the age of 4 until the end of elementary school) childcare and midday meals (lunch) are offered at no cost during school periods, regardless of the income of the household in which the child lives. The CSA scheme (see page 3) reduces the cost borne by the parents outside school periods.

The teachers and staff of education and childcare facilities are encouraged to cooperate in projects and shared activities (extracurricular supervision plans).



C. PUPILS FROM 12 YEARS UPWARDS



1. Schooling

Secondary education is for young people from 11 to 12 years upwards. It is dispensed by more than 50 institutions: public institutions (mainly secondary schools), private institutions applying the ministry's national curriculum, private institutions applying a different curriculum, and European schools.

The range of courses and diplomas on offer is very wide. Pupils and their families identify the institution that best suits them by consulting various publications and the www.orientation.lu portal.

1.1. Public secondary education offering the national curriculum

While applying the ministry's official curriculum, each secondary school may, as part of its autonomy, introduce an educational approach, classes or specific measures tailored to its pupils' needs and expectations.

Classical secondary education

Classical secondary education (*Enseignement secondaire classique*, ESC) is general schooling spread over a period of seven years. It aims to prepare pupils for higher and university studies; on successful completion of their studies, they are awarded the corresponding secondary school leaving diploma (*diplôme de fin d'études secondaires classiques*).

German is the teaching language for the first three years. During the following four years, all subjects (except German and English) are taught in French.

Starting in the second year of classical secondary education, pupils may choose English or Latin (or Chinese in one secondary school). From the third year onwards, all pupils are also taught English. At the end of the fourth year, pupils may choose one of the eleven existing subject areas (sections) (A – modern languages; B – mathematics and IT; C – natural science and mathematics; D – economics and mathematics; E – art; F – music; G – human and social sciences; I – IT and communication; N – entrepreneurship, finance and marketing; P – cognitive sciences and humanities, R – politics and sustainable development).

At the end of each term (or semester), the transcript (*bulletin de notes*) indicates the marks obtained in the various subjects taught, any remedial measures, absences, and comments on behaviour. At the end of the school year, the transcript indicates the decision on promotion (whether the pupil is to move on to the next class up, or not). During the transition phases, it also includes the opinion regarding guidance (*avis d'orientation*).

General secondary education

General secondary education (*Enseignement secondaire général*, ESG) covers seven years leading up to the corresponding secondary school leaving diploma (*diplôme de fin d'études secondaires générales*). This diploma grants the same rights as the classical secondary school leaving diploma: the holder can either start a professional career or enrol in higher education (university or non-university studies).

During the first three years (guidance route), the teaching language is German, except for mathematics, which is taught in French. There are also classes with a specific language system (*à régime linguistique spécifique*). Thereafter the teaching language usually remains German, except for certain subjects which are taught in French.

Parallel to the guidance route, the preparatory route (*voie de préparation*) in general secondary education is for those pupils who, by the end of their primary education, have not acquired the required levels of competence (*socles de compétences*, skills base). They are taught in modules, which allows them to progress at their own pace. They are prepared for joining a more demanding class or for vocational training. This preparatory route may be followed in either German or French.

At the end of the third year of general education, pupils can continue their path by choosing either vocational training or one of the five streams (administrative and commercial stream; health and social professions; general technology; art stream; hotel and tourist industry) and the 19 subject areas of general secondary education.

Assessment in general secondary education follows the same principles as classical secondary education.

Vocational training

Initial vocational training gives young people a general education, including both theory and practice. It begins after the third year of secondary education. Some 140 training courses are available, directed at obtaining one of three qualifications (from the least to the most demanding):

- *Certificat de capacité professionnelle* (CCP, certificate of professional capacity), with a duration of three years;
- *Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle* (DAP, vocational aptitude diploma), also with a duration of three years;
- *Diplôme de technicien* (DT, technician's diploma), with a duration of four years.

Vocational training may be carried out:

- under the full-time scheme (*régime à plein temps*): at a secondary school, with periods of work experience totalling at least 12 weeks;
- under the concurrent scheme (*régime concomitant*): partly in a company and partly at a secondary school;
- under a mixed scheme (*régime mixte*): full-time at a secondary school for one or more years and the rest of the training under the concurrent scheme;
- under the full-time scheme (*régime à plein temps*): at a secondary school, with periods of work experience totalling at least 12 weeks.

Most training courses are taught in German, although some are taught in French or English.

Teaching is carried out in modules (and not by subject). Each module is designed to develop a number of skills and focuses on real-life professional situations.

Assessment is made on a semi-annual basis with transcripts, an intermediate review during training, a final review, and one or two integrated project(s) placing the pupils in a real or simulated professional situation.

1.2. Public secondary education offering international curriculums

European Curriculum

Six public schools offer a European syllabus at the secondary level (French-, English- and German-language sections) leading to the European Baccalaureate. These schools are open to all pupils, and there is no enrolment fee.

International Curriculum

Four public secondary schools prepare pupils for the International Baccalaureate (IB) in either English or French. This is a classic baccalaureate, offered by 2,500 secondary schools in more than 140 countries worldwide.

International English curriculum (Cambridge)

One secondary school offers teaching leading to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) at about the age of 16, Advanced Subsidiary (AS) levels, and Advanced (A) levels at about the age of 18. Teaching leading to the A-level qualification is offered in more than 125 countries worldwide. The qualification attests that the pupils have completed their secondary education.

German-Luxembourgish curriculum

One secondary school in Perl (Germany) combines elements of the German and Luxembourgish school systems, and leads to a qualification under the German system as well as to the Luxembourgish secondary school leaving diploma. German is the main teaching language.

1.3. Private secondary education

Five private secondary schools follow the ministry's national curriculum.

One private school prepares pupils for the International Baccalaureate (IB) in English, and another prepares pupils for the International Baccalaureate (IB) in French.

Another private school prepares pupils for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Advanced (A) levels.

Three institutions follow the curriculum of the French *éducation nationale*.

In addition to these schools, there are also secondary-school classes at the two European schools in the Grand Duchy, primarily intended for children of staff of the European institutions.

1.4. Schooling for foreign pupils

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3. guidance: orientation suggestion towards an adequate class;
4. monitoring: monitoring of the pupil during two years.

As in elementary education, the intercultural mediators provided by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth are available to facilitate communication between parents and the school.

1.5. Support in secondary education for pupils with special needs

For those children who find it difficult to keep up with the normal pace of teaching, there are assistance schemes at both the local and national levels, following on from the scheme in operation in elementary education.

At the request of either the parents or the school's director, the school's inclusion commission (*commission d'inclusion*) defines the assistance to be given and measures offered to a pupil with special needs and monitors the process. If these measures are insufficient, the commission proposes a personalised training plan (*plan de formation individualisé*), submitted to the parents for their approval. The plan is implemented by the support team for pupils with special needs (*équipe de soutien des élèves à besoins spécifiques*, ESEB).

The inclusion commission also advises the school's principal on implementing the reasonable accommodations that may be made for certain pupils (extra time in examinations, use of human assistance or technological aids, etc.).

At the national level, it functions in the same way as the scheme applied for pupils in elementary schools.

1.6. Guidance

Each secondary school defines its orientation approach in its school development plan, and the approach is implemented by the orientation unit (*Cellule d'orientation et d'intégration scolaires*). The aim of the approach is to help each young person make appropriate choices that correspond to their profile and provide the best chance of success.

The Maison de l'orientation (House of Orientation)

This centre brings together in one place in Luxembourg most of the government's services in charge of guidance.

2. Outside teaching hours

Within the school, the socio-educational service (*Service socio-éducatif*) is the main player in the extracurricular offer. It includes cultural, social and sporting activities as well as learning activities.

3. Higher education

The higher technician's qualification (*brevet de technicien supérieur*, BTS) is awarded at the end of a short course of higher education (four to six semesters) starting after the secondary school leaving diploma. The aim of the course is to provide students with a higher level of vocational training in their specialisation.

The University of Luxembourg, created in 2003, has already earned an international reputation for its multilingualism (German, English and French), its internationality (students of 130 different nationalities), and its research programmes (including computer sciences, biomedicine, European law, educational sciences, etc.).

Two private specialist higher education institutions, accredited by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education, offer higher education programmes: Lunex (sport and physiotherapy) and the Luxembourg School of Business (LSB) (business and management).

Even if they are not resident in the Grand Duchy, students (children of frontier workers or frontier workers themselves) enrolled for an eligible cycle of higher studies may apply for financial aid for higher studies from the government. The assistance comprises a basic grant plus possibly a mobility grant, a grant based on social criteria, a family grant, full or partial reimbursement of tuition fees and a State-backed loan, and is paid to the student each semester.

D. ADULTS





Recognition of diplomas

The recognition of foreign certificates and diplomas is subject to certain conditions.

Validation of prior experiential learning

The validation of prior experiential learning (*validation des acquis de l'expérience*, VAE) makes it possible to gain recognition for the skills acquired throughout one's life and obtain corresponding certificates and diplomas.

Support for continuing training

Salaried workers, the self-employed and people in the liberal professions may request individual paid leave for training (*congé individuel de formation*). This paid leave may total 80 days in the course of a person's career; it is paid for by the government.

They may also request language leave (*congé linguistique*) in order to learn Luxembourgish or improve their level. This paid leave may be granted for a total of 200 hours in the course of a person's career. 50% of the cost is paid by the government.

For people in a precarious situation or who have signed an integration and reception contract (*contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*), the cost of enrolling for a general-interest course is reduced to 10 euros.

Private-sector businesses established in the Grand Duchy can obtain government assistance for funding training, amounting to 15% to 35% of the annual amount invested.

Back-to-education option

The back-to-education programme (*2^e voie de qualification*) enables adults to obtain a recognised formal qualification. There is no charge for the options offered by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth in cooperation with the secondary schools and the National School for Adults (*École nationale pour adultes*, ENAD).

The master craftsman's diploma (*brevet de maîtrise*)

This qualification entitles its holder to set up a business in the craft trades as a self-employed person and train apprentices. Courses leading up to this qualification are organised by the Chamber of Skilled Trades and Crafts (*Chambre des métiers*). They are open to people who hold certain diplomas and have at least one year of professional experience in the particular craft.

General and civic training for adults

The Ministry of Education, Children and Youth organises general and civic training courses in secondary schools and through the municipalities and various approved not-for-profit associations in the following areas: basic education course, general interest classes and courses related to integration and nationality.

Are you planning to move to Luxembourg?
Do you wish to prepare in the best way possible your
children's arrival and their
integration into the school system?

For any information or appointment,
please contact the

Service de l'intégration et de l'accueil scolaires (SIA)
of the Luxembourg Ministry of Education, Children and Youth.

Phone: (+352) 247-75274
E-mail: secretariat.sia@men.lu

You can also visit the following website:

