

New Skills for New Futures Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in Luxembourg

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FEDORA Project

New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in the European Union

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PREFACE

The Luxembourg report on "New Skills for Vocational Guidance" is the national contribution to a common European project on this important topic.

The report is based on a pattern which has been laid down by FEDORA in order to give an overview about the situation in academic guidance and counselling in higher education in Europe.

The Luxembourg report outlines the particular situation of academic counselling in our country, due to the fact that Luxembourg has an incomplete structure of higher and post-secondary education within its own territory.

The author himself is actively working in the field of counselling and information for future students in higher education and also for students already studying either in the Grand-Duchy or, as most Luxembourg students are compelled to do, at foreign universities.

Skilled advice has also been given by Mr Norbert Ewen, a psychologist at the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg, whose experience based on his involvement in many national working groups on the topic of guidance and counselling was extremely helpful.

Raymond Harsch

December 1997

SUMMARY

This report has been written as Luxembourg's contribution to a FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique) project on "New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education".

The project is funded and supported by the European Commission under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Its aims are:

- 1 To provide a up-to-date overview of the current structure of guidance and counselling services within higher education, the roles of those who work in these services, and the training for such roles
- 2 To identify the extent to which training provision exists within the European Union to equip those in guidance and counselling roles in higher education with the new skills they require to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse student body, within a European labour market.
- 3 To provide a basepoint for exploring the extent to which postgraduate and post-experience training modules might be made available across Europe, possibly leading to an European Master's degree in guidance and counselling in higher education.

It should be pointed out that the present report concentrates only on guidance and counselling services. Other social services responsible for financial assistance, housing etc. are not described.

The description of the Luxembourg situation in academic guidance was not easy to write because in many respects Luxembourg does not have an internationally comparable structure of higher education or of services providing academic counselling.

To explain this particular structure, section 2 gives a survey of the existing institutions of higher education in Luxembourg and the structure of services and individuals involved in academic counselling. As the reader will see, an academic counselling office does not exist in each educational institution. There is also no real structure of guidance inside the educational institutions concerning the problems of employment and of disabled students. Broad information about career structures and studies abroad are given by the staff of the *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires*, a central department of the Ministry of Education, which is located outside the schools.

Section 3 indicates the main occupational roles for the different services listed in section 2. Due to the particular situation in Luxembourg, it is not possible to give a detailed account of the tasks performed by all the individual counsellors.

Section 4 gives a short overview of the training provided for persons working as psychologists or counsellors. Here again, Luxembourg lacks a specific training for those involved in academic counselling. Apart from the fact that psychologists get a general training in counselling and guidance, there are no specialized pre-service or in-service training courses for psychologists or counsellors. Unfortunately it does not seem that there is likely to be any fundamental change concerning training in the near future.

Therefore the conclusions in section 5 are very general in nature.

2 STRUCTURES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN LUXEMBOURG

The situation in Luxembourg concerning higher or post-secondary education is a very particular one amongst all the countries of the European Union. First of all it is needless to point out that the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg is the smallest country in the E.U., with the smallest population too (about 400,000 people) including a large number of foreigners and migrant workers. Luxembourg has no real tradition in the field of higher education. Despite the fact that a nucleus of university studies was created in the 19th century as the *Cours Universitaires*, transformed into the *Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg* in 1969, there has never existed a complete structure of university studies.

This also applies for institutions of non-university higher education. At present there are only a few institutions offering post-secondary education:

- ° *Cycle court d'études supérieures en gestion* at the *Centre Universitaire*: 2 years of studies in the field of management.
- ° *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* (IST) (Higher Institute for Technology): 4 years of study in the area of technology leading to the diploma of *ingénieur industriel* (industrial engineer).
- ° *Institut Supérieur d'Études et de Recherches Pédagogiques* (ISERP) (Higher Institute for Studies and Research in Pedagogy): 3 years of study for pre-school and primary-school teachers.
- ° *Institut d'Études Éducatives et Sociales* (IEES) (Institute for Studies in Education and Social Sciences): 3 years of training for educators (*éducateurs gradués*).
- ° *Lycée Technique "École de Commerce et de Gestion"* (Technical Lycée "School of Commerce and Management"): 2 years of training for a higher technician diploma in the field of secretarial training, marketing and management (*brevet de technicien supérieur*).
- ° *Lycée Technique des Arts et Métiers* (Technical Lycée for Arts and Crafts): 2 years of training for the higher technician diploma in motion picture animation (*brevet de technicien supérieur*).

As this list indicates, the policy of the Ministry of Education in the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s has largely been concerned with creating more vocationally oriented courses in higher education.

In 1996 a law on higher education was passed at Parliament, giving a specific status to two institutions of higher education, namely the *Centre Universitaire* and the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie*. The *Institut Supérieur d'Études et de Recherches Pédagogiques* and the *Institut*

d'Etudes Educatives et Sociales were also recognized as institutions of higher education. The two technical lycées offering the higher technician diploma are not officially regarded as higher education institutions.

At the level of postgraduate studies the provision is even more limited. There are either only short-term seminars (4 weeks on average) organized by the *Institut Universitaire International de Luxembourg* which do not lead to a final degree. On the other hand, two graduate courses are offered mainly for people already working: (1) an M.B.A. programme offered by the Luxembourg branch of Sacred Heart University in Luxembourg; and (2) a programme offered by the University of Nancy 2 (*Institut d'Administration des Entreprises*) and the Luxembourg Chamber of Private Employees (*Chambre des Employés Privés*) leading to the French *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées* (DESS - Diploma in Specialized Higher Education). Those courses are usually offered on a part-time basis; the diplomas delivered are not Luxembourg degrees but foreign ones.

The institutions of higher or post-secondary education in Luxembourg do not claim for the payment of tuition fees (with the exception of the courses of the Sacred Heart University and the University of Nancy 2 described above).

Students who want to study in Luxembourg or abroad are entitled to ask for financial assistance by the Luxembourg Ministry of Education. This assistance takes the form of a grant (depending on the student's or his/her parents' income) and/or a loan at a low interest rate (2%). The financial assistance from the Luxembourg Government has been regulated for the first time by an act of 8 December 1977, modified (so as to encourage more people to undertake post-secondary studies) by an act of 13 March 1992. The *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires* of the Ministry of Education is responsible for the procedure for granting financial assistance. Grants for postgraduate studies are also awarded by the Ministry of Education.

In the academic year 1996/97, 1,811 students were enrolled in post-secondary and other institutions of higher education (Medernach, 1996). Their distribution over the institutions was as follows:

° Centre Universitaire:	250
° Institut Supérieur de Technologie	292
° Institut Supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherches Pédagogiques:	321
° Institut d'Etudes Educatives et Sociales	200
° L.T.Ecole de Commerce et de Gestion	304
° L.T.des Arts et Métiers:	23

In addition, 3,176 students were enrolled in foreign institutions of higher education. These students were studying in the following countries (Medernach, 1996):

° Belgium:	1233
° France:	689
° Germany:	668
° Switzerland:	91
° Austria:	168
° Great Britain:	159
° Portugal:	75
° Italy:	33
° USA:	38
° Netherlands:	22

These figures, recorded by the *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires*, are based on the students' requests for financial assistance (approximately 90% of the students in Luxembourg apply for financial aid).

Even if in the future the *Centre Universitaire* is authorized to organize a complete first level of studies (*premier cycle*) in some chosen specializations where there is a need, and also postgraduate courses in close cooperation with foreign universities, Luxembourg will probably always lack a complete structure in higher education. The result of this situation is that a majority of Luxembourg students have to go abroad to undertake studies.

This has considerable consequences for guidance or counselling of students. It means that academic and career counselling are particularly important for Luxembourg students at the end of secondary school. Guidance and counselling for students already enrolled in higher education is the responsibility of the Luxembourg Ministry of Education only when they are enlisted in a Luxembourg institution of higher education. If they are studying abroad, no direct counselling is available for them through a Luxembourg channel; they instead have to rely on foreign guidance and counselling services.

2a. Main guidance and counselling services

In the Luxembourg system of higher education there are only two formally organized counselling services:

- *Services de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires* (SPOS - Psychological and School Guidance Services)
- *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires* (CPOS - Psychological and School Guidance Centre)

In addition to these services, some other more informal guidance support services/systems can be identified.

The system is analysed here in relation to a holistic student-centred guidance model (Van Esbroeck, 1997; Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997), which is being used as a descriptive model in the survey of which this report is a part. The result of this analysis is to be found in table 1. Most of the descriptive categories used in this table are self-evident, except for the category "level" which may need some explanation. It indicates whether the service is:

First-in-line (1): part of the formal teaching function.

Second-in-line (2): linked to the formal teaching function, but with some degree of specialisation.

Third-in-line (3): separated from the formal teaching function, and offered by specialists.

The Psychological and School Guidance Services

The SPOS have been created, mainly between 1970 and 1980, by the Ministry of Education within the secondary schools. These services are funded by the ministry. The ministry controls them administratively through the day-to-day direction of the schools. The CPOS, also founded by the Ministry of Education, is responsible for aspects related to methodology and the co-ordination of the guidance tasks.

The SPOS have a responsibility for psychological assistance of students and for general information on the structure of the Luxembourg educational system, including higher education. This competence does normally not include vocational guidance. However, the psychologists and guidance workers of the SPOS usually deal with the students' demand for information about the labour market.

In post-secondary education there are only two SPOS. These are the SPOS working within the two *lycées techniques* which provide higher technician training programmes.

Table 1 : Main guidance and counselling services and systems - structure and content

Service/system	Funding/administrative control	Location	Extent	Level	Target-group
Psychological and School Guidance Services (<i>Services de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires</i>)	funded and controlled by Ministry of Education	inside institutions	2 services within lycées techniques with post-secondary programmes (1)	3	all students within the post-secondary programmes
Psychological and School Guidance Centre (<i>Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaire</i>)	funded and controlled by Ministry of Education	outside institutions	one central service	3	all students at secondary and HE levels
Psychological Service of the University Centre (<i>Service Psychologique du Centre Universitaire</i>)	funded and controlled by institution	inside institution	1	3	all students
Educational Guidance Support at ISERP (<i>Aide à l'Orientation et Psychologique - ISERP</i>)	funded and controlled by institution	inside institution	1	3	all students
Educational and Career Guidance Support at IEES (<i>Aide Pédagogique et Orientation Professionnelle - IEES</i>)	funded and controlled by institution	inside institution	1	3	mainly first-year students
Educational Guidance at IST (<i>Aide à l'Orientation - IST</i>)	funded and controlled by institution	inside institution	1	3	all students

(1) Though technical lycées are not recognised as higher education institutions

The SPOS operate independently from the formal teaching function and are thus to be labelled as third-level services. The target group of the SPOS are the students within the institutions where they are located.

Psychological and School Guidance Centre

The CPOS is also dependent on the Ministry of Education. It not only co-ordinates the guidance work of the SPOS, but also serves as a "larger" SPOS, receiving pupils and students for guidance purposes. Though its main focus lies in psychological support and school guidance, the CPOS also gives information on the labour market, as in the case of the SPOS.

The CPOS operates independently from the formal teaching, at the third level. The target group includes pupils from secondary schools as well as higher education students studying in Luxembourg or abroad (in first degrees or postgraduate courses).

Guidance at the *Centre Universitaire*

At the *Centre Universitaire* there is one part-time psychologist working for a limited number of hours per week. He covers all guidance support activities. This support is limited to students at undergraduate level. There is no guidance available for those enrolled in postgraduate programmes.

This support system is not well enough structured to be analysed in detail for this survey and therefore it does not appear in all tables.

Guidance at the non-university higher education institutions

The guidance support at the *lycées techniques* is provided by the SPOS located in these schools.

The situation for the other institutions is very different. There are no SPOS or other guidance offices existing within these institutions. For most of their problems, students are referred to external services, in particular the CPOS. However, they also have some limited support available within the institutions. These support systems are not well enough structured to be formally analysed for this survey and do not appear in all tables.

The *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* (IST) has appointed a teacher who serves for one hour a week as a counsellor offering educational guidance. This teacher is called a *professeur-orienteur* (teacher/guidance worker).

At the *Institut Supérieur d'Études et de Recherches Pédagogiques* (ISERP) some guidance and counselling is available through the staff members (teachers) with an initial training in psychology.

The *Institut d'Etudes Educatives et Sociales* (IEES) uses the first year as a probation year, during which students may receive some support when they encounter problems related to learning skills or when they want to find more information on the career of educator (*éducateur gradué*). Some support is also provided by staff members with an initial training in psychology.

Vocational guidance

Vocational guidance is made available through the Labour Administration's Vocational Guidance Service (*Administration de l'Emploi - Service de l'Orientation Professionnelle*). This service is mainly geared towards vocational guidance of pupils in secondary education and young people in vocational training. It is not part of the higher education guidance scene. This despite the fact that it runs a large documentation centre with data on careers at all levels. As pointed out above, the SPOS and CPOS usually deal with this type of information-giving to HE students.

2b. Commentary

There is one important point which must be underlined: guidance or counselling is optional for HE students. There is no obligation for them to seek advice or information either at a SPOS or at the CPOS. However, all guidance support is given free of charge by the different services.

Due to that fact the counsellors of those services do not see every student enrolled in an educational institution, there is no compulsory testing scheme or even a planned guidance programme during the various study periods in higher education. As a result it is not possible for the author to give detailed information about the range of individual problems covered by the different counsellors or psychologists.

The main function of the SPOS is providing guidance and psychological help for students. This also applies to the *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires* whose tasks also include producing written information on secondary and higher education in Luxembourg and abroad, and organizing information meetings for students (e.g. the "Students' Fair" in Luxembourg, and study visits to foreign universities).

Stages in the student career at which guidance is available

In assessing the availability of guidance at the different stages in an educational career, it must be kept in mind that in Luxembourg only a limited HE system exists.

Because of this, the pre-entry stage is especially important. A great stress is laid on information and guidance for pupils in the last two years of secondary education in order to help them in their choice of a career and/or of studies in higher education. The SPOS and CPOS are particularly active in this stage. The CPOS coordinates various activities on this level, organizing the Luxembourg

“Students’ Fair” which provides a broad survey of the studies offered by Luxembourg and foreign institutions of higher education and the careers offered by Luxembourg firms and public administrations. To prepare the pupils to their visit to this fair, the CPOS publishes a large number of information brochures and leaflets on the topic of careers and studies in higher education. It also runs a documentation centre comprising a huge number of information brochures and study guides about foreign institutions of higher education. Internet and foreign data-bases on higher education are on display. The counsellors in the academic guidance service of the CPOS frequently use these new information technologies for their guidance work.

The counsellors in the SPOS use the documentation of the CPOS to prepare students for their choices.

On-course guidance is only partially provided by the Luxembourg counselling services and is limited to the non-university HE institutions and both of the *lycées techniques* preparing for the *brevet de technicien supérieur*. The guidance at this stage is related to choosing educational options and courses; it also includes study visits to firms as part of the preparation for the transition to the labour market, and to other schools and institutions as part of educational guidance.

Guidance at the exit level is only available in the educational schools or the vocational training programmes.

Student/counsellor ratio

There are no figures available on counsellor-student ratios. Personal guidance in the academic counselling services in the educational institutions is only accessed by 1- 2% of the total student population enrolled in Luxembourg higher education.

Special target-groups

The counsellors in the SPOS rarely have to face demands for information or guidance from students with disabilities or from work-based, part-time or distance learning students - these latter types of learning in higher education are not offered by Luxembourg institutions.

However, the *Centre de Psychologie et d’Orientation Scolaires*, as a central institution, is at times confronted with demands from foreign students, by students seeking financial assistance, and by those who want to study abroad or intend to start distance learning at foreign educational institutions. The CPOS helps them by giving individual counselling plus documentation on the vast range of studies offered by foreign institutions of higher education and, of course, by the Luxembourg institutions described above, as well as on the financial assistance granted by the Luxembourg Government and on student housing.

Trends

It does not seem that there will be any fundamental changes in the near future in the structure of guidance and counselling services in higher education in Luxembourg.

3. ROLES AND TASKS

3a. Introduction

The task analysis is based upon a student centred holistic guidance model (Van Esbroeck, 1997; Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997). This model distinguishes three types of guidance:

Educational (E): guidance on choices of educational options, and learner support.

Vocational (V): guidance on choices on, and placement into, occupations and work roles.

Personal (P): guidance and counselling on personal and social issues.

The focus of the two guidance services being covered is analysed on a 7-point scale. The allocation of the 7 points is based upon a combination of several variables: time spent, and how the focus is perceived by the counsellor, by the client and by the institution. The results of this analysis are given in Table 2. The number of staff given in this table refers to the number of persons engaged in the roles identified.

For the guidance systems within the HE institutions which are incorporated in table 2, no analysis of focus is available. The number of staff is commented upon in section 3b.

For each of the occupational roles mentioned in table 2, a task analysis has been tried out. The following task classification (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1996) was used:

1. **General management:** general administrative management, including service/programme planning and evaluation. Includes managing guidance activities within the institutional setting, and general liaison with external bodies (e.g. educational institutions, guidance agencies, social services, official bodies, and employers). (A)
2. **Information management:** the collection, production and display of information in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (B)
3. **Information-giving:** providing relevant information to individuals or groups in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (C)
4. **Counselling:** helping clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings about their present situation, about the options open to them, and about the consequences of each option.
 - 4.1. **Short-term individual counselling:** helping clients on a one-to-one basis in a single or limited number of sessions.(D)

- 4.2. **Long-term individual counselling:** as 4.1 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. (E)
- 4.3. **Short-term group counselling:** as 4.1 but on a group basis. Tends to be in smaller groups than teaching, to be composed of individuals who share some common characteristics, to focus on their expressed needs rather than on predetermined learning aims, and to be organised to encourage active participation by all the individuals involved.(F)
- 4.4. **Long-term group counselling:** as 4.3 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions.(G)
- 4.5. **Facilitating self-help groups:** encouraging individuals to form themselves into ongoing groups to share experiences and to support each other.(H)
5. **Advice:** making suggestions based on the helper's own knowledge and experience and on assessment results. (I)
6. **Assessment** making judgements about individuals' suitability for certain options, based on inventories, tests, observations, interviews, etc.
 - 6.1. **Facilitating self-assessment:** supporting individuals in choosing their own assessment devices and drawing conclusions from them.(J)
 - 6.2. **Diagnostic assessment:** selecting assessment devices, interpreting the results and making appropriate recommendations.(K)
7. **Referral:** referring individuals to services better equipped to deal with their problem.(L)
8. **Teaching:** programmes of planned experiences, designed to develop the skills, concepts and knowledge that will help individuals to manage their educational, vocational and personal development. (M)
9. **Placement:** into education or training programmes, and/or into employment.
 - 9.1. **Liaison with providers:** liaison with employers and with education and training providers to obtain information on the opportunities they offer.(N)
 - 9.2. **Coaching:** helping individuals to present themselves effectively (on application forms and in interviews, etc.).(O)

- 9.3. **Vacancy information:** providing individuals with information on particular vacancies in education, training or employment.(P)
- 9.4. **Preselection:** preselecting individuals for particular vacancies in education, training or employment. (Q)
10. **Advocacy:** negotiating directly with institutions or agencies, within and/or outside own institution, on behalf of individuals, especially those for whom there may be particular barriers to access. (R)
11. **Supporting other guidance sources:** providing training sessions and disseminating information materials to teaching staff and other guidance providers.(S)
12. **Feedback to providers:** collecting information on the unmet needs of particular groups, and encouraging providers of opportunities to respond by adapting and extending their provision.(T)
13. **Follow-up:** contacting former clients to see what has happened to them. Its purposes may include data for use with subsequent clients, evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance given, and offering further support needed.(U)

For each of the tasks listed, a rating on the importance of the task is given on a 0 to 4 scale, on the basis of the work normally carried out within the role:

- 4 major involvement
- 3 considerable involvement
- 2 some involvement
- 1 minor involvement
- 0 no involvement

Table 2 : Main occupational roles and focus

Service/system	Occupational roles	Number	Focus		
			E	V	P
Psychological and School Guidance Services (1)	Psychologist (<i>Psychologue</i>)	2	4	1	2
Psychological and School Guidance Centre (2)	Teacher/guidance worker (<i>Professeur-orienteur</i>)	6	4	1	2
	Guidance counsellor (<i>Conseiller d'orientation</i>)	2	4	2	1
Psychological Service of the University Centre	Psychologist (<i>Psychologue</i>) (3)	1	1	1	5
Educational Guidance Support at ISERP	Teacher/psychologist (<i>Professeur-psychologue</i>) (4) (5)		2	1	4
Educational and Career Guidance Support at IEES	Teacher/guidance worker (<i>Professeur-orienteur</i>) or Teacher/psychologist (<i>Professeur-psychologue</i>) (4) (5)		4	2	1
Educational Guidance at IST	Teacher/guidance worker (<i>Professeur-orienteur</i>) (3) (5)	1	4	2	1

(1) limited to the services involved in giving guidance to students in post-secondary education programmes (*lycées techniques*)

(2) limited to those who are involved in HE guidance

(3) part-time role

(4) number of persons involved cannot be defined

(5) the analysis of the focus is only a very rough estimation and may vary considerably both in time and among the persons involved in the activity

Table 3 : Tasks performed in the main occupational roles

(note: the roles are grouped according to their services as listed in Table 2)

Occupational roles	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Psychologist	1	1	3	4	1	0	0	0	3	1	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Teacher/guidance worker	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	4	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Guidance counsellor	3	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Psychologist	0	1	3	4	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Teacher/psychologist (ISERP) (1)																					
Teacher/guidance worker or																					
Teacher/psychologist (IEES) (1)																					
Teacher/guidance worker (IST) (1)																					

(1) the lack of structure, the instability of the system and the differences between the persons involved in this support system mean that a task analysis has not been possible

3b. Commentary

Number of staff

In addition to the staff mentioned in table 2, there is one documentalist involved in HE guidance at the CPOS. This brings the total number of persons involved in HE guidance to 3 psychologists, 7 teacher/guidance workers, two guidance counsellors and one documentalist.

However, it should be noted that two psychologists, one guidance counsellor and all of the teacher/guidance workers do their guidance and counselling on a part-time basis. The teacher/guidance worker, who is a teacher helping the psychologist in his/her work, is only appointed on average for 5 to 8 hours a week. But not all teacher/guidance workers are involved in HE guidance. Indeed, those working at the SPOS in the *lycées techniques* are mainly involved in guidance tasks for secondary-school pupils. The number of students enrolled in post-secondary education are a minority in these schools. Accordingly, it can be estimated that no more than 3 teacher/guidance workers are involved in HE guidance.

Tasks performed

If we analyse the tasks performed by the counsellors, the following comments can be made:

1. General management (A): This is a limited part of the role of the psychologists working in the SPOS, though the administrative control here is in the hands of the school director. The management element is related to liaison with CPOS and other external bodies such as labour administration.
2. Information management (B): Collection of data, mainly on higher education and training possibilities and labour market aspects, occurs in both services. However, it is much stronger within the CPOS.
3. Information-giving (C): In relation to education and training opportunities, this is an essential task within SPOS and CPOS.
4. Counselling (D to H): Helping students to explore themselves, reflect on the opportunities open to them and the consequences of particular choices is an essential task within SPOS and CPOS. The counselling support will be mostly of a short-term individual counselling type (D), though long-term individual counselling (E) and short-term group counselling (F) are provided from time to time within the SPOS. Group counselling (F and G) and self-help groups (H) do not occur.
5. Advice (I): This is used by SPOS psychologists.

6. Assessment (J,K): Diagnostic assessment is provided, though more frequently at secondary than at HE level, by the psychologists (J). The teacher/guidance workers are more involved in facilitating self-assessment by giving appropriate devices to the clients (K).
7. Referral (L): Referring individuals to better-equipped services is common practice for the counsellors of SPOS and CPOS. Contacts with various state and private institutions and even individual persons are helpful in this respect.
8. Teaching (M): This is mainly done by the teacher/guidance workers, particularly within the vocational training courses.
9. Placement (N to Q): This is not part of the CPOS counsellors' tasks, except for some liaison with providers (N), especially in the case of counsellors working with students in vocational training courses. Also some coaching (O) can occur.
10. Advocacy (R) on behalf of the students is a task of the psychologist and counsellor, while feedback to providers (T) is non-existent. This is also the case for supporting other guidance sources (S), except for the CPOS which indirectly gives some support to other guidance workers through the publication of specific brochures and the collection of statistical data.
11. Follow-up (U): This may occur, but is not systematically assured.

Content of tasks

The main office for guidance in HE, the *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires*, does not only deal with guidance and counselling for students who want to study in higher education, but also has to organize and co-ordinate counselling at the transition from primary to secondary education and within secondary education and vocational training. Within the field of higher education, its competence reaches from pre-entry to postgraduate studies.

The work in relation to HE guidance implies not only individual or (sometimes) group counselling, but also the production of information brochures about careers and studies in higher education, the collecting of data and documentation on higher education, and the creation of a database and an Internet site on this topic. Also, the organization of special information meetings on higher education, such as the Students' Fair or visits to universities or other information meetings, is carried out by these counsellors.

This task becomes more complex due to the fact that Luxembourg students need to be well informed about the situation in higher education in several foreign countries (Belgium, France, Germany,

Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom, U.S.A. Italy, Spain, Portugal...) and because students also ask for career guidance.

While the use of new technologies has become widespread for the staff of the CPOS, this is not always true for the staff of the SPOS. The Internet is used only by some individual members of the SPOS and indeed not all SPOS have access to the Internet (this is due to the fact that from the administrative point of view, the educational institutions have to provide this equipment).

As has already been pointed out, the European dimension is very important for the Luxembourg counselling system, despite the fact that only a very few foreign students come to Luxembourg for study purposes. Thus the "European dimension" is mainly geared to the need of Luxembourg students (or foreign students already living in our country) who want to study abroad. This implies, especially for the counsellors of the academic guidance department of the CPOS, gathering a vast range of documentation about foreign institutions of higher education, to keep constantly informed about the conditions for academic recognition of diplomas (Luxembourg diplomas abroad as well as foreign diplomas or degrees in our country). Furthermore, with the enlargement of the European Union, these counsellors must all know about European legislation and directives concerning higher education. All this is particularly important, because students want to be well informed about the recognition procedure in Luxembourg once they have terminated their studies abroad. There are also more and more foreigners holding university degrees who wish to work in Luxembourg and therefore seek recognition of their qualifications by Luxembourg educational authorities.

3c. Detailed profiles

At present it is only possible to give detailed indications about the work profiles of the counsellors working in the academic guidance service of the Psychological and School Guidance Centre.

These counsellors have a certain number of administrative tasks (A) to do in addition to their informational (B,C) and guidance and counselling tasks (D). Activities like long-term individual or group counselling (E,F), facilitating self-help groups (H), advice (I), diagnostic assessment (J), teaching (M), liaison with providers (N), vacancy information (P), preselection (Q), feedback to providers (T) and follow-up (U) are not carried out by these counsellors. The main part of their counselling task is to receive people seeking for information about studies or careers (interviews), to prepare information brochures and leaflets on higher education and various careers, and to gather information and documentation on this topic through different channels (Internet, databases, books etc.). Furthermore, they refer students to other services (L) and they also negotiate directly with Luxembourg and foreign institutions of higher education and with other official administrations (e.g. ministries) on behalf of students who want to get access to HE (especially when problems occur) (R).

On average about half a dozen students a day ask for an interview with each counsellor. Furthermore, about twenty phone calls and a similar number of enquiries by letters, E-mail or fax are dealt with daily by these counsellors. The organization of the Luxembourg Student's Fair which takes place every year in November also requires a lot of preparation work. During different periods of the year (e.g. from June to October) many more persons ask for help and advice. Thus it frequently happens that some twelve to twenty or even more students ask for an interview at the academic guidance department. Clerical work mainly consists in answering the questions on issues in HE, study options and specializations, entrance requirements, tuition fees, financial assistance, and housing. These questions may range from small details (e.g. address of an institution of higher education) to basic questions related to the choice of a career or even linked with personal or psychological problems. Most guidance activities are focussed on individual guidance though it sometimes happens that group counselling is given.

The psychologist working at the *Centre Universitaire* is particularly concerned with short-term individual counselling (D), assessment and diagnostic assessment (K), referral (L) and advocacy in relation to the personal situations of the students (R). He also gives lectures (M) at the *Centre Universitaire*. Vocational guidance or giving information (C) about the possibilities of studies abroad or about career opportunities are not the main tasks of this psychologist, nor is he concerned with activities like placement, liaison with providers (N), advocacy (R) or feedback to providers (T).

4. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

4a. Introduction

The requirements for some of the HE counsellors working at SPOS and CPOS are quite specific, though not connected to HE guidance. No specific training is available for the other persons involved in this field. An overall analysis of the current position is provided in table 4.

4b. Commentary

The psychologists working at SPOS must hold a first degree in psychology and have to follow a practical training of 2 years before they are given tenure. The practical training is mainly on-the-job-training, though for the first two years of their appointment as psychologists-in-training (*psychologues-stagiaires*) they have to attend courses on school legislation, cognitive styles, and vocational and educational guidance. These courses are geared towards secondary-school guidance; no specific training is provided in relation to HE.

The teacher/guidance workers at the SPOS can hold any first university degree, and have to follow a 3-year practical on-the-job training programme. This programme consists of following courses on methodology, psychology and educational sociology. However, there is no specific training in relation to HE. During this practical training period, these teachers are called *professeurs-stagiaires* (teachers-in-training).

The practical training for psychologist and teachers is organised and financed by the Ministry of Education. The entire training is free of charge for the participants. No private institutions or professional associations are involved in this training. Indeed, there is no professional association for counsellors in Luxembourg.

Further in-service training is optional for the SPOS staff, but there is no specific training in relation to HE available in Luxembourg.

The situation described above also applies to psychologists and teacher/guidance workers of the CPOS. However, within this Centre there are no psychologists or teacher/guidance workers involved in HE guidance: only guidance counsellors are involved in such work. The counsellors do not have to be holders of a specific university degree. Though they have to go through a 3-year on-the-job training, they receive no formal guidance training.

The HE counsellors working at the CPOS have built their experience by learning on-the-job. This work experience to some extent substitutes for the lack of specific guidance training.

Table 4 : Training and qualifications

Service/system	Occupational roles	Minimum educational qualifications for entry	Initial training in guidance and counselling	In-service training in guidance and counselling
Psychological and School Guidance Services (1)	Psychologist	4 yrs first degree (FT) in psychology	2 yrs of practical on the job training (FT)	optional
	Teacher/guidance worker	4 yrs first degree (FT) in any field	3 yrs of practical on the job training (FT)	optional
	Guidance counsellor	4 yrs first degree (FT) in any field	none	optional
Psychological and School Guidance Centre (2)				
Psychological Service of the University Centre	Psychologist	4 yrs first degree (FT) in psychology	none	optional
Educational Guidance Support at ISERP	Teacher/psychologist	4 yrs first degree (FT) in psychology	none	optional
Educational and Career Guidance Support at IEES	Teacher/guidance worker or Teacher/psychologist	4 yrs first degree (FT) in any field or 4 yrs first degree (FT) in psychology	none	optional
Educational Guidance at IST	Teacher/guidance worker	4 yrs first degree (FT) in any field	none	optional

(1) limited to the services involved in giving guidance to students in post-secondary education programmes (*lycées techniques*)

(2) limited to those who are involved in HE guidance

4c. Detailed profiles

Due to the particular situation in the Luxembourg system of academic counselling, it is not possible to provide detailed profiles on the occupational roles mentioned above.

However, some basic pattern in the training scheme of the psychologists and the teacher/guidance workers may be observed. Thus, despite the fact that the psychologists and the teacher/guidance workers usually have had different specializations at university, the on-job-training is centrally regulated by the Ministry of Education in Luxembourg, and comprises a defined programme for the psychologists on one side and for the teachers on the other side.

The teacher/guidance workers are not specifically trained for the work in a guidance service. Indeed, their appointment as a counsellor may occur, at their request, during their career as a secondary-school teacher. Their basic on-the-job training is common to all the secondary-school teachers and comprises mainly courses in methodology, pedagogy and school legislation.

The psychologists receive a common on-the-job training, but are not necessarily prepared for academic counselling.

The counsellors at the Psychological and School Guidance Centre do not receive any training related to academic counselling, even during their on-the-job training.

Despite the absence of any adequate preparation of the counsellors to academic guidance and counselling, the efficiency of the work achieved by all the staff working in academic guidance in Luxembourg is good and the results are convincing.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The description of the structure of academic guidance in Luxembourg indicates an “under-development” in this area by international standards.

However, the present structure seems to meet the needs of the student population. The number of students registered in Luxembourg institutions of higher education is quite small, and few foreign students come to Luxembourg for their higher education. On the other hand, a major part of the total student population of Luxembourg studies abroad, where they can use the relevant services for academic counselling.

At present the *Centre de Psychologie et d'Orientation Scolaires* has to face a steadily increasing number of students who want to change either their university or their specialization, or who have experienced failure at university. There are also more adults seeking advice or information on distance learning.

Thus counselling is becoming a more and more complex challenge for Luxembourg counsellors involved in HE guidance. The use of new technologies is of growing importance, especially in relation to finding information and making it possible to reach a larger number of students interested in having more educational opportunities at the national and international levels.

The use of new technologies for psychological assistance is however still limited in our country. Testing is mainly done in a traditional way, even if some individuals also now use computer-based testing systems which have been developed abroad.

Regarding career guidance, it should be noted that the problem of unemployment barely exists in Luxembourg. There are only few individuals holding an university degree who are registered as unemployed by the Labour Administration. However, underemployment at a lower level of qualification is becoming an increasingly difficult problem for some holders of a higher education degree. All academic counsellors will have to deal with this problem in the future.

As information on the labour market is provided exclusively on the Labour Administration, increased cooperation with this institution will become necessary. At present the Labour Administration has only very little experience in handling the problem of underemployment of holders of university degrees.

For these reasons, academic counsellors are interested in improved training opportunities to enable them to face the forthcoming problems in the academic sector.

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