Reform of vocational education and training

With the law of 12 July 2019 (loi du 12 juillet 2019) [1], several ad hoc adaptations have been made to the system of vocational education and training. These changes have been elaborated in close cooperation with the professional chambers. Apprenticeship contract and internship agreement are now included in the Labour Code. As a result, the legal certainty of apprenticeships has been improved. The Labour Code also specifies the content and duration of the apprenticeship contract. Furthermore, it defines the conditions allowing a professional to provide training for a trade. The above-mentioned law also creates a legal basis for the VET steering group, whose mission it is to coordinate the development of vocational training and to validate the curricular work carried out within this framework.

The reform introduces the following changes in vocational education and training:

- **Numerical scores** have been reintroduced for assessment (alongside competency-based evaluation) to facilitate the understanding of the assessment and promotion system
- A **compensation system** has been adopted in order to enhance the learning opportunities; ‘bridges’ between different training paths are facilitated
- Apprentices absent for a valid reason from the test of their final integrated project shall be offered the opportunity to pass the assessment at a **second session**; similarly, an apprentice who has failed a module will be offered to pass a complementary examination in September
- The **duration of apprenticeship contracts** has been extended from one to two years, and the maximum duration has been set
- In case of an apprentice's longer absence, e. g. for illness or maternity, the contract may be **suspended**: if needed, the months of absence may be added to the total duration of the apprenticeship
- **Educational innovation projects** may be launched, like those existing in general and classical secondary education
- A model of **on-the-job training** has been introduced to enlarge opportunities for people active in the labour market.

The reform aims at providing training and work opportunities for all learners at all levels of education. The law will enter into force in two steps: in school year 2019/20, the first-year classes will be reformed, as well as the study year following the intermediate report; the other study years will follow as from school year 2020/21.
New name and definition for adult education structure: 'National school for adults'

On 11 July 2018, the members of Parliament adopted the bill 7301 [2] foreseeing an adult education structure's name change, from former 'Second chance school' (École de la 2e chance) to 'National school for adults' (École nationale pour adultes).

Ever since 2009, when the establishment was created as 'Second chance school', the training provision of this school has been adapting to the target population, and some 1 200 learners have since been offered tuition and training. Today, the School doesn't exclusively address people having left education and training prematurely while being over the age of compulsory schooling. On the contrary: training is being offered to all adults wishing to enlarge their competences in the framework of adult education. The designation 'second chance' thus doesn't correspond any more to the establishment's present-day objectives and provision.

The new name 'National school for adults' better suits today's ever-growing demand for lifelong learning provision, and corresponds to the Lifelong learning strategy adopted by the government.

The National school for adults represents a single structure where several learner profiles may come together, such as:

- Various generations and diverse life or professional experiences
- School dropouts due to social or learning difficulties
- Beneficiaries of a promotion scheme, people in professional retraining or in vocational training.

The above-mentioned bill also proposes to adapt the school's organic law with respect to the terminology instituted by the 29 August 2017 [3] reform of secondary education, in particular concerning the names of 'classic', respectively 'general' secondary education.

The modifications foreseen by the bill will enter into force from the beginning of school year 2018/19.

DAES training programme adapted to fit the needs of adults in occupation

From the beginning of school year 2018/19, adults who prematurely left the school system are offered an adapted pathway to qualification, which enables them to pursue a professional activity while preparing the DAES access diploma to higher education (DAES; diplôme d'accès aux études supérieures). This training programme 'en alternance' is organised in the form of evening classes at the School for second chance and at Athénée de Luxembourg. It complements the existing day classes of the Second chance school, introduced in 2016.

The DAES diploma is recognised as equivalent to the secondary school leaving diploma (diplôme de fin d'études secondaires), irrespective of the type of training, whether through day-time classes or 'en alternance'. As a consequence of this recognition, the DAES provides access to the regulated professions and occupations in the public sector, as well as access to higher education and university.

The study programme, learning format and timetables of the training 'en alternance' take account of the learners' professional constraints: part of the training is provided in class, another part comes online in the form of e-learning.
The 32 weekly lessons are distributed in three prongs:

1. Autonomous preparation and learning of the various modules
2. On-site training with a teacher, to consolidate and check learning outcomes (scheduled on evenings and outside school holidays); evaluation tests (on 8 Saturdays)
3. Autonomous exercises and revision work in the perspective of the final examination.

Concerning the curriculum, the learner has to chose 6 modules pertaining to 4 study fields: languages, mathematics, natural sciences, human and social sciences, arts.

The Internet is an important feature of this training provision. An online platform ensures the provision of course materials and establishes distance communication with the teachers. This aspect facilitates the learners' autonomous work according to their availabilities.

DAES 'en alternance' training is available to people who are either under a work contract, or active in an occupation, or registered at the Employment agency (ADEM), or participating in a professional or qualification training programme, as well as people educating a child.

To qualify for registration, candidates have to fulfil one of the following preconditions:

- Holding a technician's diploma
- Holding a master's qualification (brevet de maîtrise)
- Successful achievement of ESC or ESG class 2e, respectively class 12e -technician's regime- of the former 'technical secondary' education
- Successful completion of the preparatory class leading to the DAES training.

For more information:

- Communiqué [4] (in French) on the ministry of Education's website
- Press release (in French): DAES for professionally active learners (Le Diplôme d'accès aux études supérieures (DAES) en alternance [5])

2017

In 2017, there were no reforms in this area.