



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* LUXEMBOURG

## **POLICY PAMPHLET**

A GUIDANCE BOOKLET FOR  
FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS





## INTRODUCTORY WORDS

Distinguished stakeholder,

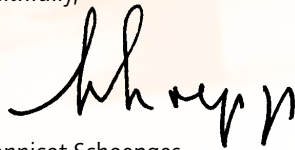
The Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research is aware that some members of its stakeholder community retain concerns about the creation of the University of Luxembourg. In response, we would like to provide you with some straightforward information on the project.

During the meetings with industrialists and academics on April 25th and April 28th 2003 respectively, several participants raised questions that led us to produce this policy pamphlet.

In addition to providing you with opportunities to discuss issues directly with us, we trust that this brochure will provide you with some guidance into our perspectives on the University of Luxembourg, and that the subsequent information will moderate many of your anxieties.

We sincerely hope that in future we can count on you and your collaboration as much as we have in the past, for the mutual goal of founding a thriving establishment for research and higher education that will award this country with the prestige and international recognition that it deserves.

Yours faithfully,



Erna Hennicot-Schoepges  
Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research



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# QUESTION 1: WHY DOES LUXEMBOURG NEED A UNIVERSITY?

## 1.1. The founding creed

The contemporary knowledge society increasingly **depends on research** conclusions and information transfer **for managing societal and economic needs**.

It is important that the Grand Duchy **embraces the opportunities presented by the knowledge age**, and that it positions itself to capitalise upon this to create a society that is **economically stable and socially cohesive**.

In an era of rapid change it is essential that we should no longer totally rely on the solutions of the past, but rather be prepared to have **the courage to seek innovative and creative strategies**.

The creation of the University will provide the fertile grounds for the foundation from which these innovations will emerge.

In this culture of analysis **the importance** of a **University emerges clearly**:

- A University is *a centre seeking scientific truth* through intellectuality and pluralism;
- A University is *an independent sphere* in hunt for accuracy beyond pressure from authority and mass bigotry;
- A University assumes the *think tank* role of society;
- A University congregates *experts in search for substantial solutions* to prevalent problems;
- A University laboratory *provides input for advances in industrial fields*.

## 1.2. A University for the 21st century

As the first academic institution of its kind to be established in the 21st century, the University of Luxembourg should be created according to a **uniquely distinguished status** that emerges from the **rapidly changing environment** of higher education and research.

Long-established universities, however, are experiencing difficulty in adjusting to this changing environment. The University of Luxembourg should not follow an inappropriate traditional structure, but be governed in a manner that allows for an **integration of the requirements of the changing environment** and the **needs and opportunities of the 21st century**:

### a) Globalisation

The impact of globalisation is changing the socio-economic-political context by increasing competition and uncertainty; in order to be successful in this new competitive environment universities must ensure that graduating students are prepared for this new world and that research reflects the needs of 21st century society.

### b) Knowledge Revolution

The advent of the 'knowledge revolution' is altering the way in which both business and the public sector are operating. Furthermore the entire educational process must take advantage of opportunities presented by advances in information technology; Business competitiveness and the efficiency of public sector are dependent to an increasing extent on a strong research base to develop new products, processes, services and policies.

### c) Interdisciplinarity

Most major research breakthroughs and solutions to societal problems result from inter-disciplinary activities conducted at the interfaces between traditional academic disciplines.

### d) Alliances

Global alliances of strong academic institutions and departments are forming to compete with traditional regional institutions for outstanding students and major research funding.

### e) Competition

The Bologna process will increase competition between European institutions and demand emphasis on quality.

### f) Budgetary Constraints

All of these issues must be accommodated within the constraints of tighter budgets.

## QUESTION 2: WHAT UNIVERSITY FOR LUXEMBOURG?

### *2.1. Founding principles*

In order to take advantage of the opportunities indicated in §1.2, following **basic principles should guide the University through its formation:**

- The University of Luxembourg will seek to **be innovative and relevant to the needs of the 21st century**, but it will not be modelled on traditional regional Universities;
- **The primary focus of the new University should be research** and, in this regard, the University should develop a few niches in which it can **serve the interests of Luxembourg and achieve international recognition**;
- In that major research advances are most likely to be achieved **by teams of researchers from different disciplines**, priority should be given to the establishment of a small number of major, **interdisciplinary centres of research excellence**;
- The overall thrust of the research component of the University shall be to become **internationally recognised as a centre of research excellence in a few specified interdisciplinary areas** which are of importance to the welfare of Luxembourg society and business;
- In order to **avoid the traditional compartmentalisation of knowledge**, only a **small number of academic Faculties** will be established with all academic staff based in one of the units; consistent with the objective of interdisciplinary research, it is recommended that departments be only created in exceptional circumstances;



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- The University must recognise **a societal responsibility to contribute**, where possible, **to public policy development**; such responsibility pertains not only to law and social sciences but also in such disciplines as life sciences and IT;
- In keeping with the research focus of the university **the main degrees will be research oriented, i.e. masters and doctorates**;
- The University of Luxembourg will offer **a small number of undergraduate degree programmes at the bachelor level which are** broadly based, **learner-centred** and which **require students to spend some time abroad**. Some may reflect the current offerings of existing institutions.

# QUESTION 3: WHAT IS AN “INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE”?

## 3.1. Background

The origins of the interdisciplinary centre emerge from the straightforward concept that to satisfy the information thirst of the contemporary knowledge society and to acquire bona fide remedies to prevailing societal sufferings, **solutions must transpire from more than one sphere.** Environmental problems, for example, can be more easily unravelled through combined efforts from research experts from multiple disciplines, such as biology, ecology, conservation, energy, geography, sciences, human studies...

The complexity of the existing problems in our world is such that only the input from many disciplines and experts can contribute to their resolution.

The University of Luxembourg has the unique possibility to pick up on this global necessity and succeed as a centre for excellence in research that provides these resolutions through **implementing a base for a multitude of specialists to jointly seek outcomes for world problems.**

The goal and idea of an interdisciplinary centre is to reunite experts from a multitude of backgrounds who are to collaborate on a question that requires immediate attention.

### 3.2. A simple model

The interdisciplinary centre **channels research and education on transverse themes across multiple disciplines** whilst simultaneously aspiring to integrate innovative approaches and new perspectives.

**The interdisciplinary centre does NOT desire to be a place for private or public competition(s), neither between faculties nor between individuals. It is merely a place for research with the sole and only purpose being research and seeking solutions to global problems. Interdisciplinarity by nature requires consensus, homogeneity, collaboration and harmony. Every interested expert researcher is more than welcome to join.**

### 3.3. Plenty of opportunities

- The interdisciplinary centre offers the possibility for **existing Luxembourg researchers to start, continue or cooperate with a project.**
  - The interdisciplinary project pushes research into a **new and higher dimension.**
  - The interdisciplinary centre allows for experts **to gather with colleagues** in order to **intensify the work** on a project, take on a new angle or perspective for seeking results.
  - The interdisciplinary centre may be used as **a meeting point** for countless researchers, including those of the existing Centres de Recherche Public.
- If you are currently involved with a research project rest assured that **OF COURSE you can continue your work** at the University of Luxembourg. In fact, the interdisciplinary centre will assist you for a successful completion by providing you with the opportunity of integrating different perspectives, and through these human resources, into your work.

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### *3.4. Internal communication*

Numerous members of the stakeholder community have expressed anxieties about how they will be able to find out which research expert is involved in which project.

**Rest assured that every staff member at the interdisciplinary centre is there to provide you with information. Just ask!**

**Internal communication experts will work intensively to guarantee a smooth running of an unsophisticated, straightforward and frequent communication procedure. You do NOT have to worry about assistance with your project; they will provide you with information.**

## QUESTION 4:

### WHAT DOES THE UNIVERSITY WANT TO ACHIEVE?

The ultimate goal of the University is to **achieve excellence in research quality**.

The results of the research by the excellent experts in their fields will contribute to societal benefit.

## QUESTION 5:

### WILL I BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS UNIVERSITY?

**OF COURSE you will!**

The University of Luxembourg requires a **manifold amount of human resources** to achieve its ultimate goal. In fact, any establishment depends upon its members' input to be successful. So no matter whether you are a teacher, a researcher, a caretaker or an industrialist, we welcome your contribution!



## QUESTION 6: DO I ENJOY ANY FREEDOM AT THIS UNIVERSITY?

- > You have the freedom **to continue your work.**
- > You have the freedom to **research**
- > You have the freedom to **teach.**
- > **You will not be forced into researching a particular topic!**



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## QUESTION 7: WHO CAN SUPPLY ME WITH MORE INFORMATION?

Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

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