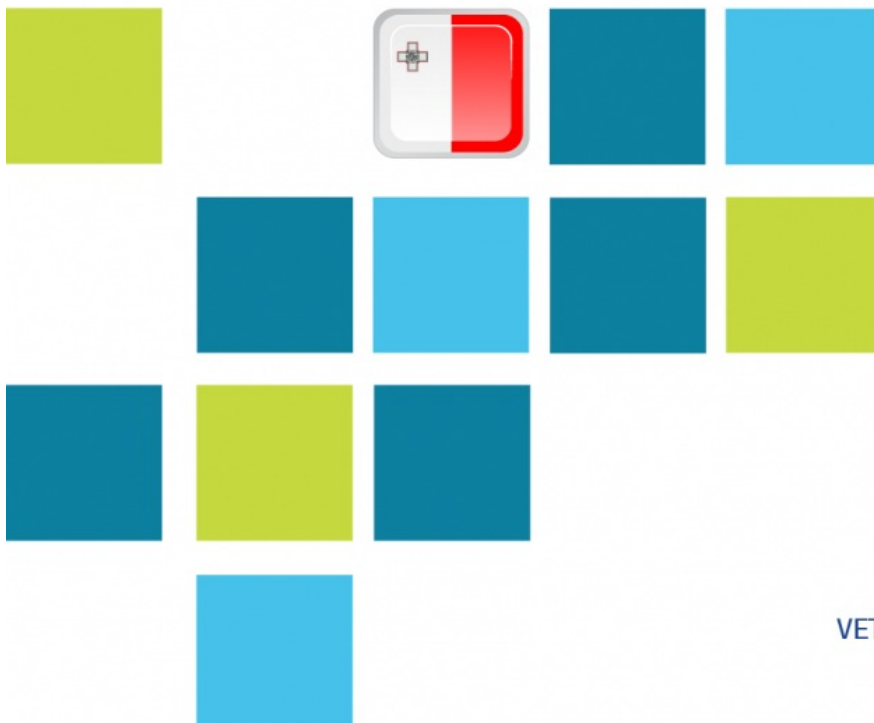

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

MALTA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements (1)

Overall responsibility for vocational education and training (VET) in Malta lies with the Ministry for Education (MFED). The Ministry for Tourism and Consumer Protection (MTCP)(2) is in charge of VET for the tourism sector. The two main State providers – the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) – are self-accrediting further and higher VET institutions offering VET qualifications at EQF levels 1 to 8. There is also an increasing number of private VET providers. In 2019, MCAST introduced apprenticeship degrees in 7 programmes. In 2021, MCAST embarked on a first doctoral programme at EQF/ MQF level 8.

Lower and upper secondary level

The *My Journey – Achieving through different paths* (3)) reform has introduced a new compulsory secondary school system that aims to increase enrolment in vocational and applied subjects, to enhance the flexibility of education pathways and increase the attractiveness of VET. In school year 2019/20, almost 30% of learners are enrolled in upper secondary VET programmes (EQF/MQF level 3), continuing the upward trend recorded in the past 5 years.

Qualifications

The Maltese qualifications framework (MQF) sets the overall parameters for VET programmes at EQF levels 1 to 5 in terms of distribution of key competences (decreasing with level), sector skills and underpinning knowledge (increasing with level). Both VET State providers offer study courses ranging from foundation programmes up to master degrees. In 2021, MCAST launched its first professional research doctorate, an MQF/EQF level 8 qualification.

Available VET qualifications and progression pathways are:

- certificate and award courses at EQF/MQF introductory level A and B, levels 1 or 2, giving access to programmes at the next EQF/MQF level in the same field: these are introduction and foundation certificate programmes, which include a component of work experience and work-based learning:
- for learners without a qualification;
- certificate courses at EQF/MQF level 1, 2 and 3, comprising a percentage of work-based learning, which provide access to programmes at the next level:
- for foundation certificate holders and those with an EQF/MQF level 2 compulsory education qualification;
- advanced diploma courses at EQF/MQF level 4 (2- to 3-year duration);
- for learners with a general education or VET EQF/MQF level 3 qualification. These courses include mandatory work experience through apprenticeship schemes. Higher -diploma courses at EQF/MQF level 5 (1- to 2-year duration):
- for learners with an EQF/MQF level 4 VET qualification;
- both State VET institutions offer a suite of tertiary qualifications at bachelor and doctorate (PhD) levels.
- VET-related degree programmes are also provided by the University of Malta (UM) faculty of health sciences and the faculty of education.

Adult learning/continuing VET

Continuing VET (CVET) is mainly provided by MFED's Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE), MCAST and the ITS. Most courses are part-time and take place in the evening. Pegging CVET courses to the EQF/MQF ensures the quality and value of all learning.

Adult learning is mainly provided by MFED's DRLLE, MCAST and the UM. The latter two enrol individuals as regular students based on the maturity clause. Besides targeting the unemployed, Jobsplus (PES) is increasingly refocusing courses towards reskilling and upskilling employees. This will help meet the demand for new skills in emerging economic sectors and so improve employability and career prospects.

Distinctive features (4)

The 2016 Eurobarometer opinion survey on vocational education and training showed that, of all the EU countries, VET is most appealing and attractive in Malta.

VET features as a central theme in Malta's education policy in the *Framework for the education strategy for Malta, 2014-24* (5).

Developing excellence in VET and higher education through research, effective licensing, programme accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications is entrusted to the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). In January 2021, the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) was re-established and incorporated as the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority by means of the Further and Higher Education Act (6).

In 2009, Malta was the first EU country to reference its qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA). VET is referenced at all qualification levels, allowing for flexible progression pathways and permeability between education and training sectors.

VET education now starts in compulsory lower and upper secondary education. All VET programmes at upper secondary level combine VET with general education. The 2018 Act regulating work-based learning and apprenticeship established work-based learning as central to VET. Apprentices receive remuneration for the on-the-job training from employers and a stipend from the government.

Stakeholders strongly support VET. The Chamber for Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (7), the Malta Employers' Association (8) and the unions are involved and sit on the boards of State VET providers. Many employers promote apprenticeships, with dialogue between VET providers and industry as a key feature in qualification design.

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- [1] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443>
 - [2] Consumer Protection was added to the portfolio of the Ministry for Tourism in December 2020. Its designation is Ministry for Tourism and Consumer Protection (MTCP). <https://tourism.gov.mt/en/Pages/MinistryforTourismandConsumerProtection.aspx>
 - [3] About the reform at secondary level see Ministry for Education and Employment (2016). *My Journey – achieving through different paths*. <http://www.myjourney.edu.mt/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MY-JOURNEY-BOOKLET-WEB-UPLOAD-24FEB17.pdf>. See also: Cedefop; ReferNet (2021). *VET REF: developments in vocational education and training policy database*. [Unpublished].
 - [4] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443>
 - [7] The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry is the independent body

representing companies from all economic sectors. <https://www.maltachamber.org.mt/>

- [8] Malta Employers Association (MEA) The MEA is a constituted body that represents employers from all sectors of industry and commerce in Malta.
<https://www.maltaemployers.com/>

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Skills shortages and mismatches are the result of demographic challenges, low unemployment, the share of low-qualified adults and strong economic growth. The domestic labour supply cannot meet the increase in demand particularly in view of the challenges in finding and retaining specialised niche workers. Consequently, over the past few years, there has been an influx of foreign employees. In January 2021, Jobsplus estimates show that 26.9% of the labour force consisted of foreign workers, of which 44.7% (31 658) hailed from other EU countries. Employers face difficulties recruiting skilled workers (healthcare, financial and ICT sectors), as well as reporting labour shortages in clerical support, service and sales and for machine operators and assemblers. It is noted that average length of stay of foreign workers has remained relatively unchanged since 2012, standing at 3.5 years.

The focus of VET and employment policies is to increase skilled workforce supply by helping more young people complete education or training, make a successful transition to a job and by increasing employment among inactive ageing people. The new legislation strengthening the regulation of apprenticeship and work-based learning is part of the measures.

Early school leaving from education and training (ELET), has been decreasing steadily at a faster rate than other countries. In 2020, the ELET rate dropped to 12.6%, lower than that of other four Member States. Measures to reduce it include:

- a strategic prevention plan launched in 2014;
- second chance education options;
- more progress-monitoring in the education ministry.

The 2014 strategy has contributed to a constant and significant fall in the ELET rate. In 2020, following a review of the 2014 strategy, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Research and Employability (DRLLE) launched the *Early leaving from education and training (ELET) policy – the way forward 2020-30* (9). Following public consultation, it will be officially launched in Q4 2021. The policy embraces the three approaches of prevention, intervention and compensation and aims to continue reducing the ESL to reach the national target. Introducing vocational subjects in lower secondary education has also proved effective in preventing early school leaving.

Motivating more adults to engage in upskilling and reskilling in lifelong learning is a priority. In 2020, the participation rate in adult learning in Malta was 11% against 9.2% at EU level. This is an increase of 3.3 percentage points over the 2014 participation rate. In 2020, the DRLLE, launched the new *National strategy for lifelong learning 2020-30* (10). The national lifelong learning strategy paves the way for empowering people through personalised and innovative learning approaches. The strategy aims to widen VET provision for adults. It includes actions that specifically promote VET within a lifelong learning framework. One measure is to strengthen work-based learning with industry. It also envisages the introduction of VET and applied subjects up to EQF/MQF level 3 for adults. The subjects offered will be aligned to those offered during the last 3 years of compulsory education as part of the reform *My Journey – Achieving through different paths*.

A National Skills Council (NSC) was set up in 2016 to improve skills governance and forecasting. It recommends policy changes – relevant to its mandate – to the government (11).

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- [11] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443>

CHAPTER 3.

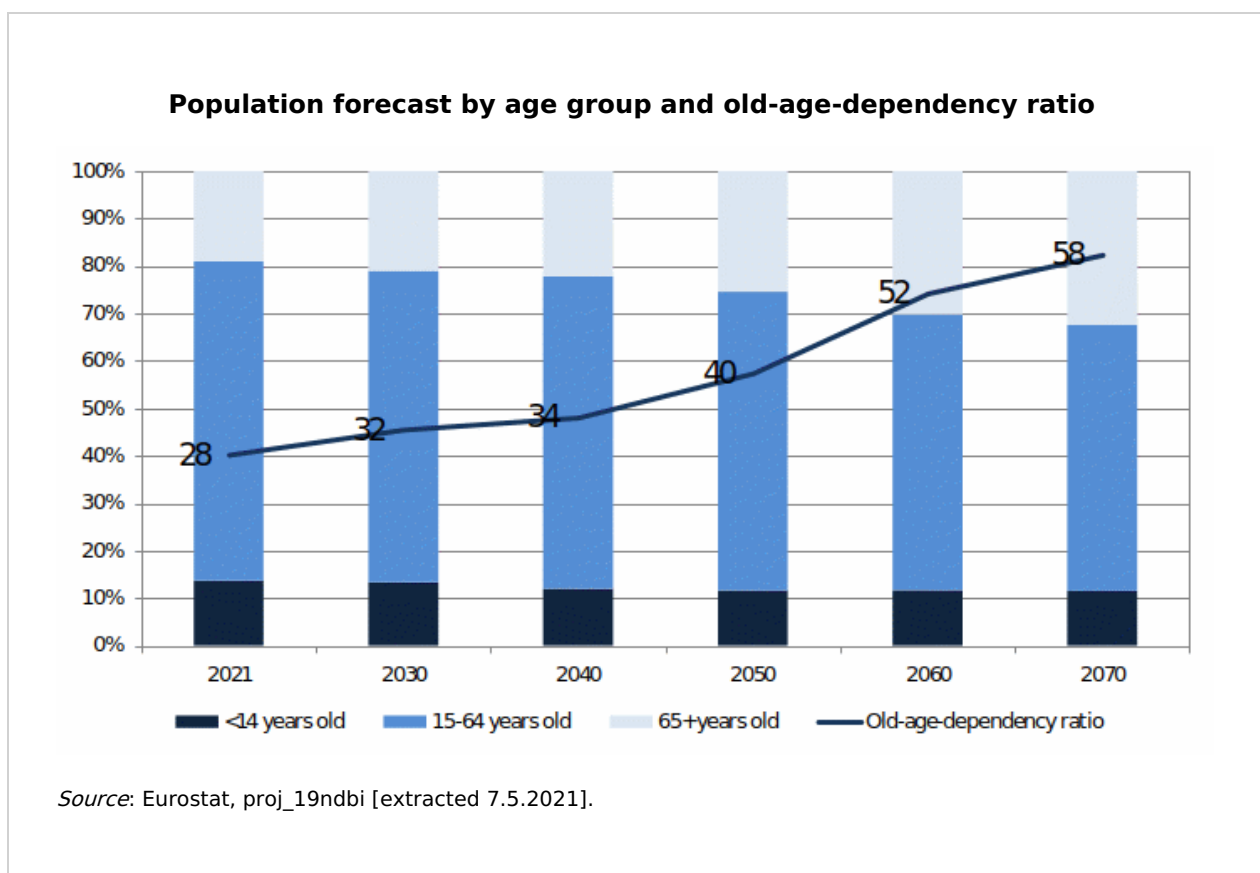
External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

Population in 2020: 514 564 (12) It increased since 2015 by 17% mostly due to immigration (increased birth rate contributed to a lesser extent) (13).

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing.

An old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 28 in 2015 to 58 in 2070.



The increase in school enrolment due to the increase in migration flows will have an impact on VET as more learners take the VET option. This would require more educators and learning facilities.

3.2 Economics

In 2018, (latest data available) there were only 67 firms in Malta that employed more than 250 persons. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) during the same year constituted 99.9% of all firms, with the vast majority, 93.1%, being micro firms employing less than 10 persons. Small firms, employing between 10 and 49 workers, accounted for 5.9% of all enterprises, while 1.1%

of all firms were medium-sized (14).

Maltese SMEs in the business economy sector generated around EUR 5.3 billion in value-added, amounting to 81.8% of total value-added. SMEs also account for 77.7% of total employment with large firms accounting for 34 150 employees. This is a healthy development, as growing dependence on many small and medium enterprises is making the Maltese economy less susceptible to idiosyncratic shocks (15). Between 2014 and 2018, (latest data available) overall SME growth in the Maltese economy was remarkably strong. Value-added in these enterprises increased by 58.1%, exceeding that of large firms, which increased by only 43.2%. However, in terms of employment, SME growth at 19.3% lagged behind the 32.2% increase generated by large firms

Main economic sectors (16):

- financial and insurance activities;
- professional, scientific and technical activities;
- arts, entertainment and recreation;
- information and communication;
- wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles;
- manufacturing.

Economic actors play an active role in linking VET to the needs of the economy. They are represented on the board of directors of the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), while at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), they are represented on the board of governors and on the board of studies, as stipulated by law, contributing to the development of VET courses at all levels. Both MCAST (17) and the ITS have developed bespoke continuing vocational education and training (CVET) courses for certain industries requiring specific skills, e.g. avionics, block chain and distributed ledger technologies.

An increasing number of enterprises offer apprenticeships, internships and work-based learning to VET students in both institutions.

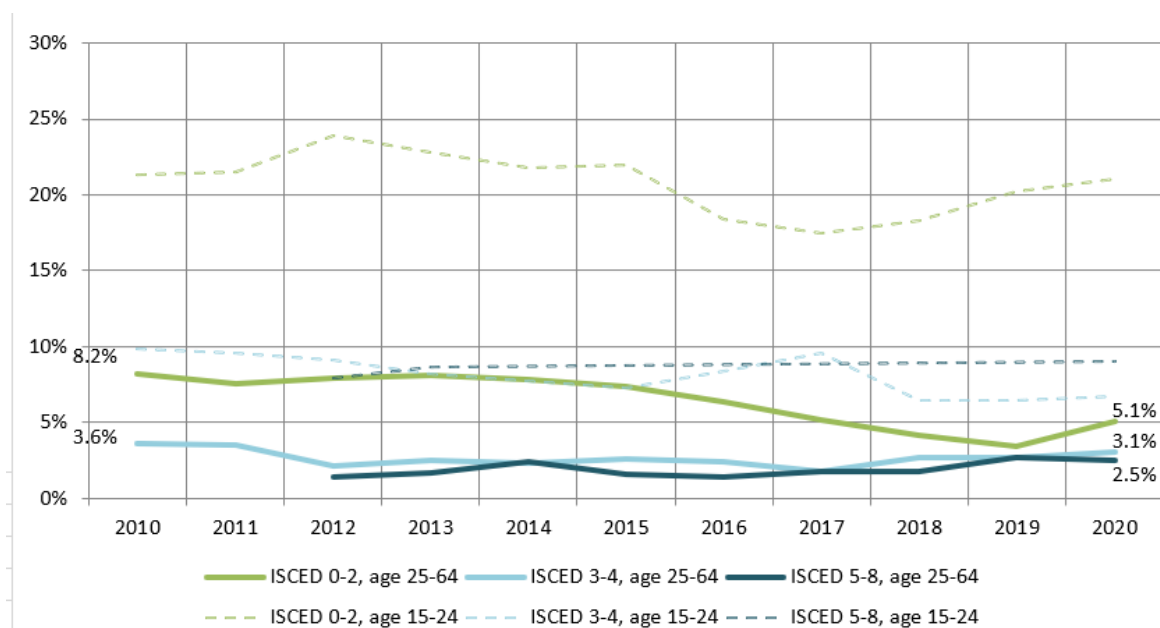
3.3 Labour market

Depending on the job, employers usually ask for qualifications, competences and skills.

The labour market is considered flexible. However, a number of occupations/professions is regulated (e.g. engineers and accountants require a professional warrant).

Total unemployment (18)(2020), 3.5% (6.2% in EU-27); it decreased by 0.3 percentage points since 2016 (19).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2010-20

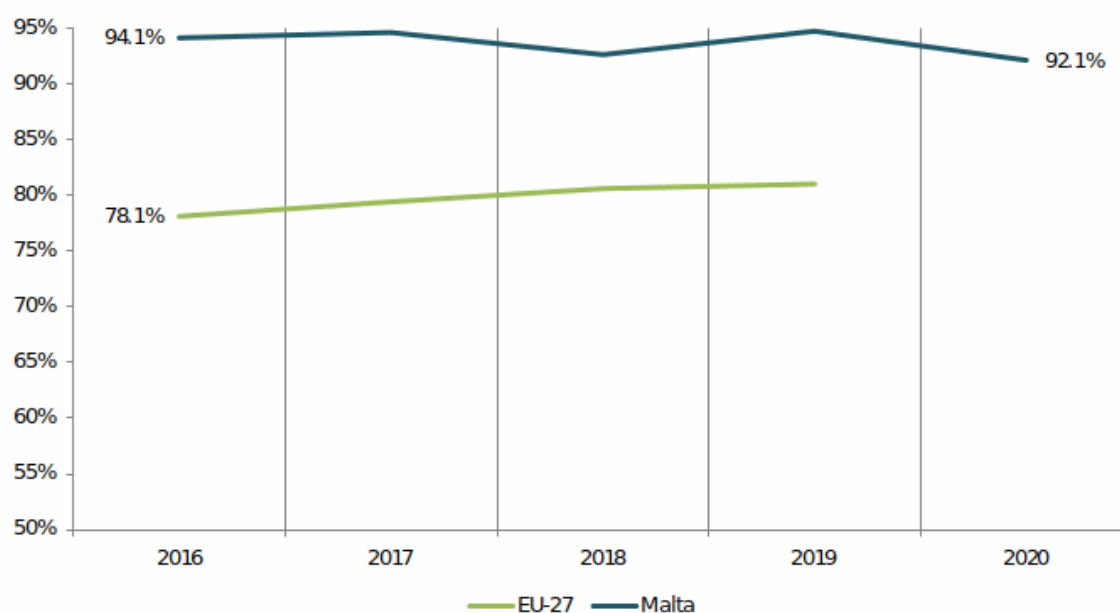


NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 3-4 and 5-8, both age groups.
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education
 Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgæd [Extracted 16.9.2021].

The impact of education on unemployment is significant. The unemployment rate for the low-skilled (20 to 64) has been decreasing up to 2019, with a slight increase in 2020. The unemployment rate for those with a medium level qualification, has generally been around half that of the low-skilled. The share of persons aged 15 to 64 having a low level of education decreased from 59.6% in 2010 to 37.0% in 2020. Conversely, the share of persons with a medium or high level of education increased by 8.7 and 14.0 percentage points respectively in the last 11 years (20).

Employment rate of VET graduates aged 20 to 34 fell from 94.1% in 2016 to 92.1% in 2020.

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [Extracted 6.5.2021].

The fall (-2.0 pp) in employment of VET graduates aged 20 to 34 in 2016-20 was higher compared to the increase in employment of all graduates of that age (0.4 pp) in the same period in Malta (21).

[12] NB: Data for population as of 1 January, Eurostat tps00001 [extracted 7.5.2021].

[13] NB: Data for population as of 1 January, Eurostat tps00001 [extracted 7.5.2021].

[14] These are estimates for 2018 produced by DIW Econ, based on 2008-16 figures from the structural business statistics database (Eurostat). They are extracted from the Small Business Act (SBA) fact sheet 2019.

<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/38662/attachments/20/translations/en/renditions/native>

[16] Recent GDP growth is mostly driven by services. Between 2019 and 2020 professional, scientific and technical activities and the manufacturing sector as a percentage of GDP, increased by 0.4 percentage points when compared to that of the previous year. Information and communication activities together with financial and insurance activities increased by 1.2 percentage points. For arts, entertainment and recreation, the increase was around 0.4 percentage points (Eurostat, 2020). Contrary to the increasing trend observed in the last 3 years, the administrative and support service activities experienced a decline of 0.4 pp when compared to the previous year. The share of added value by agriculture remained stable at a rate of 0.5% of GDP, resulting in the country being dependent on imported food supplies. In contrast, the shares of sectors such as i-gaming, financial services and IT services, legal and accounting services have increased significantly.

- [17] MCAST Gateway to Industry (MG2i). <https://shortcourses.mcast.edu.mt/index>
- [18] Percentage of active population, 25 to 64 years old.
- [19] Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 6.5.2021].
- [21] NB: Breaks in time series, Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 6.5.2021].

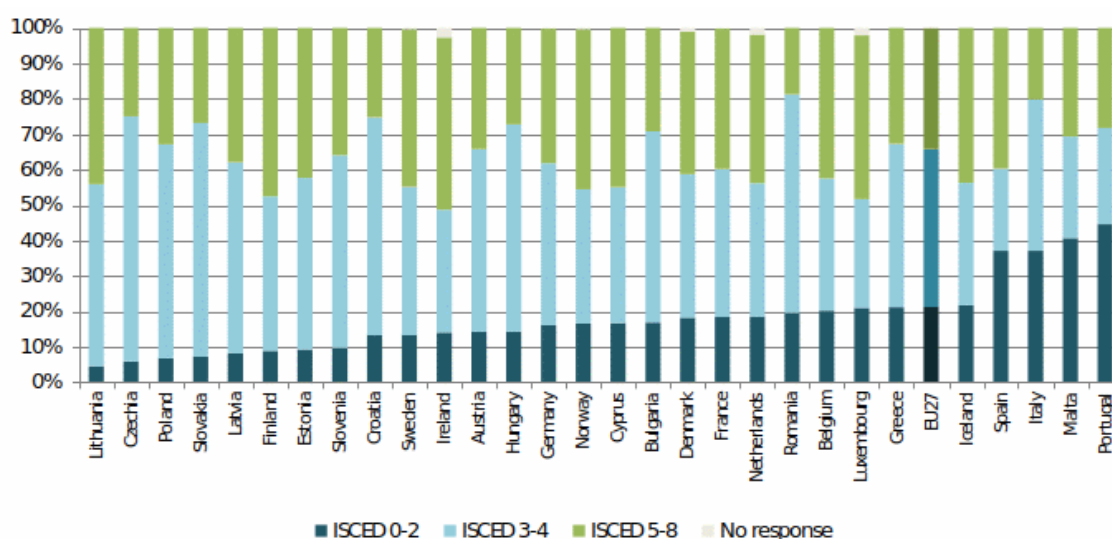
CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2020, 40.7% of the 25+ population has an ISCED 0-2 level of education, 28.7% ISCED 3-4 and 30.6% a tertiary qualification ISCED 5-8. Developments in the last 15 years reflect extensive investment in education and training. The inflow of foreigners also contributed to rising attainment levels; they often have a tertiary qualification and relatively few are low-skilled (22) (23).

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2020



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011. Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia and Latvia

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_pgaed [Extracted 16.9.2021].

4.3 VET learners by level

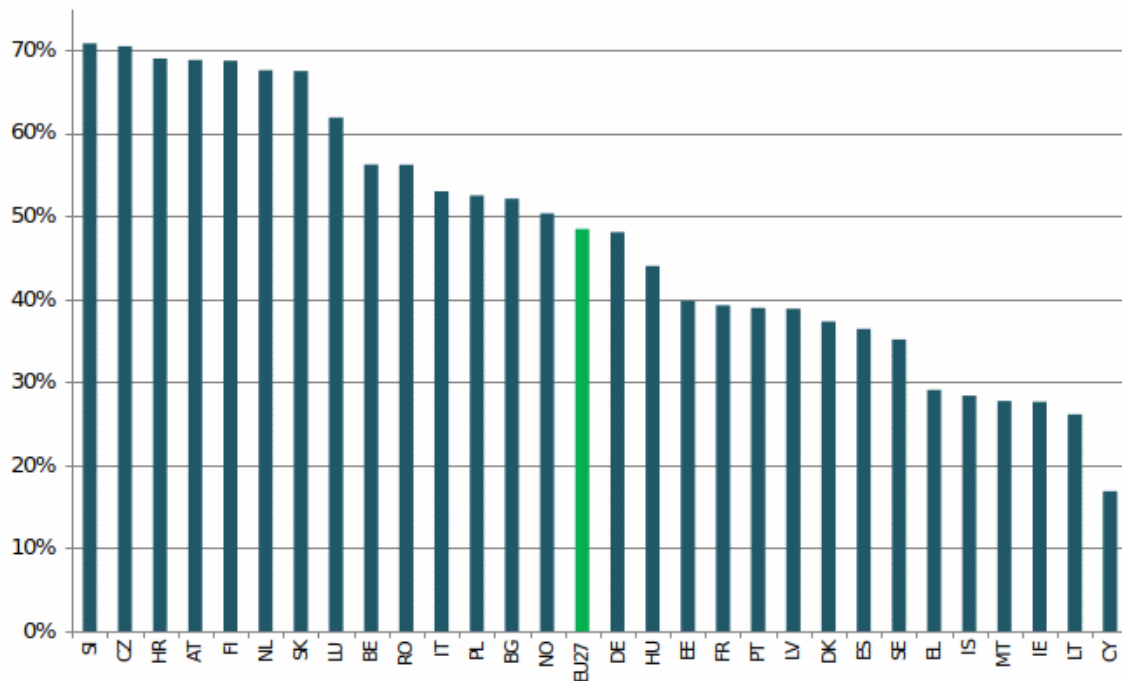
Share of learners in VET by level in 2019

lower secondary
0.8%

upper secondary
27.7%

post-secondary
Not applicable

**Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper secondary level
(ISCED level 3), 2019**



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 6.5.2021].

4.4 Female share

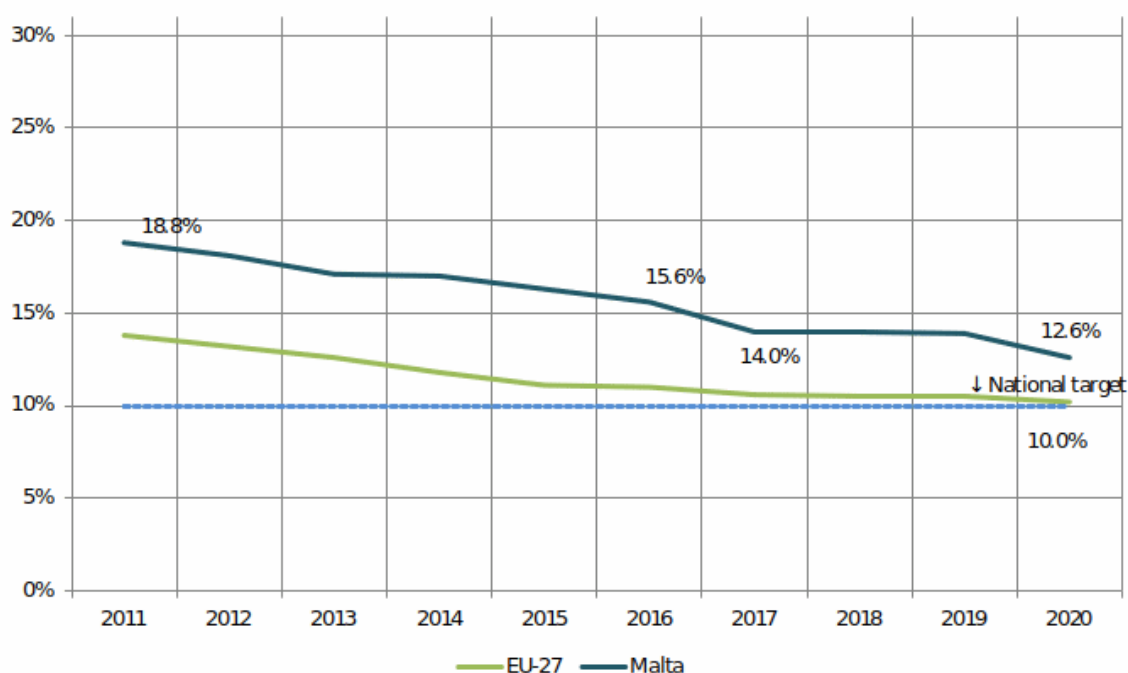
In 2019, (latest data available) the participation rate in upper secondary VET stood at 27.7%, an increase of 2.1 percentage points over a 4-year period.

In the school year 2020/21, the uptake of VET and applied subjects by female learners in year 9 was 36%, a marked increase from the 32.49% recorded for the previous school year.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased from 18.8% in 2011 to 12.6% in 2020. It is above the national target for 2020 of not more than 10% and the EU-27 average of 10.2%.

Early leavers from education and training in 2011-20



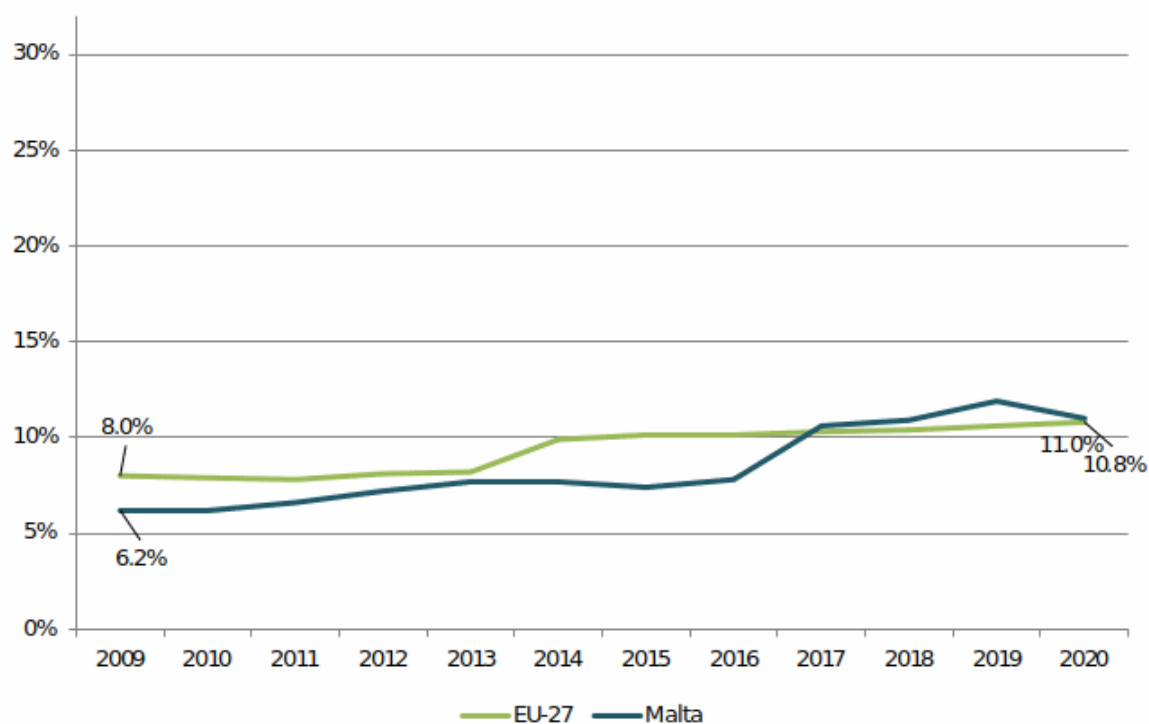
NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training break in time series.

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 18.10.2021]

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning offers training opportunities for adults, including early school leavers from education. The older unemployed groups are also covered.

Participation in lifelong learning in 2009-20



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training; break in series.
 Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [extracted 6.5.2021].

Participation in lifelong learning in Malta has been increasing. From 6.2% in 2009, it reached 11.0% in 2020, 0.2 percentage points above the EU-27 average (10.8%).

4.7 VET learners by age

Information not available

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED 0);
- primary education (ISCED Level 1);
- secondary education (ISCED 244-343, 344, 254, 353,);
- post-secondary general education (ISCED Level 3);
- post-secondary vocational education and training (ISCED 454);
- tertiary education (ISCED 665, 766, 767, 864).

Early childhood education and care, available for children from the age of 3 months up to 2 years and 9 months, is provided at centres run by both State and private entities. As from April 2014, families with both parents in full-time or part-time employment or in education are entitled to free childcare. Children between the ages of 2 years and 9 months and 5 years attend kindergarten classes that are operated by State, church and independent schools.

Compulsory education is distributed over 11 years and covers the ages from 5 to 16 years. It consists of two cycles: the primary cycle (from age 5 to 11) and the secondary cycle (from age 11 to 16) which consists of middle schools (from age 11 to 13) and secondary schools (from age 13 to 16). Around 50% of learners in compulsory education attend State schools, another 36% go to church schools and around 14% are in independent schools.

Primary education consists of a 6-year programme that addresses general and vocational themes. Learners are streamed in the last 2 years and sit for the national end of primary benchmark assessment in year 6 to determine their level of education.

As from 2014, co-education has been introduced in the secondary cycle. The phasing in of middle schools (from age 11 to 13) ensures that smaller sized school communities result in more individual attention and a more caring environment that promotes better student-teacher relationships. Parent involvement is encouraged with a view to preventing disengagement. The curriculum addresses general and vocational skills.

All secondary schools (from age 13 to 16) provide general education courses and also options for learners who want to follow a vocational career pathway. At the end of secondary education learners are awarded a secondary school certificate & profile (SSC&P) that recognises formal, non-formal and informal education. Learners may sit for the secondary education certificate (SEC) exams that are a prerequisite for taking up many of the programmes available at upper secondary and post-secondary level.

Following compulsory education, learners can choose to follow either a general or a vocational post-secondary education path (from age 16 to 18). General and some vocational education programmes are intended to lead to tertiary education. The main institutions at post-secondary level are the Malta Junior College, the Giovanni Curmi Higher secondary school, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), the latter providing hospitality courses.

The University of Malta (UM) (24), also an autonomous institution, offers tertiary general education programmes ranging from certificate and undergraduate level to doctoral level.

Tertiary vocational education is provided by MCAST. In 2021, a new Doctoral programme on small enterprises has been introduced with students embarking on this course in October 2021. ITS provides degree courses in hospitality studies up to master level. Private organisations also provide post-secondary and tertiary education (25).

- For learners with an EQF level 1 qualification: 1-year introduction and foundation programmes (lower secondary, ISCED-P 254, 353) leading to an EQF level 1 or 2 certificate. They integrate key competences within the vocational aspects of the curriculum, include work experience, and give access to studies at the next EQF level in the same field. The most popular fields of study are manufacturing, construction and arts and humanities. Foundation certificate holders can continue VET in 1- to 2-year apprenticeship schemes (upper secondary, ISCED-P 353) leading to a VET diploma (EQF level 3).
- For students with an EQF level 2 compulsory education qualification: 2-year, mainly school-/college-based programmes (upper secondary, ISCED-P 353) leading to a VET diploma (EQF level 3). These programmes include work-based learning and give access to programmes at the next level.
- For those with an EQF level 3 compulsory education qualification: VET programmes (post-secondary, ISCED-P 454) leading to an advanced VET diploma (EQF level 4). There are school-/college-based 2-year programmes and 2- to 3-year apprenticeship schemes. Some programmes can be followed either college-based or as apprenticeship. VET diploma (EQF level 3) holders can enter these programmes as well.

VET in higher education includes:

- 2-year college-based programmes (ISCED-P 554) leading to higher VET diplomas at EQF level 5. A VET advanced diploma (EQF level 4) is required for entry. Higher VET diplomas are equivalent to a degree after the first 2 years of a university programme; they allow entry to the third year of VET bachelor programmes provided graduates meet entry requirements. Higher VET diploma graduates from the ITS can also pursue a bachelor in tourism programme at the UM;
- 3- to 4-year bachelor programmes (ISCED 655, leading to EQF level 6) which open up progression opportunities to selected academic master programmes. ITS offers three VET bachelor programmes.

VET bachelor programmes are open to:

- sixth-form graduates with two advanced and two intermediate level passes;
- MCAST advanced diploma (EQF level 4) graduates;
- VET higher diploma programme graduates (see above);
- ITS diploma (EQF/MQF level 4);
- ITS higher national diploma (EQF/MQF level 5)
- 3-year part-time VET bachelor degree, MCAST B.A. (Hons)(EQF level 6) in vocational education and training. This bachelor programme aims to provide practitioners or intending practitioners in VET settings with the knowledge, skills and competences to work effectively, efficiently and confidently as professional teachers, supervisors, mentors, educational designers and agents of change in the fast-changing reality of industry
- 3-year part-time VET master programmes (EQF level 7) at MCAST. In 2016/17 an MBA for small business programme and a master of business informatics programme were offered for the first time. Graduates with an academic bachelor degree from the UM or an MCAST VET bachelor degree can enter these programmes. By February 2019, the suite of MCAST master programmes offered are:
 - master by research;
 - master in retail;
 - master in artificial intelligence for industry 4.0;
 - master in research methods;
 - master of business administration for the small business (MBA);
 - master of science in lean enterprise;
 - master of science in information technology and systems;

- master of science in environmental engineering;
 - master of science in high performance buildings
 - master of science in integrated water resource management;
 - master of arts in product design;
 - master of science in mechatronics;
 - master of science in exercise and sports science;
 - master of science in aerospace engineering;
 - master of science in mechanical engineering and sustainable technology
 - master in vocational education applied research 4.0- MVEAR 4.0.
- The ITS offers two master degrees at EQF/ MQF level 7:
 - master of arts in heritage interpretation;
 - master in business administration in international hospitality management.

The government ambition is to become a learning society by developing adult education, especially continuing VET, and easing access to these forms of learning. The education ministry's Department for Research, Lifelong Learning, and Employability (DRLLE) (26) is the main provider of part-time adult learning courses. Its adult learning unit offers over 400 EQF level 1-5 courses in community-based learning centres, local councils and community centres. Most courses develop basic key competences, but the offer also includes continuing VET and visual and performing arts courses.

State VET providers also offer continuing VET courses. Around 300 part-time courses at MCAST cater for adults who cannot take part in full-time programmes due to employment, business, family or other commitments. They support career development and, in some cases, enable participants to take up more specialised jobs.

MCAST provides tailor-made courses to industry, on demand. In view of the general shortage of workers, industries are resorting to upskilling their own employees rather than solely seeking readily skilled employees from outside their firm. During 2015, around 62% of enterprises provided some form of continuous vocational training (27). These included; in-house continuing VET courses, job rotation, exchanges, secondments, study-visits, conferences, workshops, learning circles or self-directed learning.

Firms might well provide in-house training to their employees but partnering with MCAST gives them the opportunity to provide employees with level-rated courses and MCAST-badged certification, either for full qualifications or for partial awards, both pegged to the Malta qualifications framework (MQF). As a result, the population of part-time learners at MCAST is increasing, with Maltese and foreign workers choosing to upskill themselves, directly or through their employers, in order to get higher accredited and MCAST-badged certification.

[24] <https://www.um.edu.mt/>

[25] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/malta_en

[26] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>

[27] Eurostat, Enterprises providing training by type of training and size class – % of all enterprises [[trng_cvt_01s](#)]

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

Reform of apprenticeship was launched in 2014 following 2013 and 2014 European semester country-specific recommendations merging off-the-job education and on-the-job learning in a single apprenticeship scheme. Improving quality, strengthening the role of employers in assessment and setting the stage for fully implementing a three-tier framework comprising work placements (EQF levels 1-4), apprenticeships (EQF levels 3-4) and internships (EQF level 5 and above) were the key characteristics. Attracting more learners to VET by expanding work-based learning and motivating them to stay in labour market relevant programmes, the reform contributes to reducing early leaving.

In 2014 the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) took over administration of apprenticeships from the public employment service Jobsplus and renamed it the national apprenticeship scheme. The enactment of the Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act, which came into force in March 2018 (28), further consolidated the reform in apprenticeship and work-based learning.

The Act aims at strengthening work-based learning and apprenticeship by:

- setting definitions and operational parameters for work placements, apprenticeships and internships;
- outlining responsibilities and governance structures (such as the national skills council);
- defining rights and obligations for VET providers, employers and learners;
- highlighting the role of employers as responsible learning partners;
- setting a compulsory minimum number of hours for all forms of work-based learning and linking remuneration to the minimum wage;
- using ECVET/ECTS in all forms of work-based learning;
- introducing a single EQF-based apprenticeship qualification replacing the dual certification currently in place;
- launching a training agreements register to support data collection and policy-relevant analysis by the national skills council.

Since 2018, MCAST has introduced developments, reflecting its ambition to ensure quality work-based learning opportunities (apprenticeship, internship or work exposure) in all its programmes:

- mainstreamed pilot projects (placements, apprenticeship and internship) into full-time programmes;
- developed work-based vocational competences for all apprenticeship programmes, serving as assessment benchmarks (apprenticeships office);
- made internship compulsory in all EQF/MQF level 6 programmes;
- launched an entrepreneurship centre (in collaboration with Malta Enterprise) to give learners opportunities to transform innovative ideas into profitable and sustainable business ventures;
- launched new apprenticeship degrees (e.g. in biomedical engineering, construction engineering, civil engineering, software development, multimedia software development);
- signed 1 739 agreements with registered industry partners

MCAST offers also work placement opportunities abroad and includes entrepreneurship training in its VET bachelor degree courses.

At the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), work-based learning in the form of 14-week local industrial trade practice during summer is compulsory for/in programmes up to EQF level 3

(ISCED 353). EQF level 4 (ISCED 354) and 5 (ISCED 554) ITS programmes include a mandatory 12-month internship abroad. Work-based learning in higher VET takes the form of internships and/or entrepreneurship training.

In the academic year 2020/21, 1 673 MCAST learners are enrolled in apprenticeship courses (29).

Apprenticeships will also be introduced through other providers, including private ones, to tap new areas of expertise with the aim of making apprenticeships more inclusive and more flexible for learners.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

[28] <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=28680&l=1>

[29] MCAST (2021). Administrative data.

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The education ministry is in charge of VET in compulsory education and at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) (30). The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) (31) falls under the responsibility of the tourism ministry.

As the official regulatory body for post-compulsory education, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) (until 2021 MFHEA was the National Commission for Further and Higher Education) supports excellence through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta qualifications framework. It also acts as a broker between the government and VET and higher education institutions, structures stakeholder dialogue, and oversees Malta qualifications framework (MQF) implementation.

Social partners sit on the boards of the State VET providers. Given the small size of the country, governance structures at provider level are important; efforts to optimise them have largely been steered by providers themselves.

The thematic organisation of MCAST in six institutes and Gozo campus providing courses from EQF Level 1 to Level 8 has helped encourage focused stakeholder dialogue and has provided a platform for employers and employee representatives to be involved in steering VET.

[30] <https://mcast.edu.mt/>

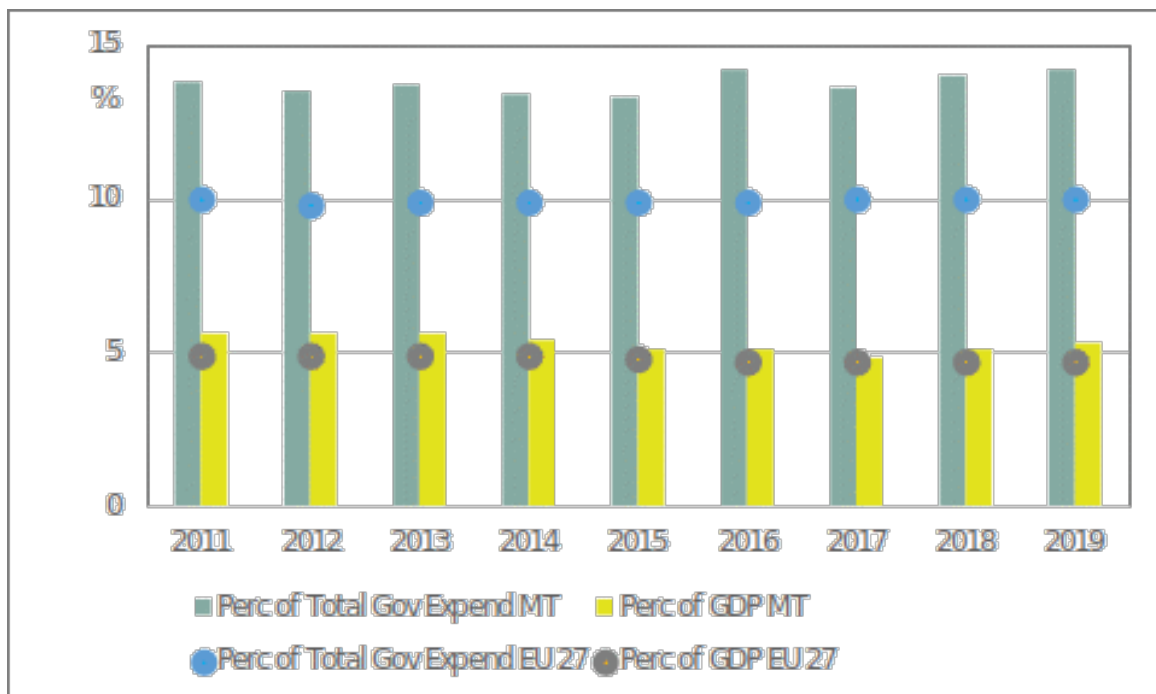
[31] <https://its.edu.mt/>

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

Public education from early childhood education and care up to tertiary level, including all initial vocational education and training offered by schools and State providers up to European qualifications framework level 6, is financed by the government. The budget for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) is part of government education expenditures. Tuition fees paid by participants in continuing VET courses generate extra revenue for MCAST and ITS.

Public spending on education 2011 - 2019 (latest data available)



Source: Eurostat gov_10a_exp [extracted 15.11.2021].

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In Malta VET teachers are present in the following areas (32):

- within compulsory education teaching vocational subjects. These teachers are delivering their subjects at the secondary level of education; they are employed at the grade of teacher and enjoy the same salary scales and conditions as any other teacher employed at compulsory level within the public sector. There is no distinction in teacher employment grades and qualifications required for these grades between general education subjects and vocational subject teachers;
- at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). MCAST is the main State VET provider, providing courses from Malta qualifications framework (MQF) introductory level on the MQF up to EQF/MQF level 8. At MCAST and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) VET teaching professionals are called lecturers, with four main grades: assistant lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer 1 and senior lecturer 2. There are specific standards applied to the qualifications of VET teachers teaching the different qualification levels within MCAST. VET teachers catering for up to EQF/MQF level 4 qualifications need to have a minimum of an EQF/MQF level 5 qualification. Those teaching at EQF/MQF level 5 and higher need to have a minimum of an EQF/MQF level 6 qualification. It is not legally necessary for VET teachers to possess teacher training qualifications at recruitment stage.
- at the ITS. The ITS is a State-funded organisation that provides training in the hospitality industry at post-compulsory level like MCAST. VET teachers at the ITS are not required to have a teacher training qualification when recruited, even if a qualification in the sector is required. In the past the ITS offered an EQF/MQF level 5 qualification in teacher training organised by the faculty of education, University of Malta, to all its staff in order to ensure that all staff have received teacher training. Current teachers at the ITS can choose any teacher training course of their choice and follow it within 5 years of their recruitment.
- Within private VET providers who cater for post-compulsory and adult learners teaching is guided by the *Accreditation manual* issued by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) (previously the National Commission of Further and Higher Education). Qualifications and courses accredited by the MFHEA specify that accredited vocational courses at EQF/MQF levels 1-4 should have tutors/VET trainers qualified at least with a relevant full qualification at level 5. In the case of vocational courses at EQF/MQF levels 5 and 6, as well as academic courses at EQF/MQF levels 6 and 7, tutors should have a full relevant qualification at least one level up from the course provided. The clarification issued by the MFHEA also states that in the case of vocational courses up to level 5, when there is clear evidence that the local market does not provide tutors of the required qualification level, the MFHEA will consider proposals for twinned provision. This involves a highly experienced and effective tutor with a lower qualification level being mentored by a colleague with a qualification at the appropriate level, who is preferably also involved in shared delivery, to ensure that the required level of learning outcomes delivery and assessment is maintained (33). All further and higher education institutions need to ensure that teaching staff are qualified, as one of the standards for internal quality assurance (34).
- at the workplace, i.e. apprenticeship tutors and mentors. Apprentices are supported by two different groups of professionals during their workplace learning experience. When an apprentice obtains an apprenticeship contract with an employer, the employer is legally bound to assign a trainer to each apprentice. The trainer is usually a trusted employee, often with a supervisory role within the company and who has the responsibility of training the apprentice and supervising his work. The trainer is responsible for ensuring that the

agreed learning programme for work-based learning is implemented. In addition to this training, the apprentice is visited at work by VET mentors who are experts in the sector. The objective of these visits is to monitor the apprentice's progress with respect to the learning of skills related to the course of study. The visits also serve to ensure that the apprentice is being provided with good learning work experience and, if any problems arise, these are tackled by the VET teacher. Thus, there are two roles within the apprenticeship scheme: mentors (VET teachers) and trainers (company employees). Visits by VET teachers to companies are part of the new reform in apprenticeship and have only started taking place during the 2014/15 academic year. There is currently no national legislation that regulates the qualification of mentors.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

The sectoral agreement between the education ministry and the Malta Union of Teachers (35), gives greater emphasis to continuing professional development (CPD). This agreement broadens the concept of CPD to include all development opportunities that nurture and cherish the creation of a Community of Professional Educators (CoPE). Since 2018, CPD encompasses all initiatives that facilitate professional discussion and growth amongst community members, such as school development planning sessions and links with the internal and external community.

Management has at its disposal a maximum of 40 hours-driven CoPE time annually (out of 80 hours). All educators are being encouraged to participate in self-sought CPD which, since 2018, is compensated by accelerated salary progression. Also since 2018, progression of teachers to the next salary scale may be accelerated from 8 to 6 years if they cumulate an aggregate of 360 hours recognised self-taught CPD time over 6 years.

Continuing VET development has placed teacher CPD high on the agenda of State providers. To prepare for the nationwide introduction of VET subjects in 2015, VET subject teachers (and university graduates expressing interest in teaching VET subjects), were trained to teach the VET subjects introduced at compulsory level. The training programme covered subject content, practical pedagogy and new assessment methods, as well as guidance to help prevent early leaving from education and training.

CoPE training sessions for teachers of all mainstream subjects in compulsory education, including VET teachers, are held throughout the school year. All learning programmes, including VET ones, are written as learning outcomes.

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) provides CPD opportunities for its lecturing staff. Teachers at MCAST can follow an EQF/MQF level 7 teacher training course – the master in vocational education applied research 4.0 – which has 3 exit points: certificate level, diploma level and master level (MVEAR 4.0) (36). In October 2020, MCAST launched the bachelor of vocational education and training 4.0 (Hons.) (BVET 4.0) for all those interested in teaching VET subjects. This is an EQF/MQF level 6 course of 180 ECTS that has been recognised by the Council for the Teaching Profession as a possible route to apply for a permanent teachers' warrant, although this is not a requirement to teach at post-compulsory level. BVET 4.0 aims to attract post-secondary students to enrol in a teacher training programme for those aspiring to join the VET sector as teachers and trainers or to offer support to apprentices in industry. This is achieved through the practice placements that are an integral part of the BVET 4.0: two placements in compulsory secondary education schools, where participants observe and lead learning in VET subjects; a placement in a VET post-secondary institution; and another two placements in industry. During their placement in industry, participants observe and eventually lead adult learning at the place of work. This innovative course highlights that, besides formal learning, informal and non-formal learning have a role in VET. Since 2019, MCAST has consolidated a more comprehensive teacher training programme for VET teachers.

Given that MCAST is also fast developing its portfolio of bachelor and master degrees, the research activity in the college is always becoming more important. To this end MCAST has also developed both a post graduate certificate and a post graduate diploma in research methods. The aim of both EQF level 7 qualifications is to equip its lecturing staff with the necessary competences to carry out research together with their undergraduate and graduate students. These efforts were further consolidated through strengthening the master degree by research (MRes) and professional research doctorate (DRes) programmes which aim to drive the college's capacity to undertake impact-based research in close collaboration with industry.

As of 2019, MCAST has also strategically embarked into consolidating and driving research within the institution, following the formalisation of the *MCAST Research Framework* (37). Through the establishment of an Applied Research and Innovation Centre (ARIC), a centralised approach was formalised which enabled the institution to encourage, train and proliferate research across all of its institutes and domains of expertise. Supporting and promoting the undertaking of research through both a curiosity driven and top-down approach, MCAST ensured that academics could collaboratively develop and further their expertise within a range of areas characterised through thematic fields of research. This has led the institution to grow research activities significantly over the past few years, with capacity increasing from 4 active researchers at the end of 2019 to over 100 academics by 2021. Also central to this success and drive was the aim to guide academics through the gradual maturation of research activities. The establishment of a centralised management team of senior research officers provided academic researchers guidance and development into research endeavours, explored opportunities of collaboration within local and international industry, as well as participating in and leading consortia of partners in research projects. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in MCAST being able to boost its engagement within externally funded research endeavours within local, EU and international entities, while also supporting an ever-increasing range of internally funded research activities. This distribution of research activity is proving key to the organisation, with significant benefits witnessed in the dissemination of knowledge within curricula, programme development and student-led projects as academic endeavours within MCAST are increasingly characterised by the need to develop and research more effective ways for the institution to further its future progress.

Quality assurance standards govern CPD and drive efforts aimed at sustaining quality in teaching and learning at the Institute of Tourism Studies. The ITS collaboration with Haaga Helia helped the institute to customise lecturing staff training programmes leading to top-up degrees in hospitality services. By upskilling its staff via the degree programme in hospitality management developed by Haaga Helia (38) ITS has been in a position to offer bachelor degree programmes in the hospitality and tourism sector since 2017 (39).

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE) and the University of Malta have taken initiatives that have raised the profile and professional development of adult educators (40).

The government encourages teacher CPD through incentives such as sabbaticals and paid study leave schemes, the Endeavour scholarship scheme, Malta Government undergraduate and postgraduate schemes, and Reach high post-doctoral scholarships.

More information is available in the Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspective on teachers and trainers (41).

[32] Information taken from <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers>

[35] The previous sectorial agreement between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) included a statutory requirement for teachers to attend an in-service course (INSET) of 3 days duration every 2 years. Educators could also attend CPD on a voluntary basis. This agreement increases the duration of CPD as well as widening the

range of CDP provision. It also places responsibility of the school to cover at least 40 hours of CPD out of 80 hours. The current agreement was signed in December 2017 and covers the years 2018-22.

- [36] Up to 2018 Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) regularly offered its staff with the opportunity to take a 30 credit EQF level 6 teacher training course to acquire pedagogical skills.
- [38] Haaga Helia is a Finnish private educational institution which started collaborating with the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in 2015. <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/about-haaga-helia/organization?userLang=en>. The organisation helped ITS develop a process for validating informal and non-formal prior learning and therefore customise lecturing staff training programmes. More information on the collaboration available at: Cedefop; ReferNet (2021). *VET REF: developments in vocational education and training policy database*. [Unpublished].
- [39] Institute of Tourism Studies (2018). News. ITS Graduation – The first ITS Bachelor degree graduates and a certificate with a link to the blockchain certificate. <https://its.edu.mt/newsitem?id=49>
- [40] In 2014, the DRLLE launched a national diploma programme in teaching adults at EQF level 5. In 2018, the University of Malta launched a course leading to a master in adult education for those who had graduated from the diploma course.
- [41] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers>

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Labour market and skills analysis in Malta has for long mostly been based on labour force survey (LFS) statistics, administrative data on employment and registered unemployment collected by Jobsplus (42) (and its predecessor, the Employment and Training Corporation, ETC), and ad hoc surveys. These sources that help monitor the labour market situation and quantify past trends continue to be used to provide insight into how employment is changing.

Forward looking information on skill needs has been scarce and limited in scope. Sources offering insight into future employment needs include regular industry trends surveys among employers in the manufacturing, investment, retail, services and construction sectors (43) and the annual attractiveness survey (44) among Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies and investors in Malta. These surveys and other sectoral foresight exercises tend to be qualitative, with a short-term focus and offering few possibilities to produce more specific information on skills. This limits their potential to contribute to forward-looking education and employment policies and their use by employers to plan ahead for future human resource needs.

Given the fragmentation in the identification and anticipation of present and future skills, Malta is working towards developing a coherent system for producing and interpreting skills intelligence to understand future skill needs better. The *National employment policy 2021-30* is proposing the following (45):

- launch a national skills census and establishing a revamped Skills Policy Council would seek towards identifying local industry-specific skills lacuna. The latter would be additionally supported with an industry skills framework, job disruption forecasts, formulation of career pathways and pro-active based consultations with education and training institutions;
- develop policies aimed towards reskilling, upskilling, life-long learning, the fostering of apprenticeships/traineeship uptake and opting for the adoption of a more transversal skillset shall be at the forefront of actively addressing skill and labour shortages. The latter will be supported with the development of a strategy on career guidance;
- given the local labour market's dependency on foreign labour, consultations may be underway to develop a National Economic Migration policy, and with it, the development of migrant retention schemes.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (46) and European Skills Index (47).

10.2 Designing qualifications

The Malta qualifications framework (MQF) was launched in 2007 by the Qualifications Council. It covers IVET and CVET and encompasses qualifications at all levels, attained through formal, non-formal and informal learning. In 2009, Malta was the first country to reference its framework to the EQF and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). Legislation adopted in 2012 established its legal basis and made the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) (renamed in 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, MFHEA) responsible for all aspects of the MQF.

In 2020, the NCFHE launched the Malta qualifications database (MQD) (48). The database can be accessed through the Commission's website and is also linked to the Europass database. The

shift from the current online register to the MQD (49) will be completed by the end of 2021 making the information on accredited programmes more accessible.

Unlike qualifications frameworks in many other Member States, the MQF also covers programmes not leading to full qualifications. Accredited programmes (courses) with level rated-learning outcomes not meeting requirements of a qualification, in terms of credits offered, lead to 'awards'. The distinction was introduced to help learners and employers better understand different types of certification and their role in recruitment and career advancement.

Courses (50) that can be accredited as 'qualifications' up to Level 7 need to fulfil the following criteria:

- learning must be in line with the level descriptor equivalent to the specific qualification level targeted;
- learning must fulfil the number of credits required;
- in the case of initial VET qualifications, the number of credits includes the indicated percentage of the course dedicated to key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

It is important that training courses are pitched at the right level of learning difficulty in terms of knowledge, skills and competences covered and the learning outcomes to be achieved following the learning experience. Both the State and private sector offer short courses that do not have the necessary number of credits to be called a qualification. These courses are usually of different duration, and consequently have different credit allocations. Any course which fulfils the level of learning but not the required number of credits to qualify for the title of 'qualification' is to be called 'award'.

The requirements for courses to be considered as 'awards' are:

- the learning outcomes need to reflect the level of learning indicated in the specific Malta qualifications framework level descriptor;
- the number of credits assigned to the course are less than those specified for a qualification at the particular MQF level;
- in the case of VET, do not reflect the required distribution of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

In 2020, as part of an ERASMUS + project, NCFHE in collaboration with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) carried out an impact assessment study of the MQF. The final report of the study was published in 2021. Overall, the findings 'indicate a good level of support for the MQF, particularly among educators and those working in Government agencies'. The report indicated three areas that need improvement: communication and marketing, improved support for capacity building, and a planned vision and strategy for the MQF (51).

[42] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

[43] Organised by the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Findings are frequently used in Central Bank of Malta reports.

[44] For the latest edition, see Ernst & Young Limited (2016). The survey includes information on recruitment problems and skill mismatch.

[45] Ministry for Finance and Employment, 2021. The National Employment Policy 2021-2030. [online] Government of Malta, pp.232-240. Available at: <https://finance.gov.mt/nep/Documents/NATIONAL%20EMPLOYMENT%20POLICY%202021.pdf>

[46] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills->

[forecast](#)

- [47] <https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index>
- [50] The structure of qualifications and the procedure of accrediting programmes is to be found in the referencing report 2016 <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The Malta qualifications framework (MQF) development has gone hand-in-hand with strengthening VET quality culture. Establishing and maintaining standards in the context of the qualifications framework falls within the remit of the education ministry.

Upper secondary and higher initial VET and continuing VET

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) (up to 2021 the National Commission for Further and Higher Education) is responsible for quality assurance in VET and higher education. The National quality assurance framework (52) launched in 2015 was a significant step forward and the first of its kind in Europe. The framework covers upper secondary and higher VET (initial VET), continuing VET as well as other types of further, higher and adult formal education offered by State and private providers.

The framework implements legal provisions on internal quality assurance and periodic external quality audits (Subsidiary legislation 2012/327.433) and provides the conceptual context for this work. The culture of good quality assurance practice at provider level and providers' readiness to take on board a more systematic quality assurance approach – two key findings of a 2014 scoping study – informed the approach to its development: fostering a quality culture by complementing internal quality assurance mechanisms already in place with an external quality assurance system adapted to national and stakeholder needs.

The framework is based on European quality assurance standards and guidelines and enriched by EQAVET and its quality criteria and indicators. It provides guidance for areas which are vital for quality without prescribing how quality assurance is to be carried out. An internal quality assurance system, accreditation and initial and follow-up external provider, and programme quality audits by the national commission for further and higher education are mandatory requirements for licensing. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the University of Malta (UM) were the first to undergo external quality assurance audits in mid-2015. As self-accrediting institutions, they are not subject to provider and programme accreditation.

Arrangements at provider level supporting quality assurance include the online employer satisfaction survey by MCAST's quality assurance office and regular contacts with sectors. VET providers use EQAVET indicators to plan quality programmes, and the MFHEA encourages them to evaluate programme outcomes and to use findings for continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an important development in Malta. As more education institutions were introducing recognition of prior learning as one of their policies within their institutions, the National Commissions for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) (name changed in 2021 to Malta Further and Higher Education Authority) contracted the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) to assist in publishing guidelines on implementing a recognition of prior learning policy within education institutions. This was published in February 2021 (53).

The benefits of recognition of prior learning may be the reduced time a learner has to spend attending classes, undertaking assessments or relearning what they already know. The evidence the applicant provides must be authentic (something they have prepared, produced or has been written about them by a relevant third party), and must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to grant credit for a subject, module, course or qualification.

In 2015, ITS started collaborating with Haaga Helia (54). This resulted in the design of a process for validating informal and non-formal prior learning for teaching staff in hospitality services

Recognition of prior learning is the basis for the validation of informal and non-formal learning. Validation of informal and non-formal learning in Malta is regulated by Subsidiary Legislation 327.432, Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Learning Regulations of September 2012 (55).

The MFHEA provides validation services. For this purpose it has set up eight sector skills units (SSUs) and is currently working on establishing additional ones. The current sector skills units cover the following industries/ sectors:

- IT;
- health and social care;
- education support;
- STEM engagement;
- printing and digital media;
- hospitality and tourism;
- hair and beauty;
- construction and building services.

In 2020, the NCFHE has published a further 21 national occupational standards (NOS) from the various sectors, raising the total number to 80) (56).

These NOS consist of a set of job-related standards that highlight the performance expected from an individual when carrying out a specific function.

These standards are pegged to the Malta qualifications framework (MQF) and are therefore drawn up using the learning outcomes approach. The NOSs are of important use to both employers and employees as they stipulate the related knowledge, skills and competences required in the different occupations and the aligned levels of these occupations.

In 2017, the NCFHE signed memoranda of understanding with Jobsplus (57) and the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) (58) to carry out the assessment procedures and tests for

validating informal and non-formal learning, for its the national occupational standards. The NCFHE has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the ITS to carry out the validation assessment procedures for the hospitality and tourism NOS.

Validation in Malta takes place in four distinct stages: identification, documentation, assessment and certification.

[54] <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/frontpage>

[55] <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11928&l=1>

[57] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

[58] <https://bicc.gov.mt/en/Pages/HOME.aspx>

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

Initial VET

Maltese and EU citizens enrolling in full-time initial VET programmes up to EQF level 6 do not pay tuition or registration fees. There are additional financial incentives for VET learners. Maltese learners over 16, including those in VET programmes at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) or the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), benefit from maintenance grants. EU and EEA citizens, as well as third country nationals, are entitled to the same rights, provided they have resident or refugee status and meet several other requirements as per terms and conditions established by Legal Notice 308/2016 and guidelines established by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board (SMGB) (59). The maintenance grant scheme includes:

- a yearly initial grant (EUR 332.94) for purchasing textbooks and other educational materials for students following EQF/MQF level 1 to level 4 courses. For students progressing to MCAST top-up degree programmes the initial grant is doubled and complemented by a one-time grant amounting to EUR 465.87 payable in 1 year (60);
- a stipend (every 4 weeks between October and June) of EUR 91.75 (including cost of living allowance (COLA) increase);
- a supplementary allowance (paid every 4 weeks between October and June) for learners facing financial difficulties and/or disability, amounting to EUR 78.69 for EQF/MQF level 1 to level 4 courses and EUR 215.29 for MQF/EQF level 5 and level 6 general courses;
- an extra supplementary grant for EQF/MQF levels 5 and 6 general courses amounting to EUR 232.94 payable in 1 year and EUR 116.47 payable for the second year and subsequent years.

Other support measures include a contingency fund assisting students facing extraordinary circumstances and higher grants for single parents receiving social assistance; the grant amount increases with the qualification level achieved by the programme they take part in.

On the strength of the Work-based and Apprenticeship Act (2018) (61) an apprentice now has the legal status of a paid employee rather than of an unpaid student. Learners on apprenticeship programmes have the right to an income equivalent to the national minimum wage per hour for the hours spent at the workplace, as stipulated in the training programme plan. The income per hour is calculated as the income derived from the sponsor (62) and from the student maintenance grant.

Apprentices receive maintenance grants on top of the wage and half the annual statutory bonus (63) paid by employers.

Recent and continuing changes are increasing grants to make apprenticeship a more attractive learning path. Increased stipends for the summer months introduced in 2015 discourage apprentices from taking on a better-paid summer job instead. The next step is topping up the grants by an amount that makes total income per hour (wage plus grants) spent learning at the workplace equal to the national minimum wage. The Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act introduces the proposal to implement the grant increase.

Maintenance grants in higher VET are used to steer learners towards programmes that educate them to become professionals in areas with labour market shortages. Students in so-called 'prescribed' and 'priority' VET bachelor degree programmes at MCAST and other providers are entitled to higher maintenance grants. Learners following prescribed degree programmes receive a stipend amounting to EUR 160.55 (including COLA increase), an initial grant amounting to EUR

798.81 and a one-time grant amounting to EUR 698.81 payable in year one. Learners facing financial difficulties and/or disability who are following a prescribed course receive a supplementary allowance (paid every 4 weeks between October and June) amounting to EUR 147.50.

Learners in prescribed VET degree programmes include all those leading to a bachelor in mechanical engineering, electrical and electronics engineering and communications technology.

The SMGB manages the maintenance grant scheme, evaluating eligibility of applications, checking student attendance to ensure compliance with regulations, and paying the entitlements. Students making insufficient progress partly or fully lose their right to receive the grants.

Continuing VET

The education ministry promotes continuing VET to increase adult participation in learning.

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE) also regularly promotes its offer of lifelong learning courses to the wider public using social media and other channels:

- continuing VET and adult learning courses organised by the DRLLE (64) are subsidised by the government. EU nationals are charged a modest tuition fee ranging from EUR 11.65 to EUR 46.59. People aged over 60 (first course), those with a disability and those on social assistance are exempt from the applicable fee;
- entry-level courses in Maltese, English, mathematics and science are offered free of charge. Migrants from EU Member States and elsewhere benefit from free basic literacy courses and subsidised English and Maltese as foreign language courses.

Incentives for learners taking part in training for jobseeker and other continuing VET opportunities offered by Malta's public employment service Jobsplus (65) include:

- free provision of training courses;
- a training allowance for employed persons who earn less than EUR 300 (basic) per week and who successfully complete a Jobsplus course (scheme known as the average wage earners scheme);
- an allowance for participants in the traineeship scheme, bridging the gap scheme and work exposure scheme. Participants in the bridging the gap schemes are entitled to 80% of the minimum wage, while the traineeship and work exposure schemes offer the full minimum wage rate for each hour of training;
- a subsidy scheme to cover childcare costs (EUR 1.50 per hour of childcare services) for participants in Jobsplus training courses;
- learners who follow a training programme that is:
 - recognised up to EQF level 5, level 6 and 7 or non-accredited, but industry- specific courses related to aviation, maritime and ICT sectors;
 - offered by a licensed training service provider, and not offered by Jobsplus; they may benefit from the training pays scheme. This scheme offers a grant of 75% of the cost of training capped at EUR 1 000 for programmes pegged up to EQF/ MQF level 4 and 75% of the cost of training capped at EUR 3 000 for training programmes pegged at EQF/MQF levels 5, 6 and 7 for non-accredited but industry specific courses.

Learners paying tuition fees for courses offered by private providers, which often lead to qualifications issued by foreign accredited bodies, can benefit from scholarship schemes and grants, such as the endeavour scholarship scheme managed by the education and employment ministry. They are part of a qualified scheme run by Malta Enterprise grants tax deductions to cover the cost of programmes (EQF level 5 or higher) required by employers.

[59] Students' maintenance grants' board administers the students' maintenance grant

scheme. <https://education.gov.mt/en/studentsgrants/Pages/About%20Us/The-SMGB.aspx>

- [60] Students who progress to a top-up degree course at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology will have EUR 465.87 made available every year in which they follow a top-up degree course, instead of EUR 232.94, to partly cover expenses related to educational material and equipment and a one-time grant of EUR 465.87.
- [62] The term 'sponsor' refers to organisations or individuals registered and approved by a VET provider to provide the work-based learning component as part of a training programme leading to a qualification.
- [63] In Malta, government bonuses are mandatory quarterly payments made by the employer to the employee, regardless of industry or organisation type. These bonuses are paid in addition to the monthly wage. Over the period of a calendar year an employee would therefore be paid EUR 512.48 under this bonus scheme.
- [64] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [65] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Tax deduction

Employers providing work-based learning opportunities of a continuous duration of at least 6 months in their trade or business are entitled to a tax deduction of EUR 600 for each work placement they offer and EUR 1 200 for each apprentice they take on (regulated by Legal notice 2014/179). The deduction shall only be allowed where the qualifying person does not benefit from any deduction, tax credit or any other form of assistance in relation to the said expenditure by the government or any government entity.

Other incentives

Malta's public employment service (PES) offers work-based learning opportunities through the work exposure scheme and the traineeship scheme. During the exposure phase (66), employers are given the opportunity to train prospective employees without incurring any financial costs (67). Participants are matched in accordance with the industry demands of the employers. This matching suggests that the occupational preferences of the jobseekers are relevant to employers' requests.

The training aid framework, in place between 2008 until 2015, gave the private sector grants to finance staff training, with the level of support depending on the type of training and enterprise size.

Its successor, investing in skills, was launched in 2017. Since its launch a total of 130 entities have benefitted from the scheme.

The knowledge transfer incentive introduced in 2016 (applicable until 31 December 2020) helped address skill mismatch and shortages by supporting employers to train and reskill their staff. In 2020, as a follow up of this scheme, Malta Enterprise launched the Skills Development 2020 (68). The scheme supports employers to provide training to develop and update the skills and knowledge of their workforce. Employees are offered training to upgrade their skills or for reskilling. Through this scheme, employers can address skills shortages and skills mismatches in their workforce and work towards developing a knowledge-based workforce.

Subsidy schemes make it easier for employers to provide work experience to young people and adults. Access to employment helps employers recruit disadvantaged jobseekers furthest from employment. The duration of the EUR 85 per week subsidy (26, 52 or 104 weeks) depends on the target group.

Employers taking on disabled persons are entitled to a weekly subsidy of EUR 125 for a maximum 156 weeks. Employers not benefitting from the access to employment scheme, will be eligible to claim a fiscal incentive of 25% of the disabled person's basic wage up to a maximum of EUR 4 500 for each person with disability. In addition, employers may apply to be exempted from paying their share of the National Insurance contribution in relation to the disabled employee.

- [66] The term 'exposure phase' refers to the on-the-job training that takes place at the employer's premises where the trainee is placed. During the scheme the trainee must attend 240 hours of placement within a maximum period of 12 weeks.
- [67] Jobplus subsidises prospective employee training through European social fund.
- [68] Malta Enterprise (2020). *Skills Development 2020*.
<https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Skills%20Development%20Scheme%202020%20%28Version%201.0%29%20FINAL.pdf>

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

Annual tracer studies provide evidence on educational and career choices and pathways of learners after completing compulsory education in State and non-State schools. Since 2010 more learners are continuing education after leaving compulsory schooling. System and institutional changes make identifying longer-term trends difficult but comparing most recent data with the situation before 2000 suggests an increasing share of learners choose VET after compulsory education, despite academic education remaining the most popular choice. As some learners would be better able to reach their potential through VET, it is important to develop guidance services further.

Compulsory education

Proposals in the career guidance policy for schools underpin current practice and recent developments of career guidance services in compulsory education (69). Career guidance in State schools is offered by college career advisors, trainee career advisors, school counsellors and guidance teachers. The service covers curricular, vocational and career guidance for learners and their parents. Counsellors collaborate closely with VET institutions.

Career-related learning is provided through the personal, social and career development (PSCD) subject. Personal, social and career development embraces the national curriculum framework principles of entitlement to quality education, recognition of diversity, and achievement. It helps learners develop learning skills, emotional literacy, self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem to equip them with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes needed to live healthy, safe, productive, and responsible lives.

Since 2014, careers education has become more important. The personal, social and career development strand on career exploration and management aims at helping learners manage their learning and career paths beyond school. Personal, social and career development has been increased from 1 to 2 hours per week. 15-year-olds take part in transition programmes offering 1-week hands-on experience in industry. Together with final year schoolmates, they also benefit from orientation visits to workplaces and VET colleges.

The career guidance platform (70) was launched in December 2018. This interactive platform facilitates career choices for secondary school learners between the ages of 11 and 16. The platform contributes to the increase in learner enrolment in post-compulsory education and reduction in early school leaving rate.

VET providers and Jobsplus

Different departments at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) provide student support services including career guidance, personal counselling and learning support. There is also an information service that provides learners with information about the training programmes offered by the college's institutes as well as the support services available both prior to enrolment and during their studies. Similar services are in place at the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS).

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE), has established a guidance unit together with stakeholders, to support adults on educational opportunities in a learner-centred approach. The service includes support in the choice of courses, helping learners to explore the options and come to a positive educational decision; it also supports them with the application process. The unit also provides professional services to help adult learners overcome barriers to learning (71).

Jobsplus guidance services encourage jobseekers (including the employed) to develop their skills further through training and/or work experience in line with labour market needs. Services include career information, advice, skills assessment and mentoring. With the new registration system – introduced in 2016 – Jobsplus has placed more emphasis on career guidance and individualised its services through profiling, personal employment advisors, and individual action plans. Support for individuals with a job, searching for alternative employment, includes discussion on suitable career paths and a career test to personalise career plans and identify gaps in training and/or skills development that need to be addressed prior to pursuing the chosen career path.

Towards a national guidance service

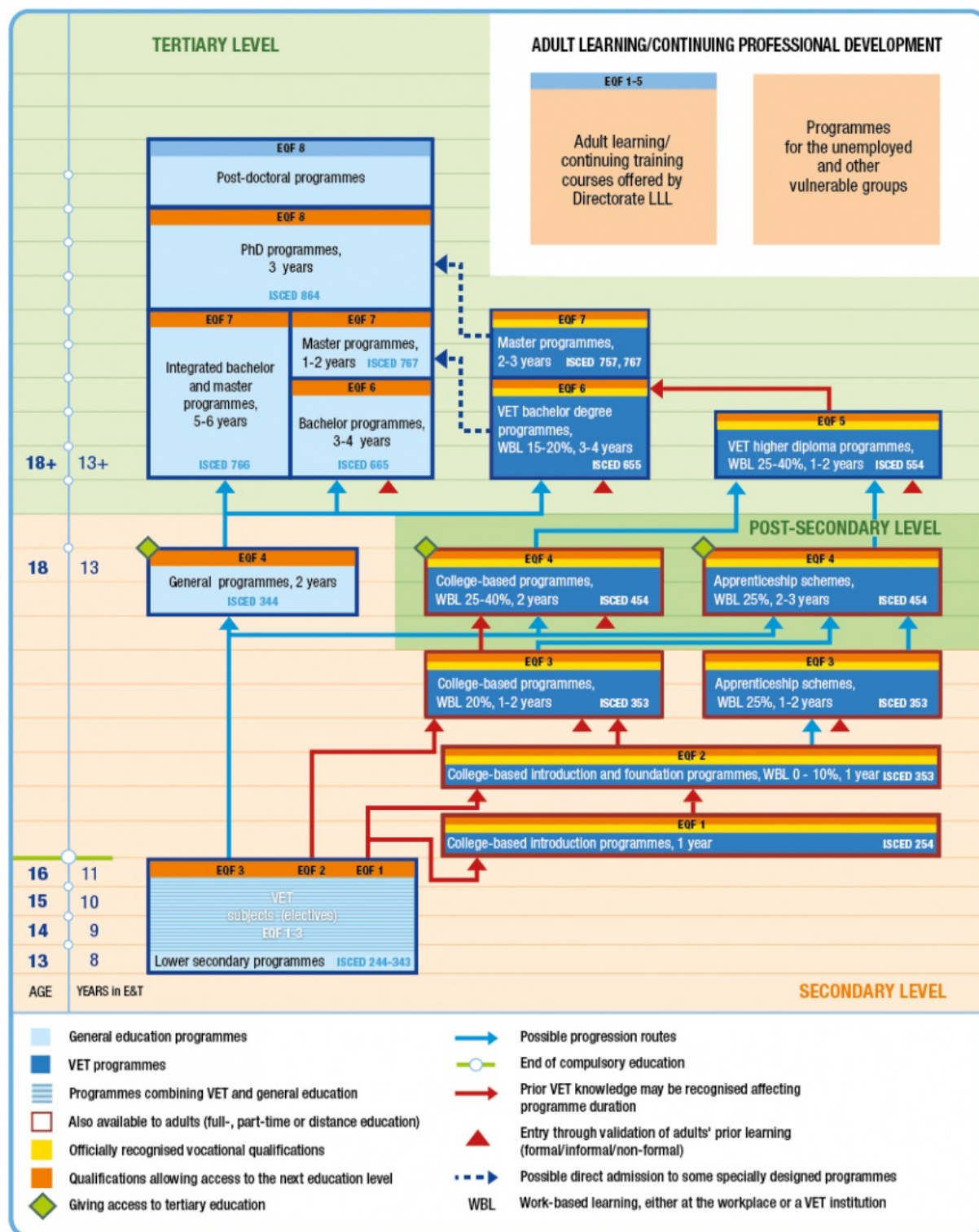
A recently established committee works on implementing the 2007 career guidance policy for schools. Plans are under way to set up a national lifelong guidance service responsible for sustaining quality services at all levels of education. Envisaged future developments include measures to widen access to guidance services measures (online portal) and to streamline provision across education and employment sectors. Besides complementing, supporting and integrating existing services, the national career guidance service will increase the interaction between education, industry and other stakeholders. The intention is to move from guidance services with a supply focus to a demand-led system; this will cater better to those in need of career information or advice on career-related information.

Please see:

- guidance and outreach Malta national report (72);
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit (73);
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices (74).

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- [70] Career guidance platform can be accessed at: <http://exploremoreproject.eu/en/>
- [72] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>
- [73] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>
- [74] <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices>

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Malta, 2022.

VET Programme Types

EQF 1
College-based introduction programme, 1 year ISCED level 254

Initial (college-based 1-year introduction) VET programmes leading to EQF level 1, ISCED level 254

EQF level	1	ISCED-P 2011 level	254
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	17
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓ Continuing VET courses are provided on a part-time basis.

Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	
Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability (75) are at a nominal tuition fee.			
ECVET or other credits	VET level 1: 40 credits From EQF/MQF Levels 5-8 credits are ECTS (76)		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)		
Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	10%		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice • work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs • in-company practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace		
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults. As from October 2016, the foundation college within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has developed a number of skills kits courses which offer more flexible, customised pathways towards achieving a certification. This programme is intended for learners who prefer to study at their own pace and explore different vocational areas. It is made up of a number of skills kits (small bite-size topics) covering various vocational areas as well as personal skills and employability skills. The programme gives the learners the possibility to choose how many skills kits to study over a period of time. It also gives the opportunity to choose from a combination of skills kits. These courses consist of short, 20-hour programmes which individuals can achieve at their own pace and according to their needs.		

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 16 years old and in possession of the Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSCP). This is the certificate of accomplishment awarded at the end of compulsory education. Learners are all given an initial assessment test. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology also offers the award in vocational skills introductory A and B. This is a structured programme of study for learners with learning disabilities/learning difficulties to consolidate the skills necessary to gain and maintain employment or to further their education. Learners are trained in one of the following vocational areas: hospitality, office skills, production and retail. They are also assessed in key skills that include Maltese, English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), IT, and daily living and community skills. A work placement experience within the college is also provided according to the vocational area being studied. Before enrolling in the programme, learners are required to attend for a 3-day evaluation period to assess the suitability of the course and identify the vocational area according to their abilities. This award is allotted 30 credits.
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. Assessment is based on a mixture of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment includes take-home assignments and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit, they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. Certification is available at any stage.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Introductory certificate
Examples of qualifications	Shop assistant, commis waiter, back-office assistant (77)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme may continue their studies at EQF level 2 in a VET institution. Those learners who complete the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology award in vocational skills introductory A and B can progress to MQF/EQF Level 1 programmes.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓	The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓	
Key competences	✓	
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	7.8 % (78)	

- [76] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [77] As described in national context. MCAST Prospectus 2018/19 available at https://www.mcast.edu.mt/rfm/source/Prospectus/Prospectus_2018/index.html#p=1. ITS Prospectus 2018/19 available at: <https://its.edu.mt/courses-admission/its-prospectus.html>
- [78] The latest available figure is 7.8% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%932016%E2%80%93NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 2
College-based introduction and foundation programmes, WBL 0-10%, 1 year ISCED 353

Initial (college-based 1-year introduction and foundation) VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 353

EQF level	2	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	17
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Research and Employability (79) are at a nominal tuition fee.	Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	60 credits (ECVET) (80)		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)
Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	10%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice • work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs • in-company practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and for adults. As from October 2016, the foundation college within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has developed a number of skills kits courses which offer more flexible, customised pathways towards achieving a certification. This programme is intended for learners who prefer to study at their own pace and explore different vocational areas. It is made up of a number of skills kits (small bite-size topics) covering various vocational areas as well as personal skills and employability skills. The programme gives the learners the possibility to choose how many skills kits to study over a period of time. It also gives the opportunity to choose from a combination of skills kits. These courses consist of short, 20-hour programmes which individuals can achieve at their own pace and according to their needs.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Finished compulsory education and in possession of the Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSCP). This is the certificate of accomplishment awarded at the end of compulsory education. Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology introductory certificate MQF/EQF level 1. Together with an initial assessment test.

Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit, they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. Certification is available at any stage.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Foundation certificate Level 2 (60 credits – ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Hairdressing assistant, beauty therapist assistant stone mason/tile layer/ plumber/ welder/ assistant (81)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology level 2 certificate can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF 3 initial VET institution.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	3.9% (82)

[80] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>

The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.

[81] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>

[82] The latest available figure is 3.9% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at:

<https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%93-2016%E2%80%93NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 3
College-based Programmes, WBL 20%, 1-2 years ISCED 353

Initial, college-based VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	17	Usual completion age	18-19
Length of a programme (years)	From 1 to 2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?			
		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?			
		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?			
	Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Research and Employability (83) are at a nominal tuition fee.		
Is it available for adults?			
ECVET or other credits	60 credits (ECVET) (84)		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)		

Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice • work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs • in-company practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold at least 2 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area. (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma in sport, the preferred subjects are English language, biology and physical education). Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology foundation certificate
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit, they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. Certification is available at any stage.
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 3 certificate/diploma (60 ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Beauty specialist in a salon, hairdresser, security/enforcement/protection officer (85)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Learners who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 4 or general education.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	7.7% (86)

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- [84] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [85] As described in national context with the exception of hairdresser (described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>)
- [86] The latest available figure is 7.7% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%93-2016%E2%80%93NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 3

Apprenticeship schemes,

WBL 25%,

1-2 years

ISCED 353

Initial-apprenticeship schemes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	17	Usual completion age	18-19
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓
Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Research and Employability (87) are at a nominal tuition fee.			
ECVET or other credits	60 credits (ECVET) (88)		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • apprenticeships		
Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers		

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • work placement • apprenticeship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold at least 2 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area. (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma in sport, the preferred subjects are: English language, biology and physical education). Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology foundation certificate
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Certification is available at all levels.
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 3 certificate/diploma (60 credits-ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Motor vehicle panel beater, motor vehicle sprayer, plasterer, tile layer, plumber (89)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 4 or general education.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓	The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓	
Key competences	✓	
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	7.7% (90)	

- [88] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [89] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [90] The latest available figure is 7.7% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%932016%E2%80%93NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 4
College-based programmes, WBL 25-40%, 2 years ISCED 454

Initial college- based VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 454

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	454
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16-18	Usual completion age	18-20
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗ Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Part-time courses provided by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, Research and Employability (91) are at a nominal tuition fee.	Is it available for adults?	✓

ECVET or other credits 120 credits (ECVET) (92)

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- full-time on apprenticeship

Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25-40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice • apprenticeship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold at least 4 EQF level 3 certificates preferably related to the study area. (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in sport development, coaching and fitness, the preferred subjects are English language, biology and physical education). Or Compulsory (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in financial services: EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications in these subjects have to be presented: English language and mathematics together with any other two EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications) Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Certification is available at all levels.
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 4 advanced diploma qualifications (120 credits-ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Assistant veterinary, laboratory technician, accounting technician (93)

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF levels 5-6 (either of VET or General education orientation)
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	
Key competences	
Application of learning outcomes approach	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	18.1% (94)

- [92] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [93] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [94] The latest available figure is 18.1% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%93-2016%E2%80%8B-NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 4

Apprenticeship schemes,

WBL 25%,

2-3 years

ISCED 454

Initial Apprenticeship schemes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 454

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	454
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16-18	Usual completion age	18-20
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 to 3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ Unless a private provider is chosen by the learner. Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability (95) are at a nominal tuition fee.		
ECVET or other credits		120 credits (ECVET) (96)	
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)		• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • apprenticeships	

Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology; • Institute of Tourism Studies; • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice • apprenticeship Since March 2018, apprenticeship schemes in Malta are regulated by the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (97) .
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold at least 4 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area. For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in joinery, furniture design and manufacturing, the preferred subjects are English language, mathematics, technical drawing, engineering drawing, engineering technology. Or Compulsory: for example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in graphic design and interactive media: EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications in art have to be presented: together with any other three EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications. Moreover, in this case applicants may be asked to sit for an interview and/or present a portfolio. Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Learners have the option of a resit. Certification is available at all levels.
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 4 advanced diploma qualifications (120 credits-ECVET)

Examples of qualifications	Pharmacy technician, food technologist, office secretary (98)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies to EQF level 5 or 6 (either VET or General education orientation).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	
Key competences	
Application of learning outcomes approach	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	18.1% (99)

- [96] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [97] <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12801&l=1>
- [98] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [99] The latest available figure is 18.1% as per National Commission for Further And Higher Education publication: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%932016%E2%80%93NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 5
VET higher diploma programmes, WBL 25-40%, 1-2 years ISCED 554

Initial VET (higher diploma) programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	20+
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗ Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability (100) are at a nominal tuition fee.	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	120 credits (ECVET) (101)		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer) • full-time and part-time		

Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25-40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • internship • work placement
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold: • either EQF/MQF level 4 qualifications; • or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology/Institute of Tourism Studies advanced diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment includes take-home assignments and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Students have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. At this level, students are generally expected to carry out an industry-based research project.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology higher diploma Institute of Tourism Studies diploma
Examples of qualifications	Quantity surveyor, restaurant manager, kindergarten/learning support educator (102)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF levels 6, 7.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	5.9% (103)

- [101] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [102] As described in national context.
- [103] The latest available figure is 5.9% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication: <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2015-%E2%80%932016%E2%80%8B-NCFHE.pdf>

EQF 6
VET bachelor degree
Programmes,
WBL 15-20%,
3-4 years
ISCED 655

Initial VET (bachelor degree) programmes leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	655
Usual entry grade	18+	Usual completion grade	21+
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	21+
Length of a programme (years)	From 3 to 4		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗		
		Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓		
		Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗		
	Unless a private provider is chosen by the learner. Full- and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.		
	✓		

ECVET or other credits 180 credits (ECVET) – 3-year bachelor course

240 credits (ECVET) – 4-year bachelor honours course (104)

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- internship

Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • Institute of Tourism Studies • private VET providers
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • internship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an EQF level 4 certificate.
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Students have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. Students are generally expected to undertake an internship monitored by college-based staff as well as by tutors provided by the employer. Assessment also includes the presentation of a dissertation.
Diplomas/certificates provided	VET bachelor degree
Examples of qualifications	Environmental engineer, mechanical engineer, marine engineer (105) .
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies to EQF level 7 (either VET or General education orientation)
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓

**Application of learning
outcomes approach**



**Share of learners in this
programme type compared with
the total number of VET learners**

>1% (106)

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- [104] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [105] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [106] 2016

EQF 7
Master programmes, 2-3 years ISCED 757, 767

Initial VET(Master) programmes leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 757, 767

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	757, 767
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	22+	Usual completion age	25+
Length of a programme (years)	3 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	90 ECTS (107)		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• Face-to-face classroom tuition • Blended on-line learning		
Main providers	• Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology • private VET providers		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	0		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• Practical training at school		
Main target groups	Programmes are available mainly for graduates who have also had some years of work experience.		
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an EQF level 6 qualification.		

Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Students have the option of a resit. Should they fail the resit they will be given the option to repeat the study unit. Assessment also includes the presentation of a dissertation.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Master degree
Examples of qualifications	Specialist in product design, specialist in mechatronics, specialist in environmental engineering (108) .
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 8 (general education orientation).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	> 1% (109)

- [107] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 – The Malta qualifications framework for lifelong learning Regulation: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (from 2021 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority). According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Referencing-Report-2016.pdf>) 1 ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of 5 hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [108] As described in national context.
- [109] 2016

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