

5th PLF on Apprenticeship

Social dialogue in Apprenticeships

2nd October 2024

**Apprenticeship, an Investment
in local talent**



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Key questions for PLF

- How do platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue work for apprenticeships in your country?
- How does the training content meet occupation needs, wages and other conditions?
- What are the challenges and benefits of applying such processes?

Key selling point for Apprenticeships in Malta

Apprenticeships and VET have a key economic function in up-skilling and integrating young people into the labour market and in providing high quality technical skills. It is an investment in local talent.

Industry Partners benefit from:

- Addressing of business skills gap
- Diversification of workforce
- Future-proofing of business
- Improved retention and productivity
- Boosting reputation



Underpinning success factors of an Apprenticeship Scheme include:

- Co-operation between the VET provider, Industry Partners and authorities.
- Systematic and close support throughout the apprentice period.
- The ability to find and develop new models of delivery when it is necessary including bespoke modalities of apprenticeship wherever possible.
- While apprenticeship regulations should be determined nationally, they should be implemented with local flexibility.
- Employer involvement in the apprenticeship system is paramount, so this should be reflected in monitoring, training and quality control regulations.

Multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms for apprenticeships

The College engages on a regular basis with various stakeholders, including government entities, industry representatives, and apprentices themselves.

- The dialogue focuses on:
 - **Collaboration and Cooperation:** To ensure that apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of the labour market and the educational system.
 - **Programme Development:** Stakeholders propose which apprenticeship programmes will be offered, taking into consideration current and future workforce needs, industry trends, and economic conditions.
 - **Curriculum Alignment:** The platforms also work to ensure that the training content provided in apprenticeships aligns with occupational needs. This often involves reviewing and updating curricula to reflect industry standards and technological advancements with direct input from Industry Partners.
 - **Wage and Conditions:** Discussions also cover wage levels for apprentices, working conditions, and other related benefits to ensure that the apprenticeship experience is attractive and fair to both learners and employers.

What do they decide about?

- **Diverse Interests:** Balancing the diverse interests and priorities of various stakeholders in order to address conflicting needs or priorities.
- **Implementation Issues:** Ensuring that policies and programmes are implemented effectively can be challenging, particularly in diverse regions or sectors.
- **Resources and Funding:** Securing adequate resources and funding to establish and sustain apprenticeship programmes can be a significant hurdle.
- **Market Dynamics:** Rapid changes in technology and market demands can render existing programmes obsolete, necessitating continuous dialogue and adaptation.
- **Engagement:** Getting all relevant stakeholders actively engaged, especially those from smaller businesses or underrepresented sectors.

Benefits

- **Relevance and Quality:** By involving various stakeholders, the programmes developed can be more relevant and of higher quality, ensuring that apprentices acquire the necessary skills for the job market.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Multi-stakeholder dialogue leads to more informed decision-making, as it incorporates a range of perspectives and expertise.
- **Enhanced Employer Commitment:** When employers are involved in the creation of programmes, they are more likely to commit to providing apprenticeships and investing in their development.
- **Improved Job Outcomes:** Well-structured apprenticeship programmes can result in better job placements and outcomes for apprentices, as they are aligned with industry needs.
- **Community Development:** These initiatives can contribute to local economic development by ensuring that the workforce meets the needs of local industries.

Apprenticeship Modalities and Duration for EQF Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 Qualifications at the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology

MCAST APPRENTICESHIP FLEXIBLE STANDARD MODALITIES

Qualification Level	Year 1					Year 2					Year 3		Total Days / hrs available on apprenticeship		Start date of apprenticeship	End date of apprenticeship
	Semester 1	Semester 2	July	Aug	Sept	Semester 1	Semester 2	July	Aug	Sept	Semester 1	Semester 2	Days	Hrs		
MQF Level 3 - excluding hairdressing courses (1-year duration)	Taught units	25	43	Fall-back									68	544	March (Year 1)	End-August (Year 1)
MQF Level 4 (2-year duration)	Taught units	25	64			22	26	Fall-back					137	1,096	March (Year 1)	End-June (Year 2)
MQF Level 6 (3-year duration)	Taught units	25	64			22	26	Fall-back				Taught units and fallback	137	1,096	March (Year 1)	End June (Year 2)

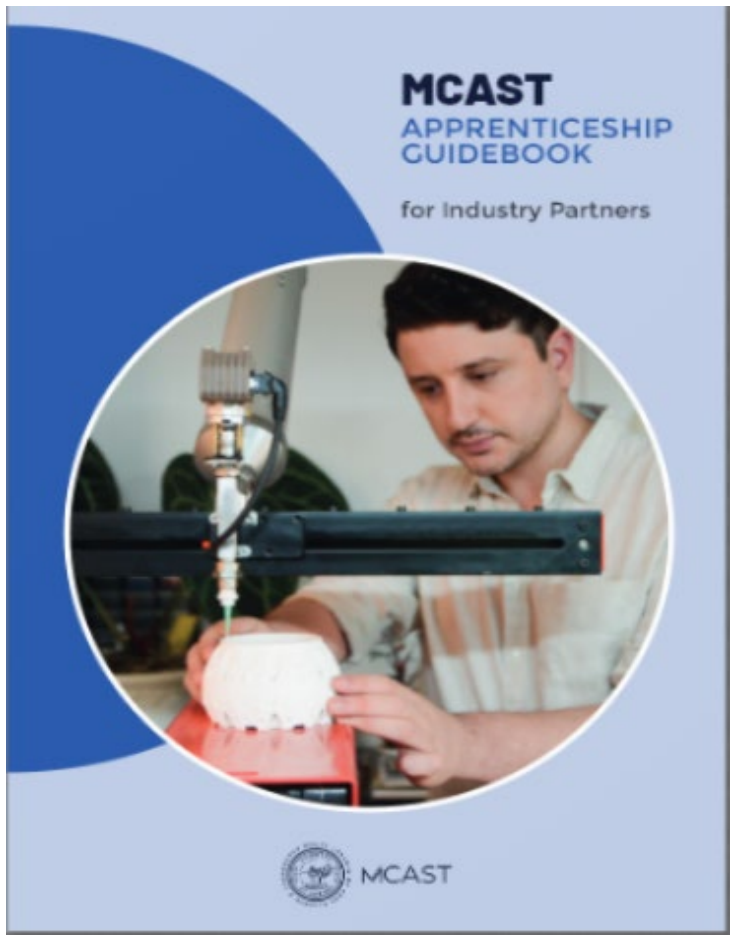
Number of MCAST Apprentices per 'Active' Employer (2023/24)

Number of employers	Number of apprentices on an agreement
1	100
1	42
1	39
3	20-29
12	10-19
28	5-9
12	4
30	3
77	2
331	1
(496 'active' Employers)	

Engaging with Industry

Submitting an Apprenticeship Vacancy

Step 1 : Explanation of the MCAST Apprenticeship Scheme



Step 2 : 2023/24 Course Catalogue 'Shopping List'



Step 3: Online Form (URL) + Access code

A screenshot of the MCAST online form titled 'Section 1 - Programme sectors and relative course selection'. It includes a dropdown menu for 'Choose Programme Sector' and a button labeled 'Next'.

Step 4: Apprenticeship Vacancy uploaded on MCAST website

A screenshot of the MCAST website showing a list of apprenticeship vacancies. The table includes columns for job titles, descriptions, and locations.

Dialogue on Campus with stakeholders takes place in various formats

Events on Campus with Industry Partners
for discussions by sector



Apprenticeship Business Breakfast
with social partners

Dialogue on Campus with stakeholders takes place in various formats

Meetings with Industry Partners by sector



Expos on Campus with sector-specific Industry Partners

Dialogue with stakeholders takes place in various formats

Sectoral Committees between MCAST and Industries



Annual Apprenticeship Onboarding Event on Campus

'Meet & Greet' between Industry Partners and prospective apprentices

67 Employers, one Campus – January 2024





Thank you for following

Some important links:

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology: www.mcast.edu.mt

The Institute for Tourism Studies: www.its.edu.mt

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority: mfhea.mt

The National Skills Council: nscmalta.gov.mt

JosPlus (Public Employment Service): jobsplus.gov.mt

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Empowering Apprenticeships: The Key Role of Employers

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INTRODUCTION

- Apprenticeships bridge the gap between **education and employment**.
- Employers play a critical role in shaping apprenticeships to align with **industry standards**.
- Structured collaboration between **VET providers, industry, and government** is key to successful apprenticeship programs.
- Real-life examples show how **employer participation** improves apprenticeships, creating **skilled workers** ready for the job market.

Legislative Framework Chapter 576:

- **Chapter 576** replaced the **Employment and Training Services Act (Cap. 343)** as the legal framework governing apprenticeships.
- It provides a clear structure for **work-based learning** and outlines the roles and obligations of all stakeholders.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - ✓ **MFHEA** (Malta Further and Higher Education Authority) oversees the accreditation process, ensuring high standards.
 - ✓ **Employers, VET providers, and learners** must comply with the Act to ensure effective training programs.
 - ✓ **Work-based learning locations** are regulated to ensure safety and appropriateness for learners.
 - ✓ **Trainer qualifications** are monitored to ensure apprentices receive high-quality guidance.

Employer Obligations under Chapter 567:

- **Provide Structured Training:** Employers are required to offer apprentices a **safe, structured training environment** that meets legal standards.
- **Compliance with Learning Standards:** Ensure that the training delivered is in line with the **learning outcomes** set by the VET provider and is supervised by **qualified trainers**.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Must ensure that apprentices receive **real-work experience** that enhances their vocational education.

Example: Mater Dei Hospital offers healthcare apprenticeships in nursing and medical fields, where learners get practical experience in a hospital setting under strict compliance with the law.

Apprenticeships as a Strategic Tool:

- **Addressing the Skills Gap:** Maltese industries, such as **ICT**, **manufacturing**, and **hospitality**, face skill shortages. Apprenticeships are a solution to build a **future-proof workforce**.

Example: In the **ICT sector**, companies like **MITA** (Malta Information Technology Agency) have successfully run apprenticeship schemes that train and hire graduates directly after completion.
- **Customizable Training:** Employers design on-the-job training programs that meet **specific business needs**.

Example: **Playmobil Malta** runs apprenticeship programs that offer technical training aligned with their manufacturing processes.
- **Long-term Investment:** Employers benefit from **reduced recruitment costs**, higher retention, and a **well-trained workforce**.

Example: **STMicroelectronics Malta** retains a high percentage of their apprentices as full-time employees post-apprenticeship.

Key Platforms for Social Dialogue and Collaboration:



- **The Malta Chamber of SMEs** plays a critical role in facilitating dialogue between employers, VET providers, and government agencies.
- **Functions as a key stakeholder** in discussions related to apprenticeships, ensuring that the interests of small and medium enterprises are represented.
- **Advocacy and Policy Development:** The Chamber actively advocates for policies that support SMEs participating in apprenticeship schemes.

Example: The Chamber has worked with **Jobsplus** and **MCAST** to simplify processes for SMEs to access apprenticeships.

- **Support for Employers:**
 - ✓ Provides **guidance on legal obligations** under Chapter 576.
 - ✓ Facilitates access to **government incentives** like wage subsidies and tax benefits.
 - ✓ Organizes **information sessions** for SMEs to help them understand the benefits of participating in apprenticeship programs.

Key Platforms for Social Dialogue and Collaboration:



THE MALTA CHAMBER

- **The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise, and Industry** is a crucial stakeholder in promoting apprenticeships in Malta.
- **Representation of Large Enterprises:** It advocates for the interests of larger businesses and industry leaders in shaping apprenticeship frameworks.
- **Collaboration with VET Providers:** The Chamber works closely with educational institutions like **MCAST** and **ITS** to ensure that apprenticeship programs align with the needs of the private sector.

Example: The Chamber frequently organises **industry roundtables** where businesses share feedback on program content and skill gaps.

- **Business Support:**
 - ✓ Offers **consultation services** to companies on how to effectively integrate apprenticeships into their operations.
 - ✓ Assists in navigating **compliance requirements** under Chapter 576.
 - ✓ Advocates for **industry-relevant reforms** to the national apprenticeship system to better serve Malta's economic growth.

Key Platforms for Social Dialogue and Collaboration:



- The **Malta Employers' Association (MEA)** fosters collaboration between employers, educational institutions, and policymakers on apprenticeship schemes.
- Focuses on resolving **skills gaps** in key sectors such as manufacturing and ICT.

Example: Worked with companies in the **manufacturing sector**, such as **Toly Products**, to create tailored apprenticeship programs addressing technical skills shortages.

- **Support for Employers:**

- ✓ Provides guidance on **legal obligations** related to apprenticeships, including compliance with **Chapter 576**.
- ✓ Assists businesses in accessing **government subsidies** and **financial support**.
- ✓ Organizes **training and workshops** for employers on how to integrate apprentices into their workforce effectively.

In-House Training Academies:

- **In-House Academies:** Many businesses in Malta are creating their own **training academies** to offer **bespoke training** tailored to their specific workforce needs.

Example 1 (Gaming Industry): Betsson Group runs an academy dedicated to online gaming, offering training in areas such as cybersecurity, game design, and digital marketing strategies.

Example 2 (Manufacturing): Playmobil Malta integrates in-house training for production staff, focusing on quality control and manufacturing processes, which enhances the skill set of apprentices working on the production floor.

Example 3 (Hospitality): Maritim Antonine Hotel & Spa has developed an in-house training academy for hospitality staff, emphasising customer service excellence and operational efficiency.

Example 4 (Finance): HSBC Malta offers an internal training program that focuses on banking regulations, customer relations, and financial product knowledge, preparing employees for various roles within the bank.

Example 5 (Telecommunications): GO plc provides a comprehensive training program focused on technical skills, customer service, and product knowledge, helping employees stay updated with industry advancements.

In-House Training Academies:

Impact on Apprenticeships:

- **Complementary Training:** In-house training can enhance apprenticeships by providing specific skills relevant to the company's operations.

Example: **STMicroelectronics Malta** collaborates with MCAST to integrate its in-house training with engineering apprenticeships, ensuring apprentices receive practical, company-specific skills alongside their formal education.

- **Potential Shift in Focus:** Some companies may prefer in-house training over traditional apprenticeships, which can limit apprenticeship opportunities in certain sectors.
- **Collaborative Opportunities:** Partnerships between in-house academies and VET providers can create hybrid models that blend **formal education** with practical experience, benefiting both learners and employers.

Real Collaboration Examples:

- **MCAST Engineering Apprenticeships** collaborate with companies like **Lufthansa Technik** and **Simonds Farsons Cisk** to provide students with practical training.
 - **Lufthansa Technik:** Offers apprenticeships in aircraft maintenance, where learners get hands-on experience under skilled mentors.
 - **Farsons Brewery:** Apprentices learn about manufacturing processes, maintenance, and technical operations within a real-world environment.
- **Result:** Many apprentices secure full-time employment with these companies after completing their apprenticeships, demonstrating the success of this collaboration between VET providers and industry.

Key Benefits for Employers:

- **Tailored Training:** Employers can tailor the apprenticeship to meet specific business needs and operational demands.

Example: **GO plc**, Malta's leading telecommunications provider, designs ICT apprenticeships focusing on network engineering to ensure the skills match their internal technological needs.

- **Financial Incentives:** Employers receive support through various incentives, including **tax credits**, **wage subsidies**, and **EU funding**.

Example: Companies like **De La Rue**, involved in high-security printing, benefit from government schemes that help cover the costs of training apprentices in specialized fields like **engineering** and **IT**.

- **Reduced Hiring Costs:** By training apprentices, employers reduce their reliance on recruiting fully trained external staff, thus lowering recruitment and onboarding expenses.

Example: **Bank of Valletta** has apprenticeship schemes in areas such as **banking operations** and **finance**, reducing the need to externally hire skilled workers.

Financial Incentives for Employers:

- **Tax Credits:** Employers participating in apprenticeship schemes are eligible for **tax credits**, easing the financial burden.

Example: **Vassallo Group**, a large Maltese company, benefits from these tax incentives by training apprentices in various sectors, from construction to healthcare.

- **Wage Subsidies:** National programs like **Jobsplus** offer wage subsidies to help employers cover apprentice salaries.

- **EU Funding:** Companies also have access to **EU funding** for apprenticeship programs, such as those provided through **Erasmus+** and **European Social Fund (ESF)**.

Example: **Betsson Group**, a major player in Malta's gaming industry, has utilised EU funding to support apprenticeships in IT and software development.

Challenges:

Challenges for Employers in the Maltese Apprenticeship System

A. Small Business Participation

Capacity Issues: Smaller businesses may struggle to participate in apprenticeship schemes due to limited financial and human resources for training and mentorship.

B. Matching Skills to Needs

Skills Mismatch: While there are programs in place, some employers report difficulty finding apprentices with the specific skills needed for niche sectors, such as advanced manufacturing or fintech.

C. Administrative Complexity

Regulatory Barriers: Employers occasionally encounter administrative challenges when accessing apprenticeship schemes or government incentives, which may discourage participation

Conclusion:

- **Chapter 576** provides a solid legal framework for apprenticeships, ensuring a win-win situation for employers and learners.
- **Social dialogue** between employers and VET providers, as demonstrated through platforms like **MCAST Meets Industry**, ensures that programs remain relevant to evolving industry needs.
- Employers benefit from **cost-effective workforce development, financial incentives**, and the ability to shape a **skilled, loyal workforce**.
- Real-life examples from key Maltese industries demonstrate how **apprenticeships help address skill shortages**, preparing the next generation of workers to meet industry demands.



THANK YOU

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