

# Conceptual Framework of Learning Outcomes in Malta

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21/06/2018

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KWALITA' U STANDARDS EDUKAZZJONI  
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MALTA**



**DEPARTMENT FOR  
QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN EDUCATION  
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# Structure of the Presentation

- Background information about education system, with particular emphasis on learning outcome approach implementation
- The two National Accreditation bodies and key policy documents
- Compulsory schooling
- Way ahead
- Conclusions and Final Remarks



# Deliverables

The main Learning Outcomes of this discourse includes:

- Recall the basic dates and features in LOs implementation in Malta.  
(Knowledge)
- Mention the two National Bodies and the key policy documents.  
(Knowledge)
- Describe the remit and responsibility of the Accreditation Unit, DQSE.  
(Comprehension)
- Identify the main benefits of LOs implementation in Malta. (Analysis)
- Explain the challenges towards an implementation of a LO approach across all sectors and levels.  
(Analysis)
- Consider the possible way forward.  
(Evaluation)

(\*based on Bloom's taxonomy)



# Setting the Background

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# Learning Outcomes in Malta

The Learning outcomes in Malta are based on the FETAC (2005) guidelines, and can be summarized as follows:

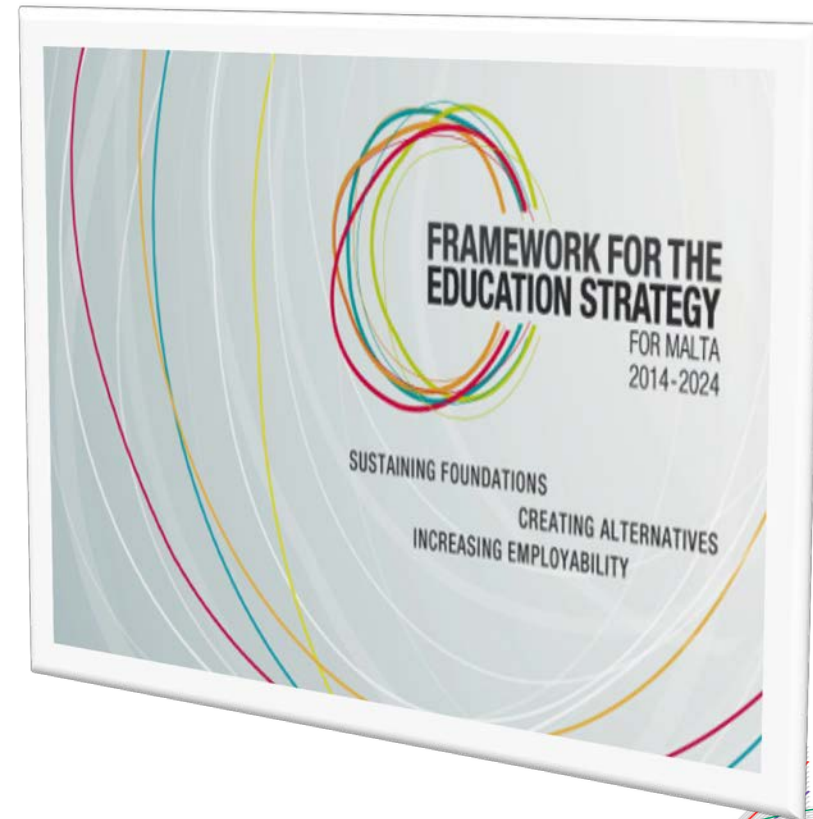
1. LOs are concise statements, devised independently of the delivery and setting, worded in clear, unambiguous language (European Commission, 2006).
2. LOs are written in the future tense and commence with an active verb which most precisely describes the actual or preferred outcome. Only one verb will be used to structure each outcome, and the verbs must be appropriate both to the level and the strand.
3. LOs reflects the level of the award. When writing learning outcomes, one needs to refer to the level descriptors so as to ensure that the proper level is being targeted.
4. A distinctive feature of the level descriptors in the MQF is that they are focused on the individual. This is why the LOs are written in the singular form (MQF, 2010).

# Accreditation in Malta – Fundamental Aspects

- Two entities responsible for Accreditation: Accreditation Unit, DQSE (MEDE) and NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION
- Pegged to Malta Qualification Framework
- Students workload defined in terms of ECTS/ECVETS.
- Learning outcome-based approach
- Identification of appropriate target audience, entry requirement, methodological approach and assessment criteria.
- Adherence to two key policy documents.

# Key Policy Documents

- *Framework for Education Strategy for Malta 2014 -2024. Sustaining Foundations, creating alternatives, increasing employability.*
- *My Journey: Achieving Through Different Paths*
- *A National Curriculum Framework for All.*
- *Referencing Report 2016.*



# National Commission for Further and Higher Education

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# Brief Background of the National Commission for Further & Higher Education regarding major development in LO and MQF

- First Referencing Report for Malta was published in 2009. Malta was the first country (as recognised also by the Council of Europe) to reference its framework to two European overarching frameworks (EQF and QF-EHEA) as well as the TQF.
- The first Referencing report (2009) was a response to amendment in the Education Act to cater for both the Bologna and Copenhagen Process.
- This referencing report indicated a shift from learning inputs to learning outcomes, as outlined in the recommendations of the European Commission (2006). These learning outcome are outlined in knowledge skills, and competence.
- Currently Malta is using the fourth edition of the Referencing Report (Referencing Report, 2016)



# Learning Outcomes

Knowledge involves the understanding of basic, factual and theoretical information and is normally associated with formal learning and therefore with text books, with contact learning hours and as one progresses along the learning pathway one can engage in research, and participate in seminars and conferences. However, knowledge can also be obtained from informal and non-formal settings.

Skills involve the application of the acquired knowledge and understanding in different contexts. A skill may not necessarily be the result of formal learning and knowledge as described above. It may be the result of repetitive work in an informal setup

Competences involve concepts such as whether one is competent to exercise the skills with or without supervision, with or without autonomy and with or without responsibility.

Referencing Report, 2009: 38

# Accreditation Unit

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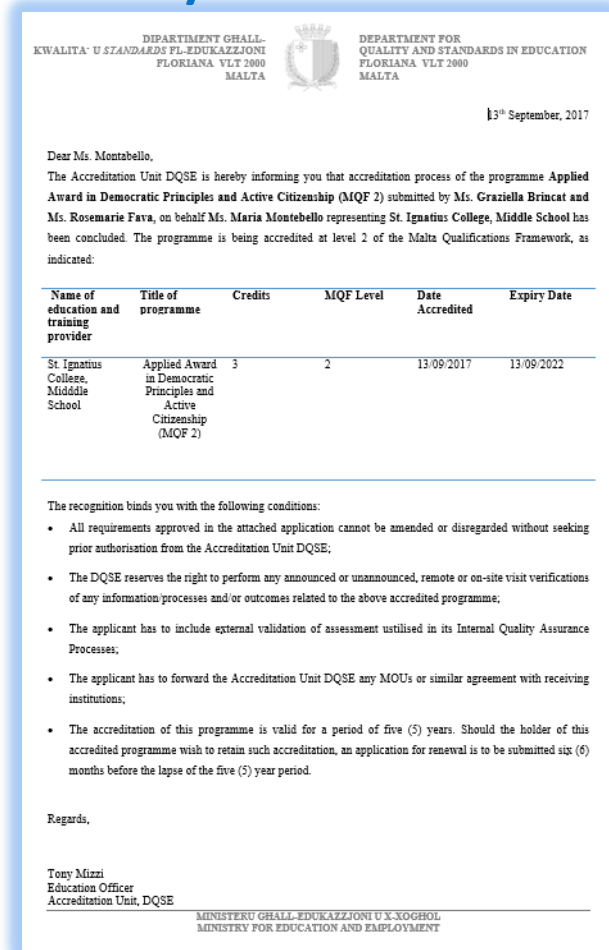
# Programme Accreditation – 4 Different paths

- **General/Academic Programmes:** Formal Programmes that takes place in traditional format with a relatively strong theoretical background.
- **Vocational Programmes:** Formal programmes that includes a field placement/practicum/work placement element.
- **Applied Programmes:** Formal programmes that are based on planned hands on activities that reflect real work scenarios.
- **Non-Formal Programmes:** Learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. learner-teacher relationships).



# Two Different Accreditation Pathways

- ✓ Formal Programmes – LOs for Knowledge, Skills & Competences
- ✓ Non-Formal Programmes – LOs organised according UNESCO's 4 pillars of learning
- ✓ LOs in both programmes pegged to NQF.
- ✓ Non-Formal programmes are recognized but not comparable.



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#### 4. Pillars of Learning

*The applicant needs to fill the underneath table following the guidelines as stipulated in the Catalogue of Accredited Awards and Qualifications in Various Categories (DQSE, 2016)*

<i>Pillars of Learning</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>
<i>Learning to Know</i>	<i>The applicant needs to list the tasks covered in relation to this Pillar of Learning.</i>	<i>The applicant needs to select the learning outcomes covered through these tasks/activities from the drop done list provided.</i>
<i>Learning to Do</i>	<i>The applicant needs to list the tasks covered in relation to this Pillar of Learning.</i>	<i>The applicant needs to select the learning outcomes covered through these tasks/activities from the drop done list provided.</i>
<i>Learning to Live Together</i>	<i>The applicant needs to list the tasks covered in relation to this Pillar of Learning.</i>	<i>The applicant needs to select the learning outcomes covered through these tasks/activities from the drop done list provided./</i>
<i>Learning to Be</i>	<i>The applicant needs to list the tasks covered in relation to this Pillar of Learning.</i>	<i>The applicant needs to select the learning outcomes covered through these tasks/activities from the drop done list provided.</i>

## Non-Formal Programmes



# Compulsory Sector

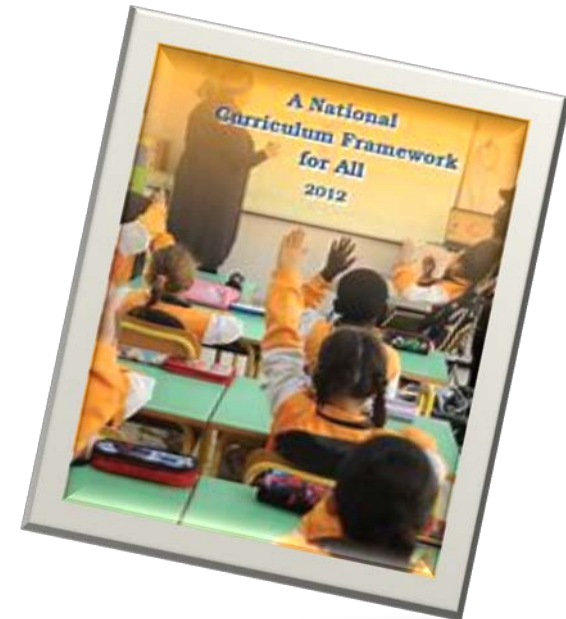
compulsory sector





# LOs in Compulsory Schooling – Policy Background

- ✓ National Curriculum Framework (2012) Outlines a shift from a topic based syllabi to a learning outcome Approach.
- ✓ As the first curriculum framework following accession in the EU, it has taken into consideration important policy-related documents issued by the European Commission.
- ✓ These include the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — A European Reference Framework (2006/962/EC); the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) (2009) and Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth (COM (2010) 2020) which is the follow up to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (Memo 06/478/12th Dec 2006).
- ✓ My Journey – different Pathways





# LOs in Compulsory School – From Policy to Practice

- ✓ The development of a framework of ten levels of achievement. These were first introduced in the draft NCF of 2010, and implemented in the state school Learning and Assessment Programmes of Forms 1 and 2 in 2012-12.
- ✓ The piloting of VET option subjects in the Secondary Years, namely BTEC, and eventually the development of home-grown VET subjects at MQF Level 3 and with parity of esteem with academic qualifications, being implemented in secondary schools as of scholastic year 2014/15.
- ✓ The development of an End of Secondary School Certificate and Profile at MQF Levels 1 and 2, that recognises different forms of learning. Concurrently, the development of a Core Curriculum Programme providing certification at MQF Level 1 at the end of the Secondary Years.
- ✓ As part of ESF Project 1.228 a project to transform the system to learning outcome approach was initiated. Expert for every subject and area design a learning outcome framework (2015) as well as enrolled a group of trainers to support the reform. Following a number of fine tunic, this approach will be launched during the next scholastic year in the following age groups: Kinder 1, Year 3 and Year 7.
- ✓ Start of Implementation of a *Learning Outcome Approach* and *My Journey: Achieving through Different Paths* as from next scholastic year

# Reflection time .. Is this LO approach actually happening during lessons?

Background scenario:

- Learning outcomes and 'aims and objectives' are often used synonymously, although they are not the same.
- Adam (2004) notes that 'Aims are concerned with teaching and the teacher's intentions whilst learning outcomes are concerned with learning'

Need for  
Programme  
External  
reviews



# Way Forward

1. Issuing of diploma supplement/transcript even in compulsory schooling.
2. Strengthening the Programme External Review Process (initiated in January 2018) within the first year of Accreditation.
3. Reinforcing the provision of Accreditation of Non-Formal Programmes.
4. Awareness sessions on learning outcomes so that it would truly be a common language.
5. Training session for future programme writers and educators.
6. Continue with the accreditation of Formal programme in line with the 'My Journey' vision.



# Conclusion 1

..... only flourishes when it is perceived  
by senior managers as an important  
aspect of staff development

(Stephens, 1996: 4)





## Conclusion 2

Reflection about  
own practices  
which lead to  
professional  
growth  
(Hudson, 2013)



Designing a learner  
centred approach in  
which the  
emphasize is what  
the learner needs to  
learn, rather than  
what the educator is  
teaching  
(Ministry for  
Education and  
Employment, 2012)

## The Educators

This leads to greater  
autonomy and  
ownership which  
results in enhanced  
motivation  
(Bezzina, 2007a,  
2007 b)

## Conclusion 3

Tomlinson (1996:4) rightly emphasized the need to understand how people learn, and the necessity of “redesigning the very process of learning, assessment and organization so as to fit the objectives and learning styles of students.”

## The Learners



Bullock and Thomas (1997: 219) it is imperative to create structures and links across different levels to reach the classroom and the students, so that “the changes have washed over and around children in classroom.”

## Conclusion 4

# Various Stakeholders

Employers

Receiving  
Education  
Institutions

Accreditation  
Bodies and  
Authorities

LOs can be understood as the glue binding together a wide range of tools and initiatives emerging from these policy initiatives and cooperation processes. (CEDEFOP, 2016)

Learning outcomes as considered as the key to improve transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, (Copenhagen declaration, 29 and 30 November 2002), Same applies for actions related to key competence and in the validation (& accreditation) of non-formal activities.

# Final remarks

Whole system reform cannot occur  
through one innovation at a time  
(Fullan, 2008)

It is 'easier to adopt a decision than  
to put it into practice, and it is easier  
to make changes in the structure than  
to reculture, which gets at the heart  
of behaviours and beliefs'  
(Fullan, 2008: 114)

Pedagogical and philosophical changes occur only when other educators, and external experts supported educators in their day-to-day teaching, and when sustained engagement with ideas is over a prolonged period of years rather than months.

(Spillane et al., 2004)



# Contact Details

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