

## Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta

Please cite as: Cedefop (2023). *Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta. CareersNet national records*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-malta-0>

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### Introduction

The **Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR)** is responsible for the provision of career guidance in the state education sector, including establishing national curricula and priorities. The **National School Support Services (NSSS)**, Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is the national entity within the Ministry responsible for providing guidelines and objectives for career guidance in the compulsory education sector (up to age 16) and various post-secondary institutions (up to age 18), namely **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, GEM 16+** and **Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form**. It is also responsible for the supply and the coordination of career guidance services, including the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace coordination and assistance in the transition stages, including those from school to work. NSSS transfers responsibility of guidelines implementation to the individual state education institutions. Although there is an increased level of freedom in the implementation of guidance activities, they are carried out in accordance with the national curricula and national priorities. **The Lifelong Learning Centre**, which also falls under the responsibility of MEYR, provides career guidance to adults who wish to pursue one of the courses offered by the institution.

Other post-secondary institutions such as the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology**, the **Institute for Tourism Studies**, the **G.F. Abela Junior College** and the **University of Malta** also provide career guidance to current and potential students with respect to the education and training programmes provided.

MEYR has committed itself to strengthening the transitions within compulsory education, post-secondary education and/or work through closer collaboration with receiving entities: post-secondary institutions, and employers/employer representatives, amongst others. Such cooperation is indispensable as the education sector increases its efforts in ensuring that all students remain in the system, thus reducing school drop-out, and that students are prepared for the world of work and/or further education.

Besides the state school sector, independent Schools in Malta are individually responsible for the provision of career guidance to students within their schools whereas the Student Services Department, Secretariat for **Catholic Education**, is responsible for the provision of career guidance services within Church schools in Malta and Gozo.

In the employment sector, Jobsplus, Malta's Public Employment Service (**PES**) is the national entity responsible for the provision of career guidance via employment advisors. It establishes priorities, target groups and partnerships related to career guidance. The Employment and Training Services Act, (**CAP. 594 of 2019**) regulates several issues such as objectives and principles within public employment services as well as services provided and labour market activities. The interests of employers and employees are integrated within labour policies since MEYR collaborates with their representatives for the drafting of labour policies.

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### Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In Malta, there is no formal lifelong guidance forum, but opportunities exist for collaboration among stakeholders involved in the delivery of lifelong career guidance. In addition to fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, the aim of such activities is to enhance the development of a lifelong guidance system, to support the professionalisation of career guidance practitioners and to promote successful career guidance practices. Collaboration exists between representatives, primarily acting within the **Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation**, (MEYR), from:

1. Euroguidance Malta, NSSS, MEYR;
2. the Directorate for Educational Services, MEYR;
3. the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes, MEYR;
4. the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability, MEYR;
5. the National Skills Council, MEYR
6. representative bodies of workers and employers;
7. Jobsplus (Malta's Public Employment Service).
8. post-secondary education institutions;
9. the University of Malta;
10. European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA);
11. Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA);
12. the Malta Career Guidance Association (MCGA);
13. non-governmental organisations involved in the delivery of career guidance (Euroguidance, 2018).

Malta re-established the National Skills Council (NSC) on March 1st 2023 as an executive entity within the Ministry of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation. The Council's main aim is that of bringing together the worlds of education, policy and industry, and setting policy recommendations in this regard, for skills-based education, continued upskilling and addressing skills gaps and skills mismatches. Lifelong guidance priorities are supported in the work of the NSC. Through the National Implementation Plans (NIPs) emanating from the Osnabrück Declaration, the council intends to set up a National Guidance Service Network (NGSN). NGSN will comprise representatives from all stakeholders working in the field so as to continue creating synergies in the provision of guidance and information securing a seamless experience to clients. The Council was set up by means of **Subsidiary Legislation 327.547 of the Laws** of Malta and has set itself a three-year strategic plan.

The NSC identified four priorities: strategic direction, anticipating industry needs and future skills, vocational education and training, and lifelong and lifewide learning. The Council will be drafting the first National Skills Strategy for Malta and has kick-started an evidence-based local skills agenda based on stakeholder feedback. The priority areas for action set in 2023, include the importance of industry-education collaboration across all levels of the education system, across all education structures, and within the talent management and training spheres.

With respect to coordination and cooperation, the National Skills Council:

1. taps into skills panorama, with studies carried out by different entities to assess the skills shortages at national, European and international levels, and in particular sectors;
2. advises educational institutions, building bridges with industry, to address skills gaps and skills mismatches;
3. steers business-education encounters to facilitate the feedback to and from while at the same time seeks a slightly longer-term qualitative forecast by the key stakeholders in each sector;
4. aims to anticipate future skills within the context of the future of work, and recommend policy changes to this extent.
5. encourages and promotes lifelong and lifewide learning, along with related career guidance services.

The **National School Support Services** (NSSS) within MEYR collaborates with national entities from the labour market to carry out ongoing training for career guidance practitioners. NSSS is also an active member in working groups for sectors including Engineering, Finance, ICT, Science, Health, and Tourism, amongst others, to secure placements for year-10 students, within state schools, who undergo a one-week career exposure experience (additional information can be found [here](#)) besides talks and orientation visits for students within the compulsory education sector. It collaborates with entities, such as the **Malta Career Guidance Association** (MCGA) and post-secondary and tertiary education institutions and other national entities in the organisation of career guidance events such as the Annual National **Euroguidance Conference**. The aim is to bring forward the employability agenda and engage in links with industry. Such initiatives are intended for both students and career guidance practitioners.

The **Euroguidance Centre** (Malta) administered by NSSS, through the organisation and promotion of a number of activities held during the year, collaborates with local stakeholders involved in the provision of career guidance. The centre promotes the European dimension in guidance activities and provides information on learning (further studies) and work mobility. Euroguidance ensures that, through its well-founded relationship with the main stakeholders and institutions, it reaches the objectives established by the **Euroguidance Network**. Accordingly, this collaboration with stakeholders enables the sharing of experiences established locally and encourages the introduction of practices undertaken by counterparts in other Member States. This exchange and promotion of practices provides a platform for lifelong guidance initiatives that, in turn, help to reduce early school leaving, reinforce vocational education and training, and support the validation of non-formal and informal learning (see [Euroguidance Malta](#)).

An example of cooperation and coordination mechanisms in lifelong guidance, organised by the centre, is the **stakeholders' forum** held each year. This allows all providers of career guidance services within education institutions and industry in Malta and Gozo to meet and discuss developments and challenges being faced by the latter in relation to the links with industry. The plan to hold such a forum on a yearly basis has been upheld.

The importance of a coordinated international outlook was outlined in the "**Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta (2014-2024)**" published in 2014 – where it was noted that Malta must have an international outlook, as "if we do not keep up with what is happening in the rest of the world, we will be putting our nation at risk and the future of our people will be jeopardised if we allow other nations to overtake us and if we do not catch up with other nations who are ahead of us because of the skills and talents of their people" (MEDE, 2014, p.3). The **Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation** is in the process of drafting and eventually launching the new Education Strategy for 2024-2030. There will be a number of pre-consultation meetings with different stakeholders, all of whom will be invited to engage in a constructive dialogue on the opportunities and challenges that the education sector faces and how these can be translated into a better quality of life for all, particularly when taking into account the fundamental role of education in promoting and sustaining economic growth and wellbeing.

NSSS within MEYR also organises other initiatives related to career guidance which require the collaboration of representatives from both industry and education. Amongst them is the '**I Choose Fair**', targeting year 10 and year 11 students from all state, Church and independent schools. This is another opportunity for students to explore career options as they leave compulsory education. The aim is to enable students to make informed choices about their future and to facilitate their transition from compulsory education to post-secondary and/or work. During the summer of 2021 since the **I Choose Fair** could not be held physically, a virtual fair was organised. A number of videos were recorded whereby speakers provided information on the particular job sector. Online one-to-one sessions with students and their parents/guardians were also conducted. In this way students and parents/guardians still had access to information and guidance. Despite a reduction in the number of participants, feedback received from those who participated in this year's **I Choose Virtual** event were quite positive. Of particular interest was that students mentioned that they could refer to the talks as and when convenient. They also confirmed that the information provided helped them to make an informed choice.

During the summer of 2022 the fair was once again organised physically. Post-secondary institutions and employer representatives were present at the fair to guide students according to their interests. Talks by employer representatives outlining the skills, qualities and qualifications needed to study/work in the different employment sectors were delivered. One to one career guidance sessions with students and their parents/guardians were also held.

In 2023, the **I Choose fair** was once again organised on a national level to all State, Church and Independent Schools. Similar to previous years, the fair was particularly targeted towards Year 11 students who have just finished compulsory education. Through the talks provided, the one-to-one sessions and the discussion with representatives from post-secondary institutions and the world of work, students and their parents/guardians where helps on making an informed choice regarding their post-secondary education.

The **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School**, **Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form**, the **Junior College**, **GEM 16+**, the **University of Malta**, the **Institute of Tourism Studies** and the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology** participate in the following career guidance initiatives related to cross-sector coordination and cooperation:

1. regular meetings with guidance teachers and career guidance practitioners in compulsory and post-compulsory Education
2. links with secondary and post-secondary schools to provide information sessions to students about courses on offer;
3. participation in career fairs and talks when invited;
4. participation in the '**I Choose Fair**', held every year - a national fair which brings together education institutions under one roof;
5. participation in the stakeholder forum organised by [Euroguidance Malta](#);
6. collaboration with the Malta Career Guidance Association

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## Access to guidance

In Malta there is universal access to career information and career guidance. All national and foreign citizens are entitled to career support services according to national legislation [further information can be found in the [Education Act](#), the [Employment and Training Services Act](#) (1990, 1996) and the [National Curriculum Framework for all](#) (2012). Specific regulations in the education and employment sectors define specialised services to different target groups and distinct levels of provision. The services are provided mainly by two established publicly funded systems.

### Schools

Schools have the main responsibility for career and educational guidance. The [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) (MEYR), through the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is responsible for the organisation of career guidance and counselling services in the state primary, middle, secondary education and Sixth Forms including [Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School](#), [GEM 16+](#) and [Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form](#). Compulsory education (up to age 16) as well as post-compulsory education general and VET programmes are provided by State schools, the Catholic Church and independent schools (Cedefop, 2017). NSSS is responsible for the State schools which include primary, secondary and Sixth Forms including Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, GEM 16+ and Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form. The Education Act (Chap 607, 2021, 2022) ensures that students have access to vocational and career guidance services, including programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace coordination, and assist in the transition stages, including those from school to work.

The [Career guidance policy for schools](#) (2007) is the major career guidance framework for policy development in the field in Malta. It led to a formal division of career guidance from personal counselling (within the psycho social support services) in State colleges, which eventually reached all students within compulsory schooling (up to age 16), who gained access to career guidance by specialised career guidance practitioners (on a 40-hour basis). Added to the existing provision of guidance teachers who already provide their services to primary and secondary school students, this policy created a new infrastructure of career guidance practitioners.

A key provision of the national career guidance policy the "Career Guidance Policy for Schools" (2007) was the provision of a National Career Guidance Centre (for all levels of education) - One of the suggestions, having pertinence for all levels of students, was provision for a National Career Guidance Centre complementary to the educational system (in other words, Career Guidance for everyone) - "a centre of excellence for career guidance in Malta" (MEDE, 2007, p. 37). This has not materialised in practice to-date.

The 2007 policy also led to an increased focus on the topic of careers within the PSD (Personal and Social Development) programme within schools, a subject that was eventually renamed [Personal, Social and Career Development](#) (PSCD). Since 2014, this change has ensured universal access to career education to all young people in compulsory schooling, including those at risk of early school leaving and students with disabilities. The dedicated teaching hours of career-related topics are nine hours in Years 3 to 6 and 32 hours for lower secondary.

In 2021, the [Euroguidance Malta](#) Centre published a handbook entitled '[Career Learning and Development – A Framework for Schools](#)' on behalf of the National School Support Services and the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. The document sets out a whole school approach, covering primary and secondary education, facilitating learners' personal, social and career development clustered around three areas of learning and competency development: personal exploration and management; learning exploration and management; and, career exploration and management. The year 2022 will kickstart the implementation of this framework. In 2023 a [conference](#) with workshops was organised. The Conference focused further on how the framework will be implemented in schools. The frameworks also addresses how practitioners can reflect and evaluate their work through the 'reflective practitioner' approach with the aim of providing a quality career education and guidance service in our schools.

Independent Schools in Malta follow their own programmes of student career guidance provision, although the 2007 Career guidance policy for schools was extended to compulsory-level church schools. The Directorate for Educational Services, Secretariat for Catholic Education, is responsible for the provision of career guidance services within Church schools in Malta and Gozo. A career advisor is employed to further strengthen access to career guidance for students within church schools.

The 2007 Career guidance policy for schools was also extended to State Sixth Forms ([MQF 4](#)). Within Sixth Forms, general higher education preparatory programmes following lower-secondary, students are provided with career guidance services, including individual and group career guidance, career fairs, talks by prospective employers and tertiary institution representatives.

Within vocational post-secondary institutions, career education is integrated into all vocational subjects and transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment services as students are provided with work-based learning opportunities. All students have access to individual and group career guidance and opportunities to participate in career-related events, such as fairs and talks.

For State higher education, provided by the [University of Malta](#), there is a legal framework providing students' access to career guidance services, for prospective and current students, through the Student Advisory Services.

Primary and secondary school students have access to career guidance focused on improving their learning and supporting their career choices. Career guidance services are delivered in schools through a variety of face-to-face provisions, both on a one-to-one basis and in small and large groups. These interventions contribute to career development as well as personal and social development of students, within a holistic approach. This includes initiatives to support students' subject/career choices and transitions from primary to secondary education and from secondary to post-secondary education and/or work.

This provision is complemented by external resources with talks by employers, career orientation visits and one-week career exposure experiences for students at the place of work (additional information can be found [here](#)). All students are included in such programmes. Several State colleges organise tailor-made programmes to cater for the particular needs of students and to encourage them to engage in direct experiences relating to employment. Such programmes target possible early school leavers, low-achieving students and/or students with individual educational needs (IENs). A [Transition coordinator](#) is also employed within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation. The Transition Coordinator is the key person to help learners with Individual Educational Needs (IEN) and their families become more aware of future educational or employment opportunities. Individual transition plans are developed and implemented with these learners and their families. The Transition Coordinator strives to build solid networks with post-secondary entities. Meetings are held with post-secondary entities to enable them to become aware of the learners' personal and educational needs and goals, and how these can be met and achieved.

Complementing the career guidance services, within Maltese schools, learners are also taught career management skills (CMS) as part of personal, social and career development. All students from year 3 to year 11 undertake a number of hours every year throughout their compulsory education on the CMS acquisition (see section Career management skills).

Schools also work closely with [Jobsplus](#) to support learners' career planning and development, where employment advisors are invited to schools to talk to students or carry out workshops in relation to career exploration, employability skills, job-seeking skills, training opportunities, and how to register for work. Prospective early school leavers and other vulnerable learners also have the opportunity to visit Jobsplus in order to gain first-hand information on services which they may need to access after they finish compulsory education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these interventions were carried out online ensuring that the pandemic did not affect the service.

In post-secondary institutions, within sixth forms, students are provided with individual and group career guidance talks by prospective employers and tertiary institution representatives, besides career fairs. Within the [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) and the [Institute of Tourism Studies](#), the main vocational post-secondary and tertiary institutions in Malta, career education is integrated into all vocational subjects; transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment companies as students are provided with work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeship, work placements, internships and job shadowing. All students also have access to individual and group career guidance and opportunities to participate in career-related events such as fairs and talks. Career guidance is also provided to prospective students and graduates both on one-to-one and group levels (see section Guidance for VET participants).

[Student Advisory Services](#) from the [University of Malta](#) provide access to quality career information for prospective students, university students and graduates. This service provides students with the necessary information and advice to make informed choices on issues related to career paths and courses of study within the local context. Other career-related initiatives are organised by individual faculties with the aim of bringing students closer to the world of employment. At the [University of Malta](#) there is also a counselling service which caters for students' personal needs (see section Guidance for higher education students).

The Students Advisory Services operates both from the University Msida Campus as well as from the Junior college where it caters for students entering post-secondary level education. At the Junior college, career guidance is managed by a team that offers students the possibility to engage within several activities that help students become more aware of their skills and how these may be applied to the labour market. Students are also assisted

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individually through study skills and time management programmes.

All post-secondary institutions and the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) host their own websites which provide information on the courses they offer, and other information related to the entity. The Directorate also provides career guidance through the Msida Lifelong Learning Centre to prospective and current adult learners. The use of ICT in guidance tends to be restricted to the provision of information about further education opportunities. Colleges also host their websites and Facebook pages. Generally, all schools within the colleges host a section on career guidance but the main function is that of providing information on the type of services offered by the school concerned. Basic contact with students and parents through emails is also evidenced in all schools.

In 2021, the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) launched the CITO Skills Checker. The Malta CITO team has developed two versions of the Skillschecker, one in simplified English and a Maltese version as part of the ERASMUS+ Check In Take Off Project. Both may be accessed [here](#). The CITO Skills Checker is a self-assessment tool that helps adults reflect on their skills in literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy, and informs them of their MQF level in each of the 3 areas. It then provides a list of courses (offered by state and nonstate Further learning institutions) that may be suitable to meet the individual's learning needs, together with their contact details.

The CITO Skills Checker can be accessed by users independently and can also be used by guidance services to generate discussion / as an initial assessment. The tool is available freely for Guidance Services to use. The Guidance Team within the Directorate make use of this tool.

To support young people aged 11 to 16 and in particular Year 8 students (12 year olds) with their choice of option subjects, the National School Support Services, [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) in collaboration with PRISMS, a non-governmental organisation have together worked on the development and regular updating of the [Explore More – My Journey Portal](#). Year 8 students and their parents/guardians can acquire information on the option subjects from a wide variety of options on offer and the different career paths and post-secondary courses that these subjects can lead to. The information is presented in an interactive way with short videos outlining all subject options on offer, videos with first-hand testimony from the people who work in the industry and a short quiz which helps students identify the work sector/subjects of their interest. The website is accessible to students, parents and teachers and is in both Maltese and English (see section ICT in lifelong guidance). One can refer to a digital format of the Options Handbook which includes all the subjects that students at Year 8 can choose from. The Options Form can also be accessed [here](#).

#### *Jobsplus/PES*

[Jobsplus](#) (Malta's national public employment services) coordinates the employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals. Access for specific client groups is facilitated through the vast coordination and cooperation partnerships. Jobsplus is regulated by the [Employment and Training Services Act](#) (2019). The organisation includes a head office and several job centres in Malta and Gozo. The career services provided include: career advice, jobseeker profiling, the development of personalised action plans, the provision of exposure schemes, training services, job matching placements and access to quality information on the labour market (further information can be found [here](#)).

EU nationals and their family members, asylum seekers and migrants with a protection status, as well as third country nationals who are living and working in Malta can also access targeted Jobsplus guidance services.

A number of private recruitment agencies also operate in Malta, but their main function is that of matching the individual with employment opportunities. Employees have access to career guidance activities provided by trade union members without career guidance experience and background, and by experts from Jobsplus.

Jobsplus works with several organisations on a regular basis, namely:

1. The [Malta Further and Higher Education Authority](#) (MFHEA);
2. the [Department of Industrial and Employment Relations](#) (DIER);
3. [Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability](#) (CRPD);
4. the [Lino Spiteri Foundation](#) (provides initial and continuous advisory assistance and job search support to persons with disabilities);
5. the [Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology](#) (MCAST);
6. the [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) (ITS);
7. career training providers;
8. IVET institutions;
9. companies;
10. [Malta Employers' Association](#) (MEA, identify labour skills shortages);
11. [Caritas Malta](#) (provides specialised and personalised services to substance abusers to increase their employability with a view to enabling their entry into the labour market and retaining employment);
12. [the Inspire Foundation Malta](#) (provides employment support, advice and guidance to Jobsplus senior job coaches);
13. [Richmond Foundation](#) (provides employment support, advice and guidance to Jobsplus senior job coaches);
14. OASI (provides specialised and personalised services to substance abusers to increase their employability with a view to enabling their entry into the labour market and retaining employment)
15. a number of NGOs and entities working with migrants (provides support in identifying the needs of migrants and support in the development of the services).

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## Quality assurance

The [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS, MEYR) is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and quality of career guidance services within the compulsory education sector. It oversees coherence between policies, education, and quality of professional training for its practitioners. The NSSS Directorate for Educational Services (DES) also works in close cooperation with the colleges, who provide feedback and advice regarding the delivery of career guidance. Implementation, monitoring and quality of career guidance provisions and practitioners within state Sixth Forms is also the responsibility of the NSSS as no formal quality assurance mechanisms regarding career guidance provision are in place.

Within the education sector, each guidance practitioner is bound by work ethics governed by the [Respect for all framework](#) (2014a). Within both sectors, the standards in place are organisation-specific and linked to career progression routes within the entity.

Career guidance within education is carried out by two streams of practitioners: career advisors, along with career guidance teachers and guidance teachers. The former group consists of a 3-tiered structure of career advisor posts: Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (PESPs), Senior Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (SESPs), although currently these posts are vacant, also require an MQF level 7 Post-Graduate Diploma qualification and Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (ESPs) who require an MQF level 6 qualification in a social science related subject, including but not limited to Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Youth Work and Social Policy. Career advisors are responsible for the coordination of career guidance within individual colleges. Career Advisors work full time on career guidance matters in [State College](#) at both primary and secondary level, supporting students, school staff and parents/guardians at both levels, thus ensuring better continuity in the educational and career development of students. They are expected to operate in a multi-disciplinary team framework.

The work of career advisors is complemented by that of guidance teachers and career guidance teachers. Guidance Teachers are qualified teachers and who besides their guidance work, also teach a subject. They also carry out personal and career guidance interventions. Hence their timetable is divided between teaching a subject and guidance work. The Career Guidance Teachers on the other hand are also qualified teachers but hold a Level 7 Qualification in Career Guidance and work specifically on career guidance matters. They do not teach a subject. The latter are situated at NSSS and co-ordinate centrally organised career orientation visits and talks. They also support one or two colleges with career guidance matters.

EO (Education Officers), who require an MQF Level 7 Master qualification in lifelong career guidance (or a comparable qualification) are responsible for the overall management of the career guidance service within the state education sector. Evaluation meetings are organised with guidance teachers, career guidance teachers and career advisors in order to assess performance and establish areas of improvement. Quality standards at college level (MQF 3) are also monitored by the Education Officers (Career Guidance). These standards are the result of collective agreements drawn up by the representing union and the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (2015, 2017).

The [Malta Career Guidance Association](#), a national association representing career guidance practitioners, was established in 2009. The Association has focused on strengthening the skills of career guidance practitioners through the provision of training in collaboration with the [University of Malta](#), the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), MEYR and other entities, including international organisations/universities. Further work is being done to professionalise the service by creating professional standards and a code of ethics. For this reason, MCGA (2017) conducted a study in Malta (through the [Euroguidance Centre](#)) to identify the skills and qualifications of practitioners delivering their services in the sector. The study showed that professionals working within the compulsory education system tend to possess higher qualifications than in the private sector. Moreover, the study showed that practitioners were in favour of the setting up of a warrant in order to practice in the profession. They agreed that this would indeed result in a better-quality provision of service. MCGA will continue to work towards this aim however it must be noted that to-date there is no need for a warrant to work as a career guidance professional in Malta.

No organisation is in charge of examining the quality of guidance-related occupational and educational information, which is published by a variety of entities, before it reaches the users.

Employment Advisors posted at [Jobsplus](#) (Malta's national Public Employment Services) are required to have an MQF level 6 in a social science related subject, including but not limited to Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Geography, Management and Social Work. Newly recruited employment advisors are required to undergo an extensive induction programme. [Jobsplus](#) also carries out continuous quality checks on the profiling and guidance given to jobseekers by all of its advisors. For new recruits, these quality checks are intensified.

In respect to State colleges, career guidance provision is monitored by the Education Officers (EOs) (Career Guidance) through one-to-one/group sessions organised on a regular basis with the Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), the Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), Career Guidance Teachers and Guidance Teachers. During these sessions feedback is provided in relation to the career guidance programmes delivered to students in compulsory education and State Sixth Forms. Guidelines regarding initiatives such as the one-week career exposure experiences (additional information can be found [here](#)) and other initiatives are also discussed and outlined. Information sessions through national guidance meetings held regularly throughout the academic year are also organised by the EOs to ensure that the same standards are kept by the different colleges, particularly in relation to national initiatives such as the option choices exercises, the career exposure experience, orientation visits to workplaces and post-secondary institutions.

In the context of quality standards for career management skills for school pupils up through secondary education (see sections Career management skills and Guidance for school pupils), a draft policy outlining guidelines on the procedures of the one-week career exposure experience, among other related activities, is currently (2019) the policy which provides direction. This policy will further strengthen the teaching of CMS by ensuring that schools follow the correct standards, aims and objectives of this experience.

The year 2022 also saw the launching of the Career Learning and Development: [A framework for Schools](#) by the [National School Support Services](#) and the Department of Learning and Assessment Programmes within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation (MEYR). The framework is intended to be a referral point for schools and colleges to help professionals support the planning, design and provision of career education and career guidance. It aims to establish guidelines for career learning and development in compulsory schooling and achieve better co-ordination between all educators involved – hence acknowledge and encourage a whole school approach to career learning. It also aims to serve as a tool which helps evaluate and improve the quality of career learning in our schools. The implementation of the framework will start in 2023 within the state colleges. The printing of the framework was funded through Euroguidance Erasmus + funds.

The Institute of Tourism Studies is governed by the [Quality assurance Manual](#).

In terms of quality assurance one may also refer to the research conducted by the students following the Master in Lifelong Learning and Career Development Course at the [University of Malta](#) about different aspects of career guidance service in Malta.

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## Career management skills

Although there is no formal national strategy on lifelong guidance for the development of Career management Skills (CMS) in Malta, the development of CMS, the access to career guidance information, learning, training and employment opportunities is the result of collaboration between various actors,

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such as authorities and agencies, associations, and providers:

1. the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES);
2. the [Malta Career Guidance Association](#);
3. [Jobsplus](#) /PES;
4. The [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#).
5. the [European Union Programmes Agency](#);
6. the [Malta Financial Services Authority](#) (MFSA);
7. the [Malta/Gozo Tourism Authority](#);
8. the [Malta Information Technology Agency](#) (MITA);
9. the [eSkills Malta Foundation](#);
10. the [Malta Chamber](#);
11. [Gozo Business Chamber](#);
12. the [Malta Employers' Association](#);
13. the [Malta Institute of Accountants](#);
14. the [Chamber of Engineers](#);
15. Government Ministries;
16. post-secondary and tertiary Institutions (particularly the [University of Malta](#));
17. private career guidance providers.

The overall aims of CMS development in all stages of education refer to:

1. provision of opportunities for the development of employability and personal development skills needed in the labour market;
2. increase of opportunities for links with the world of work;
3. encouragement for more active participation of employers in all stages of education;
4. support in increasing participation in lifelong learning, while reducing early school leaving.

The public employment service, [Jobsplus](#) (see sections Access to guidance, Guidance for the employed, Guidance for unemployed adults), coordinates employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals, for adults with special needs and otherwise at risk of exclusion. The career services provided include: job matching, job placements, access to quality information on the labour market, jobseeker profiling, career advice, the development of personalised action plans and training services. Jobsplus is also working closely with the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES) by providing training to career guidance personnel and guidance teachers in public schools to keep them updated on the latest labour market trends and Jobsplus services. It also provides sessions in secondary and post-secondary schools to strengthen students' career management skills (see sections Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, Access to guidance).

#### *Schools*

State schools are guided by the Career Learning and Development – A [framework for Schools](#) which was developed by the [National School Support Services](#) and the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. The document sets out a whole school approach, covering primary and secondary education, facilitating learners' personal, social and career development clustered around three areas of learning and competency development: personal exploration and management; learning exploration and management; and, career exploration and management

[Jobsplus](#) has increased its school-to-work interventions in many educational settings, mainly secondary and post-secondary schools. These school-to-work integration programmes include, but are not limited to, the following topics/sessions:

1. overview of Jobsplus and services offered by the Jobseekers' Advisory Services;
2. career planning and development (choosing a career);
3. self-assessment;
4. career exploration through the application of a career test;
5. narrowing down your options;
6. decision making and goal setting;
7. I want to work (including: CV Writing, job search, [Jobsplus](#) online matching system, applying for a job, preparing for an interview: elevator pitch and mock interviewing);
8. employment - what happens after I start working? (including: information for first time employees, engagement and termination forms, what to expect and work ethics).

This collaboration is not limited to public schools, but the service has been extended to church and independently run schools. These interventions are carried out both in person and also through video conferencing.

[Personal, social and career development programme](#) (PSCD) is a career management skills programme which aims to improve the emotional, communication, and social skills of students from third grade to eleventh grade. The module Career planning and exploration directly tackles topics like planning one's studies, dealing with change, transitions, the rights and duties of workers, and different pathways beyond school. These topics also help students understand the need to explore areas of interest and to identify training and education possibilities that are related to their skills and abilities.

In order to develop students' career management skills further, schools also implement career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students. The aim of career guidance is to provide access to career information, to develop the career management skills and to facilitate the school transition and the transition between the school and the labour market. This programme includes job shadowing activities, career orientation visits, talks by employers, career fairs, visits to post-secondary education institutions, and one-to-one career guidance sessions, besides alternative learning programmes for disengaged and vulnerable students who are possible early school leavers from education.

Job shadowing activities (or career exposure experiences as known in Malta - additional information can be found [here](#)) in financial, health, tourism, and IT companies (amongst others) are established in Maltese state schools. The development of job shadowing is the result of collaboration between schools, companies, and the National Schools Support Services from the Directorate for Educational Services. The aims are to increase the awareness of different career paths, to encourage students to explore different careers, to increase their study motivation, and to develop their career management skills. Students learn how to write a CV, a letter of motivation, a job application and how to make a good impression during a job interview.

Entrepreneurship opportunities through different schemes offered by NGOs help CMS development. Students get involved in coordinating the activity of different cooperatives. Through the activities, students develop their employability skills and collaborate with business mentors. They learn about working rights and regulations, economy-related issues, social benefits, vacancies, financial incentives, and work ethics.

The [Alternative Learning Programme](#) (ALP) is an educational programme which includes the teaching of vocational subjects. It is implemented in the final year of compulsory schooling with the aim of preventing school drop-out among at-risk students from within the educational system. The programme includes theoretical and practical activities and aims to improve students' soft skills through career seminars, workshops, visits, and trainings.

In addition, all sixth forms and VET post-secondary institutions (see section Access to guidance) organise career-related initiatives such as career fairs, information talks by employers and representatives from further and higher education institutions, opportunities for one-to-one and group career guidance sessions, CV writing and interview skills sessions, career visits and/or placements.

#### *Universities*

Students are helped to develop their career management skills by participating in various initiatives and services:

1. students can take part in extracurricular programmes which are awarded credit such as the Degree+ programme, which provides students with opportunities to become aware of the importance of mastering a number of soft skills;
2. the development of CMS is embedded in some of the modules taught in the different courses on offer;
3. the Student Advisory Services provide prospective and current students at the [University of Malta](#) with the necessary information and advice in order to make informed career choices;
4. students have opportunities to participate in work placements and internships initiatives;
5. opportunities for direct contact with employers during career fairs, talks, seminars, etc. organised by the different faculties (see section Guidance for higher education students).

#### *VET post-secondary institutions*

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) [Career guidance policy](#) (2011) provides guidelines for the provision of career guidance to students. Through career guidance, students are helped to develop the skills of decision making, opportunity awareness, transition learning, self-awareness, and self-confidence. This developmental programme is also supported by the syllabi at all levels to increase students' job-seeking and employability skills. Entrepreneurship, individual social responsibility, and critical thinking are among the essential key CMS taught in the different courses.

The [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) also offers opportunities for students to develop the following skills:

1. interviewing skills;
2. organisational skills;
3. time management skills;
4. study skills;
5. assignment writing.

Students participate in local practice and international internships. These work placements are important in preparing young people for their transition to employment and bridging the gap between schooling and the world of work. Students are also offered support when dealing with the change of role from that of a student to that of an employee. Similarly, the development of CMS is embedded in the modules taught in the different courses on offer. It is crucial to add that the local industrial trade practice and international industrial trade practice are integral to the courses and accredited, therefore all students must follow them in order to graduate from the respective courses enrolled in.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Gathering evidence about career guidance activities and developing monitoring studies is a shared responsibility between the following stakeholders:

1. [National Statistics Office](#) (research about Labour Market and Education);
2. [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) (MEYR) (education statistics, early school leaving monitoring studies);
3. [Jobsplus/PES](#) (statistics about the employment sectors);
4. [Malta Further and Higher Education Authority](#) (MFHEA) (statistics about further and higher education)
5. [University of Malta](#) (Graduate tracer studies);
6. national entities representing employment sectors (including statistics about the tourism, health, engineering, education, ICT sectors) (Euroguidance, 2018).

Cooperation between Malta's PES (Jobsplus) and the other entities at national level ensures that the results of labour market research in Malta, including key statistics collected, are disseminated by [Jobsplus](#) to education and employment practitioners.

Within the compulsory State education sector (students up to age 16) the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES), Ministry of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR), is the entity responsible for gathering evidence about career guidance activities. This is done through the Education Officers (EO), who are responsible for monitoring career guidance within the state colleges. There are two Education Officers who conduct this work. Education officers meet regularly with career advisors and career guidance teachers (at least once a month) to evaluate and gather feedback about career guidance programmes and initiatives

Data is gathered from end-users in order to identify the impact on their self-awareness and self-reflections. National events are evaluated, and information collected and processed by EOs; college-based activities are evaluated and processed by the respective college.

It is general practice within schools that career guidance activities are evaluated at the end of each activity by getting feedback from students, parents, and others, such as practitioners and employers/speakers involved in the activity. Interviews and questionnaires are used to gather regular student feedback on their progress, the career services used, and on what worked/did not work. Student evaluations are central to the career exposure experience (one-week job shadowing for year 10 students, aged 14-15, additional information can be found [here](#)), where each student completes a reflective journal. The journal contains reflections on the learning experience and feedback about the quality of the workplace provisions offered. The career guidance teams within state schools are requested to send a yearly report outlining the career guidance interventions undertaken in individual and group settings in the colleges. These reports outline the target group, the types of intervention and the number of students reached.

The [National School Support Services](#) within the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) also conducts the Tracer study. This is an annual compilation of statistical data about the choices Maltese students make after completing compulsory education, in relation to their post-education or work path. The study is conducted through a joint collaboration between state, church and independent secondary schools in Malta and Gozo and the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS) within the Directorate for Educational Services. This study helps to formulate a national picture identifying national, sectoral and school trends. The tracer studies identify the following trends:

1. respondents' career choices (further education, work or other options);
2. percentage of respondents' choices of post-secondary path/career choice by state, church and independent schools;
3. percentage of respondents' choices of post-secondary path/career choice by gender;
4. respondents' educational choices by gender (academic versus vocational education and training);
5. occupation choices by gender (the type of jobs both females and males are opting for);
6. reasons given by respondents for choosing to work, by gender;
7. factors which have influenced respondents' decisions to start working;
8. other choices which have influenced participants' decisions not to continue either in education or in employment, by gender;
9. number of respondents with individual educational needs post-secondary/career choice, by gender;
10. one year after students drop out, schools have access to information about early school leavers through the tracer study

Studies on early leavers from education and training are conducted by the Early School Leaving Unit within the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#), which also published the Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) in Malta ([The Way Forward 2023-2030](#)) strategy policy which was out for consultation and was launched at the end of 2022. It is a

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monitoring policy document and includes prevention, intervention, and compensation measures. An example of this is monitoring career guidance compensation policies such as that published by [the Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) (see section [Guidance for early leavers](#)).

In post-secondary and tertiary institutions, similar evaluation and monitoring exercises are conducted with the aim of getting feedback from end users about the career service used, and what was effective/not effective. Several policy documents and strategies outline evaluation processes and recommendations for career guidance provision:

1. The [National vocational education and training policy](#) (2015) highlights the need for career education information sessions across secondary and further education providers, individual sessions with the unemployed, women returners to the labour market, and other initiatives to promote the VET route.
2. The [Further and higher education strategy for Malta 2020](#) (2009, p. 37) acknowledges that guidance services play a pivotal role in motivating students to pursue further education studies prior to entering the world of work. The MFHEA (formerly known as NCFHE) is the competent authority in Malta for licensing, accreditation and quality assurance of providers and programmes. [The National Quality Assurance Framework for Malta](#) provides guidance to educational institutions that embark on the processes of Internal and External Quality Assurance in order to enhance the learning outcomes provided through their educational programmes. The MFHEA will soon be launching the National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education (2022-30). The Strategic Plan identifies key trends and drivers up to 2030 and their relevance to Further and Higher Education with a view to mapping and tackling emerging opportunities and threats. The policy implications and recommended actions highlight the need for closer policy synergies between education, research and industry/enterprise.
3. The [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 - 2030](#) suggests that the government should 'establish an independent guidance unit, together with stakeholders, aimed at supporting adults about educational opportunities in a learner-centred, neutral manner'. The Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) in Malta ([The way forward 2023-2030](#)) is based on prevention, intervention, and compensation measures.
4. The [National Employment Policy 2021-2030](#) (Ministry for Finance and Employment, 2021) also makes direct reference to the provision of career guidance. The policy recommends the development of a new long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance aligned with the ELGPN (European Lifelong Learning Policy Network) Guidelines. The National Employment Policy also recommends launching a strategy on career guidance.

#### Tertiary Education

The [Malta Further and Higher Education Authority](#) (MFHEA) conducted a [graduate tracer study undertaken in 2015-16](#). It aimed to identify the situation of graduates after they completed their qualification to evaluate the impact of further and higher education in Malta. The study also addressed the fit between the education provided and the needs of the labour market. This may help to increase the relevance and responsiveness of further and higher education to labour market needs and to the needs of the diverse student population.

Indirectly related to career guidance, the MFHEA has been conducting research focusing on the enrolment of 16- to 19-year-olds in education, and the subsequent lifelong learning journey, as reflected in their 2008-16 statistics on further and higher education. In 2015, 79% of the total population aged 17 in Malta were enrolled in further and higher education (full-time and part-time) while 21% were not registered in any of the reporting institutions. Participation in the former group is increasing.

The [Employability index](#) (2015d) is one of the measures aiming to support the transition from further and higher education to employment. The intended benefits of the Employability index were highlighted in Malta's National reform programme published in 2015: 'The Employability index will offer more guidance to students on the choices of jobs that are available for the various lines of studies by indicating to the student the potential of finding a job within the line of study being chosen.' (2015d, p. 6). According to the programme, this study aims at identifying students that may be at high risk of experiencing underemployment due to a mismatch between their educational attainment and their occupation, based on the premise that a graduate will aim to find employment which matches his or her area of study and attainment level. Employers also support research developments which support effective allocation of education expenditure and channel human resources, accordingly.

Table 1. presents an overview summary related to career guidance practices within the education and employment sectors (where available).

Table 1: Overview of career guidance practices in education and employment sector

Practice	Accessed/yearly	Number and types of guidance interventions	Number of guidance practitioners within the respective entry
Personal, social and career development programme (PSCD)	All Year 4, 5, 6 primary school students and Year 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 students in State, church and independent schools	Class-based interventions	Personal, social and career teachers teach CMS in state schools: 145 teachers in secondary and 37 teachers in primary
Job shadowing in state schools	All Year 10 students during 2017-18: 2,189 students 2018-2019: 1,956 sstudents 2019-2020: not offered due to pandemic 2020-2021: not offered due to pandemic 2021-2022: not offered due to the aftermaths of the pandemic 2022-2023: not offered due to the aftermaths of the pandemic	One-week career exposure experiences	160 guidance teachers, 6 career guidance teachers, 11 principal education support practitioners, 10 education support practitioners within state colleges, 2 education officers (career guidance)
I Choose Post Secondary Education Fair	2017-18: 1793 students attended the fair during 2018-2019: 1,000 students 2019 - 2020: 430 students 2020-2021: 68 students 2021-2022: 1,000 students 2022-2023: 1,500 students	One-to-one career guidance sessions on demand; various talks by different speakers from various entities; opportunity to speak to a representative from all post-secondary institutions.  During 2019-20 numbers were limited due to the covid 19 pandemic.  During 2020-21 the fair could not be organised due to the covid 19 pandemic. Hence 68 sessions were delivered online together with a number of recorded talks focusing on <a href="#">different sectors</a> .  During the 2021-22 I Choose Fair 677 students and their parents/guardians attended one of more of the 20 talks held at the fair. Around 78 students participated in one to one guidance sessions.  During 2022-23 104 students benefited from one to one career guidance sessions whilst 573 students and their parents/guardians attended one or more of the 22 organised talks.	Not available

Career Orientation visits in state schools	<p>2017-18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 9 students: 1,832</li> <li>Year 10 students: 255</li> <li>Year 11 students: 1,099</li> </ul> <p>2018-2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 9 students: 1,632</li> <li>Year 10 students: 207</li> <li>Year 11 students: 1,223</li> </ul> <p>2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 9 students: 738</li> <li>Year 10 students: 200</li> </ul> <p>2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 11 students: All students reached through virtual talks</li> </ul> <p>2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 9 &amp; 10: 106 Virtual and physical talks were held</li> <li>Year 11: 67 physical visits or online talks held with post secondary institutions</li> </ul>	Visits at the places of work or post-secondary institutions	Not available
State schools	All Primary and Secondary School Students have access to guidance	One-to-one, class based and group guidance sessions, visits and talks	140 guidance teachers, 6 career guidance teachers, 11 principal education support practitioners, 9 education support practitioners, 2 education officers (career guidance)
Sixth forms	All students attending Sixth Forms can participate	Talks, career fairs, group and one-to-one sessions	Not available
VET institutions	All students attending VET institutions can participate	Career fairs, one-to-one, group sessions, talks and orientation visits	4 career advisors
<a href="#">University of Malta</a>	All students attending the University of Malta can participate	Career fairs, one-to-one sessions, career fairs and talks	4 career advisors
<a href="#">Alternative Learning Programme</a>	233 students during 2017-18 189 students during 2018-2019 students during 2019-2020 students during 2020-2021 158 students during 2021-2022 89 students during 2022-2023	One-to-one, class based and group guidance sessions; 6 weeks career exposure, visits & talks	2 guidance teachers, 1 career guidance teacher
Malta Career Guidance Association	Not available	Conferences and training events	105 members
Centre for Labour Studies	Not available	Master in Lifelong Career Guidance & Development	No career guidance practitioner employed
Stakeholders' forum	Approx. 60	Working breakfast/meetings	<p>In 2017, 20 heads of organisations coming from the education sector.</p> <p>In 2018, 40 heads of organisations from industry.</p> <p>In 2019, 50 heads of organisations from the education and employment sectors.</p> <p>In 2020, the forum was postponed due to the covid 19 pandemic.</p> <p>In 2021, 40 heads of organisations from the education and employment sectors.</p> <p>In 2022, 50 heads of organisations from the education and employment sectors.</p>
Joint career trainings by Euroguidance/MCGA	Approx. 250 on a yearly basis	Various training sessions	Practitioners from education and employment
<a href="#">Jobsplus</a>	All unemployed registering jobseekers, asylum seekers, migrants with a protection status and other job changers (including also TCNs)	One-to-one and group sessions, seminars, career tests, mock interviews, training sessions (courses, 12-week exposure schemes, traineeships), job coaching, talks, workshops, career fairs, online job search and matching facilities, provision of information to other professionals working within the field.	Approx. 40 employment advisors

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## Career information, ICT in guidance

In the education sector, the importance of strengthening career guidance services through the use of ICT has been acknowledged since 2007 in the report [Career guidance policy for schools](#) (2007). [The Malta National lifelong learning strategy 2020](#) (2014) also highlights the importance of setting up a portal to organise information on courses of interest to adult learners.

The emphasis on ICT has also resulted in the Government providing a laptop to all career guidance practitioners (guidance teachers and career advisors) with internet facilities at school and college level, and the provision of tablets to all year-4 students (in primary schools) to enhance early ICT skills and learning engagement through ICT-based lessons.

Across the different stages of the education sector, the use of ICT in guidance tends to be restricted to the provision of information about further education. All post-secondary, further education institutions and the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) host their own websites (see section Access to guidance). The latter provides information on the courses they offer as well as application forms, national lifelong learning and Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) strategy documents and other information related to the entity.

The [eSkills Malta Foundation](#) has an important role in sustaining ICT integration in lifelong guidance. It is the National Coalition of Digital Skills and Jobs. It brings together representatives from the [Malta Information Technology Agency](#), the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#), the [Malta Enterprise](#), [Malta Gaming Authority](#), the [Malta Communications Authority](#), the [Malta Chamber](#) and the [Ministry for Economy, European Funds and Lands](#) It was set up by the Government in February 2014. The general aim of the Foundation is the expansion and sustainable growth of basic and advanced (ICT) digital skills in Malta. The Foundation was given by the Government several mandates to implement. These include:

1. advise Government and stakeholders on matters related to eSkills policy;
2. contribute to the expansion of ICT educational programmes and related formative initiatives;
3. lead an ICT professional development programme;
4. instigate further reform in the ICT educational offerings;
5. contribute to capacity-building in the ICT education community.

Indirectly, these developments serve as government investments in ICT to improve and deliver lifelong career guidance services. Career guidance is high on the Government's agenda and [eSkills Malta Foundation](#) facilitates initiatives and events related to digital skills in education, industry, society, and the ICT sector.

Through collaboration with the Ministry for Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation, the eSkills Malta Foundation undertakes ICT career guidance for students and career guidance practitioners. Various sessions are available to career advisors, guidance teachers, and secondary school students (see section Training and qualifications). An ICT career guidance programme is devised annually with MEYR depending on current needs, and advancement in ICT and digital skills. The Foundation also offers ICT career advice to other stakeholders, including but not limited to, the [University of Malta](#), [Malta College of Arts and Technology](#) (MCAST), private schools, [Jobsplus](#), industry and others who are interested. As a policy, due to the continuous changes in digital skills, roles for ICT and related social and digital transformation, the Foundation emphasises that both students and workers should seek regular advice to further their careers.

The [eSkills Malta Foundation](#) contributes to the identification of ICT roles required by the ICT industry and the industries using ICT, as well as the ICT skills, competences and attitudes needed. However, the wider and more proactive use of ICT career advice in the private sector and a wider reach of ICT career advice, perhaps through online interactive tools, is still a challenge.

Within the public employment service, [Jobsplus](#) employment advisors use an IT Interview tool that organises data collected from jobseekers, referred to as profiling, which in recent years has been expanded in order to include different skill sets (determined following consultation with employers) and a new section on competences. Both the skills and competences are taken into consideration for job matching purposes.

The profiling section dedicated to competences allows employment advisors to discuss with jobseekers the competences related directly to certain occupations, past employment experiences, hobbies and qualifications. It also allows them to search for competences by occupation and/or direct keywords in order to add them to a person's profile. In the new section of the profiling system there is a list of nearly 10,000 competences. A number of these have been linked to specific occupations to which they are relevant; the rest are generic and can be applicable to several occupations. Different skills sets include basic skills like literacy, numeracy, IT literacy and money management; work skills, like working under pressure and time management; and personal skills, like written and verbal communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and decision management, working in teams and work ethics.

[Jobsplus](#) launched a new [website](#) in 2016 where jobseekers can register for an account, which is linked to the jobseekers' profile. The user can manage the profile and carry out matches with potential job vacancies. Similarly, employers who have a company profile may use the online matching engine to search for potential employees directly through the website. Other IT tools, such as career tests, are also used. While on 9th April 2020, a new Online Registration System was launched where jobseekers interested in registering with Jobsplus submit a request to be included in one of Jobsplus Registers.

In the last quarter of 2016, the 'fingerprint registration system' was deactivated and a new system launched. Although face-to-face meetings between employment advisors and jobseekers are mandatory, follow-ups are no longer limited to face-to-face interactions. Instead, a series of blended services have been adopted; for instance, in the case of IT literate job seekers, e-follow-ups can take place through ICT channels such as e-mail, telephone calls, and online job application monitoring. Personalised action plan agreements between employment advisors and jobseekers have also been formalised and updated.

Jobsplus recognises that technology is a key driver of the structural changes which affect working and social life. This is especially so for digitalisation, which, together with globalisation and demographic change, is expected to affect all workers in one way or another. To this effect, more focus both at EU and national levels are given to ICT. ICT is generating new business opportunities and many occupations are changing their content and skills requirements.

At national level, the Jobseekers Advisory Unit within Jobsplus works closely with schools by offering services and information sessions to students prior to finishing compulsory education. Jobsplus also offers a number of ICT-related courses for individuals who want to acquire or upgrade their digital skills. Since Jobsplus' rebranding in 2016, more importance was placed on ICT. The branding strategy aimed to position Jobsplus as an innovative and dynamic organisation that excels in meeting the labour market needs of employers, jobseekers, and employees. The launching of Jobsplus' revamped website

[Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta](#)

offers an array of services. As Jobsplus is committed to provide labour market information, including legislative frameworks, guidelines, research publications, statistical data and policy documents, a dedicated section entitled 'resources' was included in the website.

The Jobseekers section of the website offers information regarding guidance services, schemes, training opportunities and vacancies which are part of the Jobsplus commitment to offer guidance to both jobseekers and individuals who are in employment but seeking alternative or additional opportunities. Jobsplus also offers advice on matching candidates with job openings, provides information and opportunities for upskilling their workforce and employment subsidies. This information is available under the employers' section. Jobsplus allows for individuals to report abuses related to irregular employment by the place of work anonymously through its website. The DIER, on the other hand, are responsible for abuse issues related to regular employment. To meet today's technological demands and to facilitate the matching process, the Jobsplus website includes a job matching system for those who register through the website. With such registration, the user will have access to the online job vacancy matching system and will be able to access her or his profile dashboard, CV builder and matched vacancies.

Within compulsory education, the [National Schools Support Services \(NSSS\)](#) hosts the [Explore More](#) project, an ICT-based web portal, converting all the information related to career and post-secondary education into an online system. All the information needed for students to decide on what career path they will choose is available online. This information is accessible to students, parents/guardians and teachers alike. The information is presented in an interactive way so that students are not only informed, but they can also interact with material presented in form of an online game. Students are engaged and enabled through the information given to them. The web portal also includes interactive information and includes a series of A day in the life of; this is a short video with a typical day of different professionals such as doctors, nurses, youth workers, engineers, architects, website designers, gaming and electricians, with first-hand testimony from the people who work in the relevant industry. An aptitude test is also available to students choosing their career path. The [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) will continue funding and sustaining this web portal to ensure that information on the webportal is up-to-date. New career profiles, new videos and other additional information such as a section for parents are added every year. All data is updated to reflect changes in entry requirements for post-secondary and tertiary education.

Colleges also host their websites and Facebook pages. Generally, all schools within the colleges host a section on career guidance, but the main function is that of providing information on the type of services offered by the school concerned. Basic contact with students and parents through emails is also evidenced.

Strengthening the ICT sector in guidance promotes stronger links with employers. Providing students with an ICT career exposure experience week (additional information can be found [here](#)), helps to give students real-world knowledge of how the ICT sector works. This initiative allows students aged between 14 and 15, to offer them a taste of what it would be like to be part of the ICT sector and help transform Malta's Digital Economy. The ICT Career Exposure Week is an important career activity provided by the National School Support Services (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DS) in collaboration with the [eSkills Malta Foundation](#). Career orientation visits are also available to 13-year-old students.

The [Euroguidance Malta](#) website administered by the [National School Support Services](#) also provides users with digital information on career related issues. The website provides information on lifelong career guidance and international mobility opportunities across Europe. There is also access to educational and training opportunities available in Malta and abroad. The latest reports from international organisations such as NICEC, Cedefop, and others are uploaded. In this way the local career guidance community are kept up-to-date with developments in the sector. The aim is to develop the website further to include a Members' Section where career guidance practitioners can support each other in their work.

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## Training and qualifications

An emphasis on training and keeping up to date with labour market information and developments in the career guidance sector, is a requirement for all practitioners working within the career guidance field.

Career guidance within education is carried out by two streams of practitioners: the career advisors (work full time on career guidance matters on a State College basis at both primary and secondary level, supporting students, school staff and parents/guardians at both levels thus ensuring better continuity in the educational and career development of students. They are expected to operate in a multi-disciplinary team framework), along with career guidance teachers qualified teachers but hold a Level 7 Qualification in Career Guidance and work specifically on career guidance matters. They do not teach a subject. The latter are situated at NSSS and co-ordinate centrally organised career orientation visits and talks. They also support one or two colleges with career guidance matters.) and guidance teachers (qualified teachers and who besides their guidance work, are subject also teach a subject teachers too. They also carry out personal and career guidance interventions. Hence their timetable is divided between teaching a subject and guidance work). The former group consists of a 3-tiered structure of career advisors, namely the Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (PESPs), Senior Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (SESPs), although currently the latter posts are vacant, who also require an MQF level 7 Post-Graduate Diploma qualification and Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) (ESPs) who require an MQF level 6 qualification in a social science related subject, including but not limited to Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Youth Work and Social Policy. Career advisors are responsible for the coordination of career guidance within individual colleges.

The work of career advisors is complemented by that of guidance teachers and career guidance teachers. The former, who are qualified teachers and who besides their guidance work, they are subject teachers too. They also carry out personal and career guidance interventions. The Career Guidance Teachers on the other hand hold a Level 7 Qualification in Career Guidance and work specifically on career guidance matters and do not teach a subject. EO (Education Officers), who require an MQF Level 7 Master qualification in lifelong career guidance (or a comparable qualification) are responsible for the overall management of the career guidance service within the state education sector. Evaluation meetings are organised with guidance teachers, career guidance teachers and career advisors in order to assess performance and establish areas of improvement. Quality standards at college level (MQF 3) are also monitored by the Education Officers (Career Guidance). These standards are the result of collective agreements drawn up by the representing union and the Ministry for Education and Employment (2015, 2017).

For [Jobsplus](#), an employment advisor must possess an MQF level 6 qualification in a social science related subject such as Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Geography, Management and Social Work. Newly recruited employment advisors are then required to undergo an extensive induction programme (Euroguidance, 2018).

[Jobsplus](#) provides mandatory specialised training to its staff, including continuous training in ICT and LMI themes. The competences required by employment advisors at Malta's PES have changed over the years with developments in ICT, as well as having to adapt to the needs of specific groups such as migrants and refugees, long-term unemployed and people with disabilities, requiring continuous training for employment advisors and guidance practitioners.

The in-service training of career guidance practitioners within compulsory state schools is regulated by the [National School Support Services](#). It organises training in collaboration with national entities in hospitality/tourism, health, education, ICT, science and health care, engineering, agribusiness, and transport. Career guidance practitioners within the state education sector are required to attend a number of training events during each scholastic year (Euroguidance, 2018).

Career guidance practitioners are also encouraged to become members of the [Malta Career Guidance Association \(MCGA\)](#). Each year it organises training events for its members and, in collaboration with [Euroguidance Centre](#) ([see section Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#)), it organises the Euroguidance National Conference, various publications and other training events. Career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors attend these training events. MCGA is working towards the professionalisation of career guidance in the country and works in collaboration with other national entities to strengthen the competences of the career guidance practitioners.

The role of [Euroguidance Malta](#) is important in assisting collaboration with national entities to strengthen the competences of guidance practitioners, such as informing them about European initiatives in LLG and supporting international mobility for career practitioners. Euroguidance Malta keeps up-to-date with European initiatives in guidance through contact with the EU Commission, Cedefop and other international organisations, so it can inform career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors of such developments. It also funds and organises continuous professional development initiatives to strengthen the competences of career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors.

A three-year part-time evening [Master in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development MA](#) is organised by the [University of Malta](#). Participants should have a first cycle degree with at least Category II in an area of study deemed relevant by the Board of Studies. The admission process includes an interview and the initial screening of the previous studies and professional experience. The curriculum includes the following modules:

- sociology of work;
- skills in vocational guidance and counselling for career guidance practitioners
- research methods and design;
- placement in career guidance settings;
- labour market;
- guidance theories, models and strategies;
- career guidance practice;
- professional development;
- service provision for different client groups;
- career guidance tools;
- career guidance management;
- career development and lifelong learning;
- career information systems;
- the workplace;
- applied quantitative techniques for career guidance;
- applied qualitative techniques for career guidance;
- dissertation

The course is currently being offered mainly online. A distinctive feature of the course is that both school-based career guidance practitioners and those working in the public/private employment service are trained together.

Entrepreneurship-focused training and events for school guidance teachers and career guidance practitioners have been developed with entities such as the [JAYE Young Enterprise \(Malta\) Foundation](#) and the [Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking, University of Malta](#).

During 2017-18 and 2018-19 the [Institute for Education](#), through Euroguidance funds, organised an MQF level 7 (3 ECTS) in understanding of career guidance and development. This course aimed to instil knowledge, skills and competences in educators who wish to become more professionally involved in career guidance. The course is offered by the Institute on a demand basis. In 2023 this course was once again offered to 23 practitioners coming from the education sector.

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## Career guidance for school pupils

Aiming to diminish the early school leaving rate, the [National School Support Services](#) within the Directorate for Educational Services implements career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students. The aim is to provide students with access to career information, to develop career management skills and to facilitate the school transition and the transition between school and the labour market.

A 2014 policy shift (see section Access to guidance) involving the updating of the subject [Personal, Social and Career Development \(PSCD\)](#), resulted in the inclusion of career development in compulsory-level schools (up to age 16). Career management skills are subject-based and integrated into the curriculum, which is the result of the implementation of the [Career guidance policy for schools](#) (2007).

All students are entitled to individual and group guidance, career orientation visits, one-week career exposure experiences at the place of work (additional information can be found [here](#)), career fairs and talks, career portfolio/profiling exercises, and programmes for choosing subject options. Students are entitled to transition exercises from kindergarten to year 1; year 6 to year 7, year 8 to year 9 and year 11 to post-secondary education and/or work. During all initiatives and/or transition phases, parents/guardians are involved in the process. Scheduled career-related topics in student timetables per year in the subject Personal, Social and Career Development are: 9 hours during the primary years (year 3 to year 6) and 32 hours in the secondary years (year 7 to 11) including 'senior secondary' and lower secondary education, which are divided as shown in table 2:

**Table 2. Hours per year at school (3-11) dedicated to career-related topics**

Year	Number of hours
3	2
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	6
8	6
9	5
10	6
11	9

The [Personal, Social and Career Development \(PSCD\)](#) subject complements career guidance provision and aims to improve the emotional, communication, and social skills of students. The module career planning and exploration introduces various topics: planning for life after school,

dealing with change, transitions, the rights and duties of workers, and different pathways beyond school and which relate to their interests, possible training needs and their skills and abilities.

During Primary school years, young learners do have the opportunity to start becoming acquainted to various sectors and the respective jobs/careers within the respective fields through national initiatives, such as, the competition 'X'Nixtieq Insir la Nikber' for Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils, the various outings and visits which take place over the scholastic year to various settings, through educational campaigns by entities in collaboration with NSSS, such as the 'Catch them Young workshops' by Esplora and the 'Nursing Now Campaign' in collaboration with the Ministry for Health and also through other public awareness promotions, such as, the [Heritage passport](#), [ICT workshops](#) to start acquiring digital skills at a young age, Robotics, etc.

One-to-one sessions engage students in discussing their future career choices and their O-level/SEC results. Other activities include career orientation visits to different workplaces where students are all given the opportunity according to their subject options and their interest, career talks by employer representatives and post-secondary institutions, as well as CV writing and sessions on interview skills.

Career portfolio exercises generally start from senior schooling (year 9) and continue through the school years. They are supported by a career guidance practitioner. The aim of this initiative is to encourage students to reflect on their skills, what they want to do in the future, and how they can achieve this from an early age, as students may find it challenging to make a connection between the career learning they are exposed to and the knowledge they are building about themselves, their abilities, and interests. In year 11 students participate in an individual session designed to assist with the development of a career plan. There are option choice exercises where students are helped to choose their subject options for years 9 and post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education fairs are organised at college level and also on a national level, while other tailor-made programmes are organised by individual colleges taking student needs into account. Church and independent schools also provide career guidance to school students through one-to-one and group guidance sessions, talks, and information sessions on post-secondary courses in order to help in the transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

CEEs (career exposure experience, additional information can be found [here](#)) within the financial, health, tourism, engineering, beauty and hairdressing, architecture, law and IT sectors/industries and others consist of a job-shadowing experience for year 10 students. The development of CEE is the result of collaboration between schools, organisations, and the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS); it aims to increase student awareness of career pathways, to explore different careers, to increase their study motivation and to develop their career management skills. Students learn how to write a CV, a letter of motivation, a job application and how to participate effectively during job interviews. CEEs help to reinforce the learning of transversal and entrepreneurial skills, and to reduce the distance between the educational environment and the workplace.

[National School Support Services](#) (NSSS) has worked on establishing the guiding principles and a regulatory framework for the one-week career exposure experience. It provides a logistical framework for all secondary schools in Malta and Gozo intending to organise career exposure experiences, particularly to year 10 students. Guidelines on the procedures of the career exposure experience are available. These guidelines further strengthen the teaching of career management skills (CMS) by ensuring that schools follow the correct standards, aims and objectives of this experience.

A secondary-school reform implemented in 2019, [My Journey](#), aims to increase the teaching of vocational and applied subjects. It strengthens the integration of CMS teaching within the curriculum while increasing links with the labour market through work-based learning.

MEYR is committed to creating awareness on the importance of continuing education in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Apart from one to one career guidance sessions with students in Secondary schools with those who would like to pursue a career in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) sectors, other initiatives are held to expose students to STEM/STEAM careers to students while still attending compulsory schooling. Two main initiatives which students participate in are the Career Orientation Visits (COVs) and the Career Exposure Experience (CEE). The former is a 3-hour visit to entities which operate within STEM/STEAM sectors, while the latter is a 5-day shadowing experience at a place of work whereby the Yr 10 student (15 years of age) shadows an employee who occupies the role which the student is aspiring for, such as, pharmacist, programmer, technicians, engineers, conservators/restorers, etc. Every year, thousands of students benefit from these opportunities. Five main stakeholders who host students for these initiatives are Esplora, eskills Foundation, Chamber of Engineers, Mater Dei Hospital and Heritage Malta.

The [Science Centre](#), within the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (MEYR) also organises ongoing campaigns to promote the uptake of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects by middle and secondary school students in Malta. One such activity, called [Teen Science Café](#) involves bringing 12-year-olds closer to professionals who have chosen to take up a STEM-related career successfully. STEM representatives meet students in small groups (around 12) of students, for 15-minute sessions allowing students to move from one professional to the next during the time allocated for the event. During the session, professionals from different organisations share personal/professional experiences to encourage students follow a similar professional path.

Other representatives from STEM/STEAM sectors also have the opportunity to meet students and provide information to them about the career opportunities and emerging trends within their respective sectors. This is done through national fairs held annually for students, particularly the [I Choose](#) fair for Year 11s and post-secondary students and the [My Journey](#) fair for Year 8 students before they choose the [2 Option subjects](#) to be studied from year 9 – Year 11. (insert link re I choose fair & link of the handbook if we don't have photos from the fair held in January 2019?)

Although a major component of career guidance initiatives focus on secondary school students, pupils attending Primary schools are not excluded from having career guidance initiatives held purposely for them to attract them to STEM/STEAM careers from a young age. These young learners have the opportunity to start becoming acquainted to various STEM/STEAM sectors through national initiatives, such as, the competition 'X'Nixtieq Insir la Nikber' / 'What do you want to become when you grow up' for Yrs 4, 5 and 6 pupils, the various outings and on-site visits which take place over the scholastic year, through educational campaigns by entities in collaboration with NSSS, such as the Catch them Young workshops by Esplora, the Tiny Teen Science Café and the Nursing campaign in collaboration with the [Ministry for Health](#) and also through other public awareness promotions, such as, the [Heritage passport](#) and [ICT workshops](#) to start acquiring digital skills at a young age, Robotics, etc.

The Ministry for Education and Sport has published a handbook to help students choose their 2 option subjects at Year 8. This handbook can be found on an interactive website (Explore More – refer to P2 Access to Guidance) explaining subject choices (the latter handbook first published in 2021 and then in 2022); "[Option Subjects 2022-2023 A handbook](#) for Year 8 students." Which links the subject to the eventual job (and student goals) and stresses that this is the children's choice. "Keeping in mind that you will be studying these subjects for the coming three (3) years, it is of utmost importance that you take this decision seriously. This should not worry you, because you will find the necessary support in order to help you make this decision both at school and also within your college. Career advisors, guidance teachers and subject teachers, amongst others, will be preparing a specific choice of subjects' programme to help you make an informed choice. This means that you need to gather as much information as possible before making the final decision about your two (2) option subjects." (Ministry for Education and Sport, 2022).

The [Alternative Learning Programme](#) (ALP) aims to prevent school drop-out among students from the final year of compulsory school who clearly demonstrate that they will not attain the desired qualifications and who are at high risk of becoming early leavers from education and training. The programme includes theoretical and practical activities and aims to enhance students' soft skills through career seminars, workshops, workplace visits and training.

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access the ALP. The programme is focused on developing language and digital skills and increasing the access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by career guidance practitioners who guide students in relation to programme's choice and prepare them for transition to the new school. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. A centre in Paola (2019) consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality, and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. In 2016/17, the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+), which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017). As from 2021, through an agreement with MCAST, ALP+ programme was discontinued and students are helped to directly transition to one of the courses offered by the institution.

[Jobsplus](#) (Maltese PES) is also working closely with the [National School Support Services](#) within the Directorate for Educational Services by providing training to career guidance personnel and guidance teachers in public schools and updating them on the latest labour market trends and Jobsplus services. Jobsplus increased its school-to-work interventions in many education settings, mainly secondary and post-secondary schools, further supporting the preparation of students for further education and/or work.

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## Guidance for VET participants

The Directorate for Educational Services provides career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students, including VET participants. The aim of guidance is to provide access to career information, to develop career management skills and to ease the school transition and the transition between school and the labour market. This programme includes job shadowing activities and the [Alternative Learning Programme](#) (see [Guidance for school pupils](#)).

As explained in the dedicated section (see section [Training and qualifications](#)), career guidance in state schools is offered by the Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), Career Guidance Teachers and Guidance Teachers. The service covers curricular, vocational and career guidance for students and their parents/guardians. It is provided particularly (but not only) during transition periods when students choose their option subjects at year 8 and also at year 11. These practitioners work in close collaboration with VET institutions to guide students on opportunities for further studies and employment in the different vocational sectors. Students also participate in career fairs and information activities organised by VET institutions.

The career guidance programme related to IVET (initial vocational education and training) includes:

1. job shadowing ('career exposure experiences', additional information can be found [here](#)) for 14-year-olds who take part in one-week transition programmes involving observational experience in industry (including tourism, ICT, health, engineering, arts, finance);
2. career orientation workplace visits;
3. orientation visits to VET Institutions;
4. talks by employees who inform students on options related to vocational routes;
5. career and post-secondary institution fairs.

Post-secondary institutions have no formal strategy for the teaching of career management skills; however, all institutions organise career related initiatives such as career fairs, information talks by employers and representatives from further and higher education institutions, opportunities for one-to-one and group career guidance sessions, CV writing and interview skills sessions, career visits and/or placements. Within VET institutions at this level, the development of CMS is embedded in diverse course modules (see section [Career management skills](#)).

Career-related learning is also provided through the subject [Personal, Social and Career Development](#) (PSCD). Since 2014, career education has become more important. PSCD 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. The PSCD strand on career exploration and management aims at helping learners manage their learning and career paths beyond school (Cedefop, 2017).

Non-state schools also provide career guidance to their students at different points of transition.

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access the [Alternative learning programme](#) (ALP) focused on developing language and digital skills, and increasing access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by the career guidance practitioners who guide students in choosing the best programme for them and prepare them for the transition to the new school. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. The ALP centre in Paola (2019) consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality, and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers and a career guidance teacher who supports the school provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. In 2016/17, the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+), which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017). As from 2021, through an agreement with MCAST, ALP+ programme was discontinued and students are helped to directly transition to one of the courses offered by the institution.

In relation to VET providers, career guidance is provided by the Students' Services Departments at the [Malta College of Art, Science and Technology](#), the [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) (ITS) and the [Youth.Inc](#) to students and prospective students include one-to-one guidance sessions to support the latter in choosing the right course and the appropriate career path. Students are also given support in their work-placements and during their studies. This service is offered free of charge on both an individual and/or group basis to both current and prospective students. These VET institutes offer orientation visits on campus to all secondary and post-secondary schools. The visit includes a talk, campus tour and, in the case of ITS, lunch is offered at one of the ITS' training restaurants. The ITS lunch is optional, therefore secondary, and post-secondary schools can decide on whether they would like to book a table and cover the relevant costs at one of their training restaurants. In view of support given to students in their work placements and during their studies, the role falls under that of the Counsellor (who focuses on personal issues) and the Student Support Officer (who focuses on curricular and education concerns) and not the career guidance officer. The Career Guidance Officer takes care of career related queries, CV writing and Interview skills along with providing information talks and attending career fairs. Furthermore, ITS also offers the option of carrying out one to one or group meetings virtually. ITS also offers transitional meetings to prospective students who are interested in applying to the Institute and require additional support during their studies. Meetings are held beforehand with the student and their parent/guardian to prepare for the smoothest transition.

[Jobsplus](#) guidance services (PES, Malta) 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 (2016), Jobsplus has placed more emphasis on career guidance and individualised its services through jobseeker profiling, career advice, the development of individual action plans and training services. Support for individuals 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 path (Cedefop, 2017). Within institutions offering lifelong learning opportunities, it is most often the institution offering the VET course which provides information and support to interested individuals (see sections [Guidance for the employed](#) and [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)).

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## Guidance for higher education students

The [University of Malta](#) supports young people and adults in the transition to employment and helps them to develop the skills to manage their career development over time. There is, however, no specific policy in place for career guidance or career management skills (CMS).

Students are helped to develop their career management skills through participating in different activities and initiatives:

1. students can take part in extracurricular programmes which are awarded credit such as the Degree+ programme which provides students with opportunities to become aware of the importance of mastering a number of soft skills;
2. the development of CMS is embedded in some of the modules taught in the different courses on offer;
3. the Student Advisory Services provides prospective and current students at the [University of Malta](#) with the necessary information and advice in order to make informed career choices;
4. students have opportunities to participate in work placements and internships ;
5. opportunities for direct contact with employers during career fairs, talks, seminars, etc. organised by the different faculties.

Various scholarship schemes are available for higher education students:

The [Get Qualified](#) scheme (2017-2023) is an initiative that supports the personal development of individuals to achieve qualifications and certifications required by industry. The incentive is applicable to individuals following a course of studies leading to a certification, diploma, degree or post-graduate degree courses. Upon successful completion the student will benefit from a tax credit enabling them to recover part of the costs incurred. Students following courses approved by the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) are granted tax credits on the following costs: fees paid by the individual to the university, institution or other entity recognised by the Ministry of Education and Employment for training and educational services leading to the approved qualification and fees for sitting examinations required to achieve the approved qualification ([Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#), n.d.).

The [ENDEAVOUR II Scholarship Scheme](#) aims to support good quality tertiary education and to ensure that the Maltese labour market is supplied with the right individuals and to guarantee that it is in a better position to compete at an international level. The scheme aims to support those pursuing this path to succeed both at the level of education attainment as well as contributing effectively towards the economy.

Key Objectives of the ENDEAVOUR scholarship scheme are to:

1. assist people to pursue further levels of academic research;
2. improve the quality and relevance of the education system;
3. reduce skills mismatches, particularly within the priority economic sectors;
4. support further research in science and technology;
5. increase the capacity and level of research, innovation and development activity in Malta (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.).

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## Guidance for adult learners

The [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 - 2030](#) (2021) is the framework which supports the development of career guidance activities for adult learners (refer to Pillar IV, p.24). It states that people must be provided with the information and guidance they need to make effective learning decisions and transitions. The Strategy aims to provide training to personnel who provide pastoral career and career guidance to current or prospective learners at the Lifelong Learning Unit. The strategy also aims to develop a marketing and outreach plan to steer outreach and promote guidance with stakeholders, learners and educators and establish an independent guidance unit, together with stakeholders, aimed at supporting adults about educational opportunities in a learner-centred, neutral manner. The [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation is the main government entity providing adult learning courses in Malta.

The [Employment and Training Services Act](#) (2019) is the legal framework which supports the development of career guidance activities for adults. Jobsplus, Malta's public employment service (PES) seeks 'to assist persons seeking employment by guidance and advice on the choice of employment and retraining (p. 8).

State and private post-secondary and tertiary institutions also provide career guidance to adult learners. The provision and practice of career guidance for adult learners is generally regulated by in-house policies. The latter is generally focused on educational guidance relating to courses which the institution offers.

The [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) within the Ministry of Education and Employment organises over 400 courses in around 70 subjects, including literacy and basic skills courses. During the intake period, the directorate provides guidance services aimed at assisting prospective learners. Courses are offered both in person and online, together with learn at-your-own-pace lessons and blended learning opportunities. As from 2022 there will be no examinations for courses that are not SEC or MATSEC, but these will be replaced by regular assessments. When it comes to adult learning, Malta is three percentage points above the EU average ([Eurostat, 2023](#)). Applications are accessed on: <http://www.lifelonglearning.gov.mt>

[Jobsplus](#) offers retraining for the unemployed and economically inactive (not searching for work) and employed. It provides career guidance to clients through the Job Seeker Advisory Services Unit. Employment advisors use an IT Interview tool referred to as profiling when they meet jobseekers. In recent years there has been a change in the data collected as part of the jobseeker's profile. The content was expanded in order to include different skill sets (these were determined following consultation with employers) and a new section on competences. Both the skills and competences are taken into consideration for job matching purposes.

The profiling section dedicated to competences allows employment advisors to discuss with jobseekers, competences related directly to certain occupations. It also allows them to search for competences by occupation and/or direct keywords in order to add the relevant ones to a person's profile. In the new section of the profiling system there is an extensive list of thousands of competences. Several of these have been directly linked to specific occupations to which they are relevant; the rest are generic competences which can be applicable to several occupations.

Different skills sets include basic skills (literacy, numeracy, IT literacy and money management), work skills (working under pressure and time management), and personal skills (written and verbal communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving and decision management skills, working in teams and work ethics).

A personalised action plan agreement is signed by the jobseeker and his/her employment advisor. This agreement explains what happens once someone begins an action plan, and also highlights the obligations of the jobseeker (including quotas they have to reach within stipulated timeframes) and what they can expect from the employment advisor.

An adult jobseeker may also be referred to training opportunities which may include short courses, traineeships, or work exposure.

Apart from offering guidance to registered unemployed jobseekers, [Jobsplus](#) has expanded its guidance services to those changing jobs and any other adults of working age who are interested in making use of this service (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, young people at risk, immigrants](#)).

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## Guidance for the employed

[Jobsplus'](#) (Malta public employment service) strategic plan (2016-18) includes several objectives and measures, to improve services for jobseekers/job-changers (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, young people at risk, immigrants](#)). A key challenge for Jobsplus, according to the service, is to assist people in their transitions: from education to employment, from unemployment to employment, from inactivity to employment, and from one employment to another. These measures listed in the plan include the following:

1. Measure 3.1: undertake legal amendments to create one register for jobseekers instead of the current Parts 1 and 2;
2. Measure 3.2: registration will immediately trigger referral to an employment opportunity or activation measure;
3. Measure 3.3: reach out to those seeking employment but not being registered unemployed and with youth NEETs;
4. Measure 3.4: launch the online competence-based job matching system on the website;
5. Measure 3.5: activate all registered young people within the framework of the Youth guarantee;
6. Measure 3.6: activate the long-term unemployed within the framework of the Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market through the Work programme initiative;
7. Measure 3.7: develop job profiles and respective competences to facilitate career advice and progression; and
8. Measure 3.8: propose new and innovative employment initiatives/schemes.

Jobsplus coordinates the employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals. The career services provided include job matching, job placements, access to quality information on the labour market, and career advice.

In 2017, Jobsplus formalised and expanded services offered to employed jobseekers interested in seeking alternative employment (support for job changers). A number of Employment advisors (EAs) (see Training and qualifications section) have been reassigned to reach out to those who were registering for an alternative job opportunity and provide assistance. The service includes updating of the jobseekers' profile through the checking of personal details, licences/warrants, updating employment records, inputting of new qualifications, and updating others already in the system, listing job preferences and skills and competences. The Employment advisor also recommends the use of the Jobsplus website with clients. This aims to help promote self-efficacy and induce career self-management. It includes assisting clients in registering as website users and making use of the online facilities. Advisors must also inform clients on the use of online resources and tools featuring in the Jobsplus web profile. These follow-ups are done using different communications channels/modes: face-to-face, video conferencing, by email and/or telephone. In addition to carrying out the necessary checking for required documents and vetting of profiles, the EA also offers the client the possibility to setup a one-on-one meeting by appointment. If the client is unable to do so due to work commitments, then the EA can provide guidance and follow-up with the client electronically and advise on a number of topics and facilitate activities: labour market needs and requirements and relevant training, help the client apply to any vacancies available, assist in writing a covering letter and CV, undergo a career test or mock interview and any other interventions deemed necessary by the EA to aid smooth transition into an alternative career or employment. Although in 2021, a Jobseeker Services Division has been set up within Jobsplus, the services mentioned continued to be provided.

#### *National Employment Policy (2021-2030)*

The aim of the [National employment policy](#) is to bring to light frictions that impede the labour market from functioning to its full potential. Such frictions have negative repercussions on the rate of growth of an economy. However, the economic perspective is only one part of the equation (*ibid.*, p.10), as social aspects of employment are also considered. The policy document also addresses labour market participation of people with disability. According to the policy, measures including cooperatives, 'supported employment' and sheltered employment, where needed, aim to provide a safe environment where persons with disability can contribute to society at large including the labour market.

The VASTE Programme which is a €13 million project part financed by the European Social Fund under Operational Programme II (2014 - 2020) being implemented by the Jobseeker Services Division in partnership with the Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF) brings vulnerable persons closer to the labour market through training and job exposures opportunities, which could lead to employment in the open market or self-employment. The project is built around the needs of the vulnerable audience, including persons with disability, former inmates, former substance abusers and other socially challenged individuals.

#### *The Gender Equality Action Plan (2007)*

The [Gender Equality Action Plan](#) provides a detailed outline of strategic gender equality objectives that have been identified as necessary in meeting both broad and distinctive obligations. The document sets out the [Jobsplus](#) revised gender equality scheme for 2009-10 and also includes an update on progress made over the past two years since the last Gender equality action plan was published in 2007. Progress has been made in a number of valid areas over recent years. As a result of this positive feedback, according to [Jobsplus](#), the service continues to engage its clients, staff, and stakeholders in all the phases of development of the action plan.

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

Jobsplus offers specific guidance services through its employment advisors to those who are unemployed and registering as such. Registering as unemployed brings with it a number of obligations, since jobseekers can be eligible for unemployment assistance. In order to reach those who are reluctant to register, Jobsplus also offers ad hoc guidance services to unemployed adults who, for one reason or another, prefer not to be registered as unemployed (see sections on Jobsplus in Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, young people at risk, immigrants).

A related scheme is in place for unemployed adults:

### *Training Pays Scheme*

As part of the guidance process some clients may be identified as participants of The [Training Pays Scheme](#) and they are guided accordingly. The [Training Pays Scheme](#), forms part of the ESF.01.001 Training for Employment project and aims to assist individuals to develop and/or improve their skills by participating in further off-the-job education and training. The scheme offers financial assistance in the form of a training grant to help participants with costs relating to training. This grant is awarded to the individual (trainee) after successful completion of their training. The scheme is open to applicants of working age population 15 (subject that they have completed compulsory schooling) to 64 years as per applicable law (Jobsplus, n.d.). The target of the scheme is to increase the number of adults participating in lifelong learning. Individuals participating in the scheme will be refunded 75 per cent of the direct training cost (excluding VAT) up to a maximum of €1,000 for courses leading up to MQF level 4 and €3,000 for courses leading to MQF level 5, Awards at MQF levels 6 and 7 and non-accredited but industry recognized courses related to Aviation, Maritime and ICT sectors. To be eligible for funding the course must not be offered by Jobsplus and it must be included on the scheme's catalogue which is available on Jobsplus' website. The training programme followed needs to be pegged between MQF Level 1 to 5. The training provider needs to be accredited and licensed by the [Malta Further and Higher Education Authority \(MFHEA\)](#) or an equivalent body in the case of non-accredited courses related to Aviation, Maritime and ICT. In the case of those aged between 16 and 24, they must not be participating under the Youth guarantee NEET activation scheme II 9 (See [Career guidance for NEET](#)).

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## Guidance for early leavers

The [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation \(MEYR\)](#) has joint responsibility for studies related to monitoring of early school leavers. The first national policy for ELET (early school leaving from education and training) was published in 2015. This policy provided strategic measures aimed to be completed by 2020. Since 2018, research through SRSS EU funds has been carried out to evaluate this policy and develop the 2nd policy on ELET, ([Early Leaving from Education and Training](#)) – The way forward 2020 – 2030 available on the website of the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#). Although Malta's ELET rate is still considered high compared to its EU counterparts as it is still above 10%, Malta has been one of the few countries that have decreased the rate by more than 5% during the last years and has consistently been registering a decrease during the last 10 years (p. 4). The 2nd policy on ELET, has been planned through research recommendations and EU guidelines based on the three pillars: prevention, intervention, and compensation. There are five strategic measures within each pillar. 'Early Leaving from Education and Training – ELET – The way forward 2020-2030' has been developed through a number of national consultations. Since its formation, the Early School Leaving Unit (ESLU) has always worked with relevant stakeholders within and outside MEYR in order to solidify a comprehensive framework for the collection of data related to ELET as to extend pertinent policy making and implementation. The unit carries out continuous monitoring of strategies, policies, and programmes with particular emphasis on education provision for children and youth at risk while analysing their performance based on empirical evidence.

The [Directorate for Learning Assessment Programmes](#) embarked on a large number of initiatives targeted at 'gifted and talented' students in primary and secondary education, in order to enrich their educational experience, to promote STEM subjects and careers among this cohort of students, and to prevent disengagement from school.

With the [My journey](#) education reform, from the school year 2015/16, Maltese secondary schools have been offering the following vocational subjects in year 9: Agribusiness, Engineering Technology, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Information Technology, Hairdressing and Beauty, Retail, Fashion and Textiles and Media Literacy - through applied and vocational routes (See sections [Guidance for NEET](#) and [Guidance for young people at risk](#)).

The [National School Support Services](#), through the recruitment of psychosocial professionals, including practitioners qualified in career guidance, ensures that vulnerable students in state schools receive multi-professional and timely support.

The [Foundation for Social Welfare Services](#) operates the [Youth in Focus](#) programme and the Adolescent day programme in order to assist vulnerable adolescents in reaching their potential through a personalised social work approach.

In line with the implementation of the [National Youth Policy 2015-20](#), [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) (Youth Agency) works to enhance the personal and social interests of young people. Training and support for young people is provided in several youth cafes and youth hubs through various projects that aim to reinforce their skills and competences.

Students with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties follow specific programmes in nurture classes set up in state primary schools and learning zones in secondary schools. Learning support centres offer intensive programmes to SEBD (social, emotional, behavioural difficulties) students outside the school premises.

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access an [Alternative Learning Programme \(ALP\)](#) focused on developing language and digital skills and increasing the access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by career guidance practitioners who help in choice of programme and prepare students for the transition to the new school. The programme is aimed at students who are reaching the end of compulsory schooling but who clearly demonstrate that they will not attain the desired qualifications and who are at high risk of becoming early school leavers. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. A centre in Paola consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or part-time in other lifelong learning institutions. In 2016/17, the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+), which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017). As from 2021, through an agreement with MCAST, ALP+ programme was discontinued and students are helped to directly transition to one of the courses offered by the institution.

As well as the ALP programme, resource centres aimed at students at risk of dropping out prematurely, many middle and secondary schools have been developing in-house programmes for students with difficulties in following mainstream educational pathways.

The [Prince's Trust International \(PTI\) Achieve](#), which has been introduced in schools in Malta, has been successful in helping young people re-engage by developing a sense of achievement. PTI (Achieve) works towards the MQF level 3 qualification in personal development and employability skills. The curriculum has been designed to complement existing academic programmes and helps to promote whole school learning.

Within post-secondary institutions a number of programmes are offered to students who would have left compulsory schooling without the necessary qualifications. The [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) offers a foundation programme in hospitality and tourism for students intending to follow further

[Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta](#)

education and training in the hospitality sector. It is important to highlight the point that in order to enrol in the Foundation programme, one would need to attach their school leaving certificate or by successfully completing the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP). For students who leave compulsory school without formal qualifications but who would like to have another opportunity to take up an academic route, [Guze' Ellul Mercer 16+](#) was set up in September 2015 (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014e). Its curriculum, composed of a limited number of academic subjects, prepares students to resit the SEC exams. The [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) also offers programmes at MQF level 1.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh Youth.Inc](#) programme of the Youth Agency is a full-time youth work-based learning experience aimed specifically at young people who have completed compulsory education without the basic qualification. The Foundation for Social Welfare Services runs the [Embark for Life](#) programme for vulnerable young people, aiming to help them in re-engaging with education and in preparing themselves for employment.

The adult education centres within the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Innovation offer part-time courses that range from MQF1 to MQF4 for young people and adults, both in morning and in the evening classes.

[Jobsplus](#) works hand-in-hand with the educational career guidance team to carry out interventions with potential early school leavers. Such interventions are generally ad hoc. Jobsplus also organises career guidance activities for young people registered as unemployed (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed](#), [unemployed adults](#), [NEET](#), [young people at risk](#), immigrants).

See sections [Career guidance for school pupils](#) and [Career management skills](#).

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## Guidance for NEET

The [National youth employment strategy](#) aims to serve as a holistic framework for the successful integration of young people into employment through the provision of adequate support and help with education attainment. It falls under the responsibility of the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#).

The Strategy's objectives are:

1. reducing absenteeism in compulsory education;
2. increasing the participation rate of young people in further and higher education;
3. increasing the participation rate in lifelong learning; reducing the early-school-leavers rate;
4. increasing educational attainment at different levels of the education system;
5. increasing participation in non-formal activities;
6. reducing young people's unemployment rate;
7. reducing the NEET rate; increasing apprenticeships and traineeships; and
8. reducing the incidence of precarious and informal work.

[Jobsplus](#) (PES, Malta) administers the [Youth Guarantee](#) Scheme, an EU-funded project for young people aged 15-25. The age bracket will be extended to 29 years from the upcoming programming period. Unemployed registered youths with Jobsplus are assigned an employment advisor. Post-profiling, Jobsplus, would refer these youths to a Youth Guarantee initiative which corresponds to their needs. The referral would depend on a number of factors. These include whether the person in question was of working age and whether the individual had a level of adequate education or beyond, whether the individual requires professional assistance such as psychologists or medical attention, youth workers or support workers prior to engaging in a job experience such as work exposure or traineeship. The project also includes the services of two job coaches whose main role is to support and coach particular trainees with the aim of allowing them to successfully complete their work placement and more importantly when there is the possibility for them to be employed. On the other hand, the trainee under the responsibility of a job coach aims to get the necessary training and support required for them to understand and practice the tasks and sequences necessary for the work they are allocated. Job coaches also help participants integrate within the company and identify their line of command while offering encouragement, feedback, and referrals to additional professional services such as that of the psychologist. Outreach activities are also conducted with potential participants (economically inactive youth not otherwise in education and training) in order to engage them and encourage them to re-enter the labour market accordingly.

The Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation in collaboration with Jobsplus, concurrently conducted a NEET census to ensure that Youth guarantee initiatives are tailor-made to the needs of young people. Jobsplus is now actively engaged in assisting both job seeking and inactive youth.

[Jobsplus](#) intends to carry out a second NEET census to cover the revised age group 15 – 29 years and to gauge the digital and green skills of youth.

In 2015, a Legal Notice was issued ([LN19/2015](#)) giving the authority to Jobsplus to follow up on young people participating in the Youth guarantee, with the aim of ensuring sustainability of initiatives and further intervention where needed.

The Youth Guarantee Scheme is based on preventive and assistive measures where each opportunity is designed to help young people continue their education or increase their chances of finding satisfaction and success in the labour market. The scheme consists of four education and employment related initiatives:

- NEET Activation Scheme II provides youths not in education, employment or training with personal and professional training, mentoring and constant support to facilitate their transition from education to gainful employment, while consequently improving their employment prospects, quality of life and social integration. The programme consists of two main phases: training and work exposure or further education. In the first phase, every applicant receives around 80 hours of basic training on soft skills while during phase two, the participant is offered either a work placement of a maximum of 240 hours with an employer based on his/her skills and desires, or the possibility to follow an educational course from an accredited institution such as MCAST. Upon completion of the work exposure phase, participants enter phase three which consists of a traineeship whereby participants will be able to put into practice what they have learnt during the previous two phases.
- SEC Revision Classes is offered to students who fail the May sitting of their SEC examination in the core subjects (English, Maltese, Mathematics, Biology or Physics). They are offered five weeks of free preventive classes in a choice of up to three subjects, in preparation for the September re-sit.
- MCAST preventive classes are offered in a variety of key skills and vocational subjects during the summer period in preparation for the final assessments in September for MCAST students who fail one of the exams through Level 1, 2, or 3.
- ICT Courses provide an additional educational opportunity to acquire new and valuable ICT skills and knowledge, through ECDL and a practical level 2 course. Participants are awarded with an allowance, provided they meet attendance requirements.

**Jobsplus** has an agreement with schools in respect to notification from those where early intervention may be needed to enrol potential early school leavers in the Youth guarantee activation scheme. In addition, targeted initiative specific newsletters are sent out to a database including educators, school psychosocial teams and senior management schools staff. These newsletters are in turn uploaded to the schools' internal platform and disseminated to parents and students alike in order to reach out to potential NEETs. NEETs are also sent a personal invitation which encourages them to engage in the Youth Guarantee Programme. Furthermore, a team of youth and social workers are tasked with carrying out door-to-door visits to maximise outreach potential. Additionally, social media campaigns across the YG Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages, newspaper and YouTube channels and radio advertisements as well as TikTok videos by youth influencers are used in conjunction with the invitations to increase visibility and participation.

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## Guidance for young people at risk

See section [Guidance for NEET](#).

## Guidance for persons with disabilities

Students with specific needs in secondary schools are offered the same career guidance services as those in mainstream education. Additional services can be accessed in secondary school to support specific individual needs and students with disabilities with the transition from education and employment. Transition coordinators are employed by the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation](#) with the aim of supporting these students in the transition from secondary to post-secondary education or employment.

The [National employment policy](#) addresses labour market participation of people with disability. According to the policy, measures including cooperatives, 'supported employment' and sheltered employment, where needed, aim to provide a safe environment where persons with disability can contribute to society at large including the labour market.

**Jobsplus** offers specific services to vulnerable clients and those with disabilities through the Inclusive Employment Services Unit and the Lino Spiteri Foundation (LSF). The majority of the services are offered through the ESF funded VASTE Programme which aims at offering support to individuals who encounter a number of difficulties when trying to join the labour market either due to their background characteristics or due to their disability or a combination of factors.

The Inclusive Employment Services team of employment advisors (EAs) assists former substance abusers, former prison inmates and individuals with other socio-economic difficulties in their job search on a one-to-one basis. During their meetings with EAs, clients are referred to training, work exposure schemes and work opportunities. Mentoring services are offered to vulnerable clients, before and during employment to increase the number of work placements and employment retention. The team also works closely with other specialised organizations which, in turn, offer counselling and additional related services. Specialised programmes with NGOs are offered to vulnerable clients to enhance their employability. Such programmes support the individual's entry into the labour market by offering training, social work, and psychotherapy services. Various outreach activities for clients are carried out by the employment advisors. Such activities offered include assessment, career exploration, skills identification, and referrals to work exposure schemes.

When it comes to persons with a disability, **Jobsplus** is responsible for the Register of persons with disability, as per LN 156/1995. A person needs to apply formally to be included in this register by completing the respective application form, attaching a recent medical certificate drawn up by a physician. Once the person is accepted on the register, she or he undergoes an occupational therapist assessment. Such assessment helps the Lino Spiteri Foundation guidance service to tailor a personal training plan and employment exposure.

LSF specifically deals with persons with a disability on a one-to-one basis, providing initial and continuous advisory assistance and job search support. The profiling and guidance executives create a profile of the job seeker to understand the relevant skills and abilities as well to formulate a personal action plan guiding the individual to suitable training/work exposures and employment opportunities. Job coaching is also provided to support individuals in their transition from unemployment to employment as well as to provide support during the induction period into the company and throughout their employment as necessary.

The main activity of the VASTE Programme is the development of a Vocational Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Centre, to offer detailed assessment services to the relevant user groups. Such assessment helps **Jobsplus**/The Lino Spiteri Foundation guidance service to tailor a personal training plan and employment exposure. Multiple training options such as Pre-Employment Training, Basic ICT Training, Sheltered Employment Training, the Headstart Programme and Supported Employment (On-the-Job Coaching) are also offered to the clients.

The Sheltered Employment Training gives the opportunity to clients with intellectual or other severe disabilities to receive hands-on training in different tasks such as back office, assembly of products, packaging etc. The duration of this training is of 52 weeks, during which, clients work within groups assisted by Job Coaches. Skills such as work ethics, independent living, communication, and social skills are embedded within this programme. The main objective of this initiative is to offer maximum opportunity to those with severe or multiple disabilities, possibly instigating achievement from sheltered to supported employment in the open labour market.

Similarly, Headstart is a six-month programme offered by The Lino Spiteri Foundation with the scope of increasing work prospects within the open labour market. The aim of the programme is to assist individuals in enhancing their competences related to employment. It simulates a work setting and is structured in a manner that helps individuals to improve relationships and social skills, understand work-related skills and procedures and foster workplace ethics.

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## Guidance for immigrants

The **Migrants Learners' Unit (MLU)** within the **Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation** seeks to promote the inclusion of newly arrived learners into the education system in compulsory, post-secondary and tertiary education. The aim is that each learner's well-being is valued through the provision of a holistic educational experience while focusing on the acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural competences. The unit recognises the need to value and involve all the stakeholders concerned for this educational experience to succeed.

The MLU provides an induction programme for learners who cannot as yet communicate in the languages of schooling. The course spans one scholastic year and may be extended according to the needs of the learner. Within the induction programme the services of the career guidance provided in mainstream schools especially as related to transition points are also provided for the learners in induction in preparation for choice of career paths and related subjects.

Within mainstream education all primary, middle, and secondary state, church and independent schools provide career guidance and counselling services for all students including migrants. Career guidance is also provided at the post-secondary and tertiary institutions to all students who access this service.

The MLU's Community liaison team work with other teams within the colleges and schools to disseminate information to the families and the students and provide interpretation support and help to apply for and access services.

Migrants who acquire refugee status have long been able to register with **Jobsplus** on the unemployment register. These are allocated an employment advisor and together they develop a personalised action plan for employment. The skills, competences, and work experiences of the individual with a migrant background are identified together with the training needs which generally include the need for language courses. The latter are also helped with CV writing and recognition of qualifications under the Malta qualification framework (MQF).

The **Jobsplus** Inclusive Employment Services offers support services to eligible migrants (refugees, migrants granted international protection - i.e. subsidiary or humanitarian protection - and asylum seekers) with the aim of enhancing their language skills and integrating them into the labour market. These services are offered through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) 2021-2027 through the provision of guidance services, Job Brokerage, work exposure and training courses.

Following the initial profiling stage, the service user/migrant is assigned to an employment advisor to assist during the job seeking phase. The aim is to facilitate the labour market entry in line with their skills, competencies, qualifications and work experience. Employment advisors reach out to all service users who are migrants with a Social Protection status but not yet in employment, via an invitation to a guidance meeting. Outreach is also carried out through NGOs who work directly with migrants. **Jobsplus** has also a dedicated Job Brokerage office which offers initial short work placement opportunities to asylum seekers wishing to enter the labour market. These placements may be followed by Work Exposure opportunities to create a pathway towards integration of migrant workers in the formal economy. This transition period will provide jobseekers with initial hands-on training to help them obtain the necessary skills and competences to find and retain employment. It will also provide the migrant or employer the necessary timeframe to apply for an employment licence. Participants will be paid an hourly allowance of € 4.57, comparable to the national minimum wage. Asylum seekers, refugees and holders of Subsidiary/Temporary Humanitarian Protection are also offered basic English and Maltese Language for Employment courses. Participants are given an attendance allowance of € 4.50/hour, deposited in a bank account opened in their name with Jobsplus assistance. The unit works closely with NGOs and other stakeholders in the field to offer the migrants a holistic approach.

**Jobsplus** is responsible for issuing employment licences to foreign nationals needing an authorisation to work in Malta. Beneficiaries of international protection are issued with a personal employment licence, which can authorise them to carry out various jobs with different employers. Employers are required to submit an engagement form. According to the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality (2017), licences are issued for a maximum period of one year, renewable. Beneficiaries of protection may opt to apply for a licence valid for a longer period depending on the validity of the status certificate issued by the International Protection Agency.

There are other practices/schemes which support the employability of immigrants and refugees provided by Jobsplus.

**Trade testing/Validation Process** has been set up to assess individuals who have acquired knowledge, skills and competence in a particular occupation through non-formal and informal learning, hence do not possess a formal qualification. Through trade testing a person is assessed in a particular area by the following types of assessment: a) interview; b) portfolio c) theory test; d) practical test. Candidates who successfully pass from the trade test are awarded a Certificate of Competence in that particular occupation. In the case where assessment takes place under the validation process the certificate is issued by the **Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)**. The applicant must be able to read and write as all Trade Testing/Validation Process include a written examination. However, alternative assessment arrangements are possible. This mainly depends on the occupation and **MQF** level for which the person is applying.

**Bridging the Gap** is a scheme designed to support the client in the transition from unemployment to employment. It allows the employer to evaluate the performance of the client in the workplace, prior to proper engagement. The employer and **Jobsplus** enter into an agreement regarding the work exposure period, whereby the client is placed on the scheme with the prospect of employment. Clients receive a weekly allowance of 80% of the minimum wage from Jobsplus, and they must renounce their rights to social security benefits if the work exposure period exceeds twenty-eight weeks. Employers participating in this scheme are exempted from social security contributions, wages, and sick leave benefits (Jobsplus, n.d.) and the employer can benefit from the support of Jobsplus officials throughout the work exposure phase.

Jobsplus administers an AMIF - national funded project Employment Support Services for Migrants. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund is to provide assistance to Malta in its management of migration flows, through the provision of asylum and reception facilities to migrants, the organization of activities and actions aimed at assisting migrants (refugees, migrants granted international protection - i.e. subsidiary or humanitarian protection - and asylum seekers are eligible) in their integration into the Maltese community, while also strengthening cooperation with third countries with respect to return management. The project aims to improve offer employment support services for migrants by providing employment guidance services, short term placement opportunities, work exposure and courses in basic Maltese, English for employment., cultural awareness, life skills and work ethics. Migrants benefit from an attendance training allowance grant of 4.50 Eur/hr while 4.57 Eur/hr when participating in the work exposure.

The main responsibility of **The Office of the Refugee Commissioner** is to receive, process and determine applications for international protection that are lodged in Malta, as stipulated by the **Refugees Act** (Chapter 420 of the Laws of Malta), amended by Act XX of 2017, and its **Subsidiary Legislation 420.07** on Procedural Standards in Examining Applications for International Protection Regulations. This Office is also bound by the obligations assumed by Malta under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as its obligations under European Directive 2011/95/EU, European Directive 2013/32/EU and the Dublin Regulation. The Office's fundamental objective is to ensure a totally independent, fair, efficient and swift eligibility determination process while, at the same time, guaranteeing the best quality possible regarding the hearing, examination and determination of applications.

The **Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS)** implements the national legislation and policy concerning the welfare of refugees, persons enjoying international protection and asylum seekers. In practice, AWAS manages reception facilities, provides information programmes on employment, housing, health, welfare, and education, and promotes government schemes related to resettlement voluntary returns. AWAS also acts as a facilitator between public entities responsible for providing services to ensure that national obligations to beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers are accessible and encourages networking between relevant local voluntary organisations in Malta. It also advises the Government on new developments in its field of operations and draws up reports for policy-making bodies.

General services offered by AWAS are :

### Orientation

- Information about the centre
- General information related to the stay in Malta

- Service Providers and Important offices

#### Employment

- Assistance to identify and contact Employment offices
- Support towards employability

#### Education and Training

- Language training
- Access to other training courses

#### Social Support

- Health
- Family welfare
- Schooling
- Referral to counselling and other psychosocial services

The **Jesuit Refugee Service** (JRS), Malta, a non-governmental organisation, provides the JRS walk-in service providing persons who are migrants with basic initial integration support, including help to fill in their CVs. The service tries to guide each person according to their CV:

1. if a person has Refugee Status, that person is encouraged to register with **Jobsplus**;
2. if a person has other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection or temporary humanitarian protection are referred to **Jobsplus** after a consent form is completed;
3. persons who are either asylum seekers or rejected asylum seekers are directed to the job brokerage office at **Jobsplus**.

JRS supports refugees and asylum seekers in their job seeking regarding individual employers, recruitment agencies, or other online job-seeking services. JRS also runs its own projects and supports female migrants in engaging in studies to improve their employability.

The JRS Strategy Framework for 2019-2023 can be found [here](#).

Persons with protection who have higher education qualifications are directed and supported to utilise the **Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre** (MQRIC) process, to obtain recognition of their certificates. Individuals interested in furthering their education are offered guidance on suitable options and are frequently referred to the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology** and, more specifically, to the Skills kits programme offered by the institution.

All migrants are to be informed about classes in English and Maltese languages offered by the various NGOs. English and Maltese language courses for migrants are offered by many providers such as, the Integra Foundation, the **Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability** and the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

**UNHCR Malta** is not operational in terms of activities related to career guidance per se, but they fund projects, in collaboration with their implementing partner **Jesuit Refugee Service** (JRS) and other NGOs. For instance:

**Project integrated** aims to support beneficiaries of international protection (holders of refugee status or subsidiary protection) to integrate fully and access their rights effectively in Malta. Part of this project focuses on legal and psycho-social support, including support in employment;

Integration Priority Track project provides individual support to beneficiaries of international protection to facilitate their integration in Malta. Tailored support for tertiary education, skills and employability and entrepreneurship is provided;

provision of an English course (which includes childcare support) for refugee women living in Gozo as other forms of language support in Gozo are less common than in Malta where several NGOs offer free language classes;

provision of home visits and individual counselling support. Those interested in employment and/or training are referred to **Jobsplus**.

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