

Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) international cooperation in further and higher education

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 MALTA

Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 37586

Background

The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) is firmly committed to providing an education structure aimed at maintaining academic standards, thus guaranteeing excellent standards of service within the hospitality industry. Learners' progress is continuously monitored by tutors, review boards and internal and external examiners. To achieve and maintain these standards, the institute enters into a cooperation agreement with highly esteemed and prominent higher and further education institutions. These agreements also provide opportunities for the professional development of the academic staff.

Objectives

- (a) to provide a learner- centred curriculum which promotes creativity, innovation, self-reflection, and personal independence;
- (b) to develop specialised technical, leadership and entrepreneurial skills in line with tomorrow's industry trends and requirements;
- (c) to promote an international outlook while embracing cultural diversity;
- (d) to promote professional development through lifelong learning opportunities;
- (e) to perform and solicit practices which are ethically correct and environmentally friendly;
- (f) to enhance the academic programmes already available;
- (g) to guide, mentor and holistically develop students individually;
- (h) compliance with European quality assurance (QA) standards in relation to quality of teaching and learning;
- (i) develop curriculum programmes at a degree level (MQF/EQF Level 6);
- (j) implement, manage and review degree level programmes in the near future;
- (k) being able to equip existing and future workforce within the tourism and hospitality sector with appropriate competences and underpinning knowledge.

Description

The rationale for ITS international collaboration efforts and activities is that the cooperation with top international universities and institutions provides students with the possibility to graduate from a reputable institute and also get the opportunity to study for a period of time within these institutions in order to obtain wider experience and further develop their skills to meet international standards.

2015 Implementation

In 2015, ITS signed a collaboration agreement with the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland for training 20 teachers from ITS.

2016 Implementation

The training of academic staff in collaboration with Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences, leading to bachelor degree in international hospitality management, commenced early in 2016; it included modules in Malta and e-learning under the guidance of experts from Haaga-Helia.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Divers Alert Network (DAN) Europe in the same year the ITS signed an MOU with the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management (EAHM).

2017 Implementation

In 2017, the first cohort of teachers from ITS graduated with a bachelor degree in international hospitality management from the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Divers Alert Network (DAN) Europe Foundation in 2017, signed an agreement that officially launched the International School of Diving Safety and Medicine (ISDSM).

In the academic year 2017/18, ITS launched the bachelor in international hospitality management (hons) offered in collaboration with the university of applied science of Haaga-Helia. As part of their studies, students undertake an international internship. Concurrently it also launched bachelor in culinary arts (hons) which is offered in collaboration with the institute of Paul Bocuse, France.

2018 Implementation

The agreements continued to be implemented and followed through.

2019 Implementation

In May 2019, ITS announced its new academic affiliation with the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management (EAHM), ranked one of the top 10 institutions in the world in the field of tourism and hospitality management. This agreement enabled ITS to launch its first ever master degree programme: Master in business administration (MBA) in international hospitality management as from this academic year 2019-20. This MBA is aimed at those individuals who want to progress to senior roles in the hospitality industry. This collaboration will also give the opportunity to train up to 15 lecturers in facilitating interactive and problem-based teaching and learning and providing effective classroom management skills.

ITS is offering a number of free master degree programmes as part of the e-learning training scheme offered by the ministry for tourism and consumer protection, in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). These programmes are sponsored by the MTA and are offered to applicants who work within the tourism and hospitality industries in Malta.

2020 Implementation

In December 2020, 16 lecturers from ITS graduated in masters in international hospitality management from the university of applied science of the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

2021 Implementation

ITS unveiled its *strategic plan for 2021-25*, aiming to shape excellence and innovation in tourism through teaching, research and business concept realisation.

Internationalisation is a key component of this strategic plan. It aims to lead the transformation of the international tourism industry by directing resources toward research and development, improvement and efficiency, new educational programmes, internationalisation, and support for students and others to establish enterprises within the tourism sector.

In February 2021, ITS revised its internationalisation policy, which outlines its framework for integrating internationalisation into its strategy, organisation, diversity, culture and governance. This policy aims to make ITS more accessible to global knowledge and expertise, foster collaborations with international institutions, and reach out to an international student market. It emphasises a holistic approach to academia, operations, culture, and social issues to achieve a global presence in education and research.

2022 Implementation

In March 2022, ITS signed an agreement with Aqaba University of Technology in Jordan to offer diving courses, marking ITS as the first Maltese educational institution to offer higher education programmes in the Southern Gulf region. Later on, in October 2022, ITS celebrated its 35th anniversary and announced plans to commence construction of a new campus in Smart City, Kalkara, Malta, to accommodate more students and enhance training facilities.

2023 Implementation

In February 2023, ITS signed an agreement with Switzerland's Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education (BVIS) to offer dual degree programmes. This collaboration allows students to obtain *Bachelor's and Master's degrees in international hospitality management*, with BVIS accepting applications for the 2023 intake.

In November 2023, ITS embarked on the EthAI Tour project, co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 framework. This initiative aims to develop a framework for continuous vocational education and training (CVET) focusing on the ethical integration of artificial intelligence in tourism.

Also in November 2023, ITS signed a cooperation agreement with Shanghai Industrial and Commercial Polytechnic (SICP) to enhance tourism education. This partnership is set to commence in October 2024, with ITS welcoming Chinese students enrolled in the SICP Malta International School.

2024 Implementation

2024 marked the operational commencement of the ITS partnership with the Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education in Switzerland, and the first cohort of students were enrolled in these programmes. Further to the establishment of the SICP Malta International School, the first Chinese students are expected to enrol in October 2024. In September 2024, ITS and the Kobe International University (KIU) officially entered into an agreement to jointly offer a 2+2 *bachelor degree in International hospitality management*. This innovative collaboration between Malta and Japan is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global hospitality industry.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) Malta significantly strengthened its international cooperation in further and higher education through a range of strategic initiatives. These included:

- (a) the opening of a second satellite campus in Zhengzhou, China, in partnership with Zhengzhou Tourism College, offering a three-year tourism and hospitality programme with dual Chinese and MQF Level 5 qualifications;
- (b) the launch of a mediterranean gastronomic education partnership with Institute Lyfe (France) and CAST Alimenti (Italy) to promote student mobility and advanced culinary training;
- (c) the signing of an academic collaboration agreement with Beijing Sport University covering tourism, hospitality, sports education, research, and student exchanges.

ITS also reinforced its global engagement by hosting international hospitality education leaders from 14 countries during the Alliance Network annual meeting in Malta, while continuing to expand Erasmus+ cooperation through staff and institutional exchanges with European partners.

Bodies responsible

- Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Adult learners

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

European and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

Transnational VET initiatives, including joint VET programmes

Subsystem

Further reading

[The Institute of Tourism Studies signs agreement with the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management](#)

[ITS signs collaboration agreement with Finnish university](#)

[Official launch of the International School of Diving Safety and Medicine \(ISDSM\) formed between the Institute of Tourism Studies \(ITS\) and Divers Alert Network \(DAN\) Europe](#)

[Seventeen Maltese lecturers graduated from Haaga-Helia Master's programme](#)

[Mastering the art of French cuisine](#)

[ITS internationalisation policy](#)

[New academic year marks the 35 year anniversary of the Institute of Tourism Studies-Press release](#)

[Businessnow.mt.\(2022, November 14\).??S to offer dual degrees with Swiss institution\[Press release\]](#)

[ITS the first Maltese educational institution to establish a satellite campus abroad](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Quality assurance at Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS)

The QA procedures in ITS have undergone significant changes since 2015 when the first external audit took place. A law revising ITS regulation, coming into force in 2017, contributed to the review of the quality procedures. ITS reviewed its QA manual three times.

 MALTA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2020 Completed

The National vocational and training policy (2015)

The National vocational and training policy mapped the VET sector in Malta and identified areas for future actions.

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation**Master degrees for teachers**

Due to the requirement that teachers need to have completed a master degree to enter the teaching profession, several master degrees in teaching and learning (MTL) were introduced: in October 2016 the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta started a two-year Master in teaching and learning

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2018 Approved/Agreed**The Work-based learning and apprenticeship Act**

Following consultation in 2016, a draft act was proposed by the education ministry on a framework for developing quality work placements, apprenticeships and internships.

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) international cooperation in further and higher education: Malta. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/37586>

