

Training programmes for Young people at risk of being early school leavers (ESL) or Not in Education and Training (NEETs)

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 28672

Background

The incidence of disengaged and vulnerable learners contributing to early school leavers and lack of employability skills.

Objectives

The Prince's Trust International (PTI) Achieve is a personal development and employability skills programme to support young people aged 13-19, with its main aims being:

- (a) to enhance the personal development and employability skills for students, emphasising careers and preparation for work with opportunities to link up with employers;
- (b) to provide young people with the space and attention they need to learn skills, develop confidence, raise aspirations and improve their attitude to learning as well as to form a sense of ownership of their work and development;
- (c) to empower learners to make decisions and develop leadership skills;
- (d) to prepare learners for progression into further education programmes or into the world of employment;

The modular programme provides a flexible approach to learning and development. It also helps young people boost their confidence, improve behaviour, attainment and attendance.

Description

In the school year 2015/16, the Prince's Trust XL programme - from a UK-based charity founded in 1976 by the Prince of Wales - was introduced in lower and upper secondary schools in Malta. It aims to re-engage 13- to 16-year-olds at risk of exclusion or underachievement through informal learning to foster self-confidence.

The programme covers:

- (a) personal and social development;
- (b) life skills;
- (c) active citizenship;
- (d) preparation for work.

The programme leads to an award, certificate or diploma in personal development and employability skills. It is jointly funded by the education ministry and HSBC Malta Foundation. MEDE also signed two separate memoranda of understanding with MCAST and ITS, giving the opportunity to learners to acquire different skills and continue with their educational progression. The attainment of the Prince's Trust level 2 certificate is recognised as a qualification at MQF Level 3 (EQF level 3) by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE). The Alternative learning programme (ALP) offers a vocational/applied route oriented second chance to 15- to 16-year-olds, still in compulsory education who are at risk of becoming ESL or NEET. The ultimate goal is to prepare learners for employment with the requisite skills and practices, while laying the groundwork for those who wish to continue studying. Initially, when it was introduced in 2013-14, it offered a learning programme of vocational and applied education with courses leading to MQF 1 and 2 (EQF 1 and 2). Since then, the programme continued to develop and now includes an additional year called ALP+ for 16-year-olds who want to stay on and develop in a specific vocational area leading to MQF (EQF level 3). The Youth.inc is a second chance full-time programme (MQF 1 and 2, EQF 1 and 2) with a strong VET component incorporating a work placement. It is run by the national youth agency and aimed at young people aged 16 to 21 having completed compulsory education without acquiring basic subjects. An MQF level 3 (EQF level 3) programme was developed in 2016. The Guze Ellul Mercer school (GEM16+) was introduced in 2015, offering early school leavers a second chance to obtain EQF level 3 qualifications in the basic subjects. GEM16+ cooperates with MCAST and the ITS.

2015 Implementation

No major developments.

2016 Implementation

No major developments. Implementation continued.

2017 Implementation

No major developments. Implementation continued.

2018 Implementation

During the school year 2018/19, the ALP+ 2nd year apprenticeship scheme was introduced for learners who obtained an overall MQF level 3 certificate in welding in the ALP+ programme. During academic years 2018/19 and 2019/20, students were given the opportunity to obtain a Level 4 (MQF/EQF) certificate. In fact, through a memorandum of understanding welding lessons are being delivered at the MCAST institute. The ALP+ 2nd year apprenticeship scheme also includes lessons in mathematics, English and Maltese. Learner intake for ALP and ALP+ programmes between 2017/18 and 2018/19 increased by 350% and attendance rate was very successful.

2019 Implementation

During 2019/20, around 450 learners presenting over 100 units took part in the programme. At its inception in 2015, seven schools participated, in 2019/20 the number of schools participating in this programme increased to 36.

From 2019, the Youth.inc programme shifted more to a youth work programme with the aim to guide young people to develop in a holistic way. The programme was

developed around a youth centred approach with the aim to engage young people in their own process of development and enable them to live more independently and access further study or employment. The programme attained very good results as most of the participants achieved qualification across MQF (EQF) levels 1 to 3.

2020 Implementation

APS and APS+

During the academic year 2019/20, for the second year running, students were given the opportunity to obtain an MQF level 4 certificate in welding and fabrication. Through a memorandum of understanding, welding lessons are being delivered at the MCAST Institute of Engineering and Transport. It is to be noted that there was a 133% increase in the number of students joining the apprenticeship path from the previous cohort.

Throughout March to June 2020, due to the COVID-19, the ALP and ALP plus programmes were delivered online through MS Teams. The virtual learning ensured that all the students were given the opportunity to continue with their educational journey, although this situation created some challenges due to the nature of the applied subjects.

GEM 16+

In January 2020, the Accreditation Unit within the Department of Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) accredited the GEM16+ academic programme at MQF (EQF) level 3 of the Malta qualifications framework with an exit point at MQF(EQF) level 2.

In July 2020, the DQSE accredited Maltese, English, mathematics, physics and biology taught within the GEM16+ programme, stand-alone awards at MQF level 3 of the Malta qualifications framework (MQF 3) with an exit point at Level 2 (MQF-EQF level 2).

Prince's Trust International (PTI) Achieve

During 2020, the PTI Achieve widened the age requirement for participating in the programme from the 13- to 16-year-old range to the 11- to 19-year-old range.

Youth.inc

During 2019/20, Youth.inc offered another opportunity for young people to develop their skills, be physically active, be of service and experience adventure through the Duke of Edinburgh International Award. Four young people achieved the silver award, while another four achieved the bronze award.

Young people attending Youth.inc are also participating in the sailing school programme provided by the NGO, Jarhead Young Sailors Foundation.

During March 2020, the Youth.inc programme had to go online due to COVID-19 pandemic. Both youth workers and young people adapted immediately and, as result, 254 online sessions were held on 29 different topics. This translates to 6 600 minutes of online sessions and 6 760 minutes of life skills sessions.

2021 Implementation

Youth.Inc

New curriculum at level 3. The different modules, to include inter/intra personal skills, basic IT skills, planning for further studies or employment, health, house management, money management and work experience are delivered through a youth work approach. In other words, young people are provided with non-formal education sessions to acquire and strengthen knowledge, skills and competencies. It is expected that the programme motivates the young person to engage and become actively involved to steer his/her life in a desired direction; thus enabling one's full potential and self-reliance. A Revised Work placements MOU added to the Work Placement Contract.

KTI

344 young people achieved a qualification.

GEM16+

138 students enrolled.

ALP

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, students returned to ALP. As schooling continued online, the interview process was suspended, enabling all applicants to enroll as ALP students. Intensive discussions were held with MCAST to ensure adequate preparation of ALP students for the post-secondary ALP+ programme.

2022 Implementation

Youth.Inc

No major developments

KTI

350 young people achieved a qualification

GEM16+

130 students enrolled

ALP

Interviews were once again introduced during which a panel assessed the students' vocational interests, motivations, and intentions. During this year, activity lessons were also introduced to provide students with essential life skills relevant to today's world. These lessons included: toolkit, healthy lifestyle, survival skills, interpersonal skills, media literacy, and citizenship.

2023 Implementation

Youth.Inc

No major developments

KTI

331 young people achieved a qualification.

GEM16+

118 students enrolled.

ALP

The school began preparations to renew its accreditation programme. All ALP educators, both academic and vocational, were invited to participate in the process. Frequent and constructive discussions were held with the DQSE department during this stage.

2024 Implementation

Youth.Inc

No major developments

GEM16+

128 students enrolled.

ALP

The school not only strengthened its internal programme but also took note of the RAY Programme, which had gained significant popularity at this stage. RAY - standing for Revolve Around Yourself—offers a holistic formation for students who benefit from learning experiences outside traditional classrooms. This programme was designed to support students who, despite changing schools, were better suited to a non-school environment, providing them with varied job-experience opportunities while ensuring they still obtained their School Leaving Certificate. A series of information sessions was organised for both parents and students to introduce the Institute of Trade at MCAST, launched as an additional post-secondary incentive alongside ALP+. This institute is intended to serve both ALP and mainstream students, allowing them to explore a broader range of subjects not previously available elsewhere.

Other important factors regarding the ALP. The ALP accreditation programme was renewed this year and will be submitted to the DQSE in the coming days.

Application procedures: In line with established procedures, all applications to the ALP must be submitted through the student's feeder school. Individual applications are not permitted, even in cases of frequent absenteeism.

2025 Implementation

Youth.inc

The programme offered another opportunity for young people to develop their skills, be physically active, be of service and experience adventure through:

- (a) the Duke of Edinburgh International Award. - MQF LEVEL 3
- (b) Sailing as well - MQF LEVEL 3.
- (c) Outdoor Education - MQF LEVEL 3.

Around 800 young people enrolled since 2015.

KTI

KTI celebrated the 10th year anniversary with an award giving ceremony. This was a celebration which recognised the effort of having this programme spread out over 60 middle and secondary schools in Malta.

Youth Guarantee 3.0

Following the launch of the scheme in February 2025, it is expected that its components will continue to run for a period of five years, ensuring sustained intervention and long-term impact. The scheme includes several initiatives, such as personalised career guidance, the Empower YOUth programme, which follows a three-phase approach: an initial group profiling and 40-hour life skills module, employer visits tailored to participants' interests, and technical training aligned with emerging sectors. Participants benefit from up to 270 hours of binary learning, online modules, or work placements and receive an allowance of EUR 7.50 per hour. Youth Guarantee 3.0 also includes free SEC revision classes for those who failed or were absent from their O-level exams in core subjects, remedial classes for MCAST students at risk of failing their academic year, and the ALMA mobility scheme, which offers job-related training and supervised work placements abroad to help youth gain intercultural and professional experience in another EU country. Throughout the duration of the programme, NEETs may receive other professional support if needed.

In addition to the Youth Guarantee, Jobsplus offers other initiatives such as free-of-charge training courses and the Work Exposure Scheme, which aims to help NEETs aged 16 and over gain practical skills and hands-on experience in the workplace. Jobsplus seeks to direct NEETs and other young individuals toward the Youth Guarantee for a more targeted and holistic support package, while employers who

recruit Youth Guarantee participants can also benefit from wage subsidies under the Access to Employment scheme.

GEM16+

No info provided.

ALP

No significant changes to the previous year.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry for Education (MFED)(until 2022)
- HSBC (Malta foundation)
- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)
- Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)
- Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)
- Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE) (until 2020)
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) (until 2021)

Target group

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

European and international dimensions of VET

Transnational VET initiatives, including joint VET programmes

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Information about the programme](#)

[Article on Alternative learning programme](#)

[Newspaper article about the Guze Ellul Mercer school](#)

[Prince's Trust achieves excellent results for its students - newspaper article](#)

[Prince Trust International Achieve Programme Malta Facebook](#)

[Youth.inc](#)

Related policy developments

Validation arrangements

In 2015, the *National vocational education and training policy* highlighted the need for training programmes for staff involved in validation, and for validation for learners with disability or learning difficulties.

 MALTA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Training programmes for Young people at risk of being early school leavers (ESL) or Not in Education and Training (NEETs): 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/28672>