

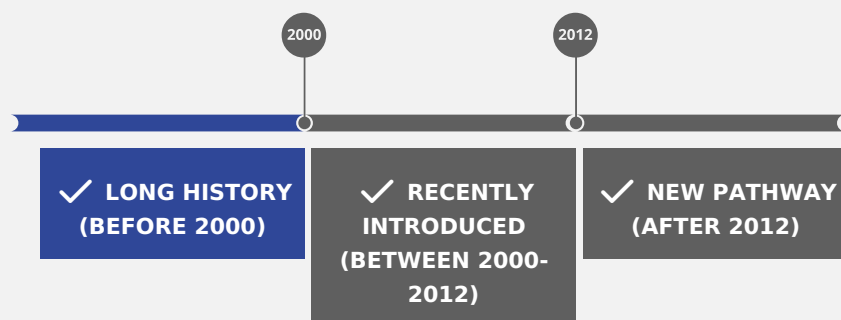
MCAST apprenticeships

 Malta

Reference year 2019

① SCHEME HISTORY

Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



The 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships Act' (Cap. 576) was established on 6th March 2018 incorporating past schemes, namely the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme and the Extended Skill Training Scheme.

Q2. How did the apprenticeship scheme originate?



The state-run Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), today known as Jobsplus [as enacted in Part III of the Employment and Training Services Act (Cap.343)], managed VET in the form of active labour market policies (ALMP) and other services for the unemployed. Until 2014, this organisation was also responsible for the organisation of apprenticeship - MCAST took most of its functions after 2014. As youth unemployment is not the main problem in Malta, apprenticeships

are seen as a tool for addressing the skills gap and difficulties to matching skills to jobs.

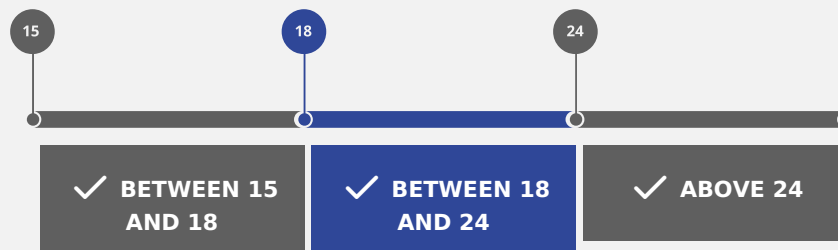
② BENEFICIARIES

Q3. Does the legal basis define the minimum and maximum age limits for enrolment of the target group of this scheme?



As per Schedule 2 B. (3) of the 'Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' (Cap. 576), "apprentices shall be regulated in terms of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452), the Young Persons (Employment) Regulations (S.L. 452.92), if applicable, and the Social Security Act (Cap. 318)". The minimum age is indicated in Young Persons (Employment) Regulations (S.L. 452.92) as not "lower than the minimum age at which compulsory full-time schooling ends". Furthermore, as defined by the Education Act (Cap. 327) a person shall be "deemed to be of compulsory school age until he has not attained the age of sixteen years or has not yet completed the last year of secondary school."

Q4. What is the average age of learners in practice?



As per information provided by MCAST the average age is 19 years (as at May 2019).

Q5. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

As per information provided by MCAST, by the end of academic year 2018/19, there were 1325 learners with an active contract with an employer.

Q6. What is the share of apprentices enrolled in this scheme in relation to all VET students for the corresponding educational level(s)?



✓ MORE THAN
60% OF VET
LEARNERS



✓ BETWEEN 30%-
60% OF VET
LEARNERS



✓ BETWEEN 10%
AND 30% OF VET
LEARNERS



✓ LESS THAN
10% OF VET
LEARNERS

According to information provided by MCAST, the number of students enrolled in MQF level 4 courses in May 2019 was 2541 and as stated earlier, 1325 learner were enrolled as apprentices with an approximate share of more than 52%.

3 QUALIFICATIONS

Q7. Are the qualifications included in the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?



✓ YES



✓ NO



✓ THERE IS NO
NQF

MQF levels 3 & 4. The 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' allows for apprenticeships at higher levels.

Q8. Is the scheme included in the ISCED 2011 mapping?



✓ YES



✓ NO

Apprenticeships are not included in the ISCED 2011 mapping but they can lead to qualifications at ISCED levels 3 (ISCED-P 2011 level 352, 353, 354) and 4 (ISCED-P 2011 453, 454).

Q9. Are the qualifications offered only through apprenticeships?



✓ QUALIFICATIONS CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THIS APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

✓ THE SAME QUALIFICATIONS CAN BE ACHIEVED ALSO THROUGH OTHER SCHEMES (I.E. SCHOOL-BASED VET)

School-based VET and apprenticeships exist in parallel. Apprentices in colleges need to achieve the same volume of learning outcomes as their peers in school-based programmes studying for the same qualifications.

Q10. Which is the type of qualification obtained through the apprenticeship scheme?



✓ FORMAL VET QUALIFICATION (WHICH DOES NOT INDICATE THE PATHWAY)



✓ FORMAL VET QUALIFICATION (WHICH INDICATES THE PATHWAY)



✓ FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP QUALIFICATION (JOURNEYMAN, ETC.)



✓ OTHERS

Apprenticeship training leads to a formal VET qualification, specifically the MCAST award (Diploma at MQF 3 or Advanced Diploma at MQF 4). (Refer to MCAST prospectus for academic year 2019/2020 accessed through the following link: <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/wp-content/uploads/Prospectus-19-20-Digital.pdf>)

Q11. Does the scheme provide direct access to higher education?



✓ YES



✓ NO

MCAST Foundation Level courses (MQF / EQF level 3) allow progression to further education at the MCAST technical level (level 4), which allows for progression to the MCAST higher education level (starting from level 5). However, there is still a great barrier for students from VET to move to higher education, mainly the University of Malta. Any arrangements depend on individual agreements.

4 GOVERNANCE

Q13. Is there any organization at the national level with roles in co-ordinating the scheme?





 

YES NO

As per Article 26. (3) in the 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships Act' (Cap. 576), "the Minister may direct any person or any department, agency, corporation or authority established by law ... to ensure the proper implementation."

The National Skills Council which was established on 9th August 2016 (S.L. 327.547), will be putting forward a proposal to the Maltese cabinet to be established as the organisation which will co-ordinate, oversee and quality assure the co-ordination of this scheme.

Q14. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives, sectoral councils (if existent), in shaping apprenticeship content, as per regulation?

ROLE IN DESIGNING QUALIFICATION ROLE IN DESIGNING CURRICULA OTHER NO ROLE

The National Skills Council which was established on 9th August 2016 (S.L. 327.547), is governed by a Board which include members representing both the education and the employment sectors. The representatives include members from University of Malta, MCAST, Jobsplus Corporation, Institute for Tourism Studies, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, Malta Enterprise, civil society, lifelong learning specialists, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Education and another 4 persons who are deemed to possess leadership qualities and have an understanding of education and the labour market. The functions of this Council is to: (a) involve representatives of the labour market in the planning of labour market preparation; (b) study, propose and plan strategies and training to reduce shortages in labour skills, improve skills and meet market demands; (c) involve stakeholders in the setting of strategiv direction of relevant education and training; (d) liaise with educational institutions; (e) perform any other function as may be assigned to it by the Minister.

Q15. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives in implementing the apprenticeship scheme, as per regulation?



✓ ROLE IN FINAL ASSESSMENT OF APPRENTICES



✓ ROLE IN ACCREDITATION OF COMPANIES



✓ ROLE IN MONITORING OF THE IN-COMPANY TRAINING



✓ OTHER



✓ NO ROLE

In the future months the National Skills Council will be forwarding a proposal to the Maltese cabinet to be established as the organisation which will co-ordinate, oversee and quality assure the co-ordination of this scheme.

5 TRAINING AT THE WORKPLACE

Q17. Is it compulsory to alternate training between two learning venues (school and company)?



✓ YES



✓ NO

In-company training is embedded in MCAST programmes, otherwise it is not considered an apprenticeship.

Q18. Is the in-company training defined as minimum share of the apprenticeship scheme duration?



✓ YES, EQUIVALENT OR MORE THAN 50% OF SCHEME DURATION



✓ YES, BETWEEN 20% AND 50% OF THE SCHEME DURATION



✓ YES, LESS THAN 20% OF THE SCHEME DURATION



✓ NO, NO MINIMUM SHARE IS COMPULSORY

The minimum duration of on-the-job training or the ratio between on- and off-the-job training is not defined in the legal framework. Such duration is set by the VET education institution for each apprenticeship calling. In practice, the share of the on-the-job training is 50%.

Q19. Is there a distinction between the training time and working time for the period spent at workplace, as per regulation?



✓ YES, THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK MAKES THIS DISTINCTION



✓ NO, THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK MAKES NO DISTINCTION

Q20. What is the form of alternation of training between workplace (company) and school?



✓ EVERY WEEK INCLUDES BOTH VENUES



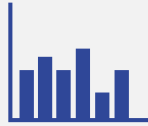
✓ ONE OR MORE WEEKS (LESS THAN 1 MONTH) SPENT AT SCHOOL FOLLOWED BY ONE OR MORE WEEKS AT WORKPLACE



✓ ONE OR MORE MONTHS (LESS THAN 1 YEAR) SPENT AT SCHOOL FOLLOWED BY ONE OR MORE MONTHS AT WORKPLACE



✓ A LONGER PERIOD (1-2 YEARS) SPENT AT SCHOOL FOLLOWED BY A LONGER PERIOD SPENT TRAINING AT WORKPLACE



✓ **VARIOUS -
DEPENDS ON
AGREEMENTS
BETWEEN THE
SCHOOL AND THE
COMPANY**



✓ **OTHER**

✓ **NOT SPECIFIED**

As per Article 9 (d) and (e) in Schedule 2 of Cap. 576 which article is related to Training Programmes of apprenticeship schemes, "start, end date, duration and hours of the work-based period" and "hours of work-based learning" are established in the training agreement between the VET provider, employer and the apprentice.

Q21. What is the basis for the training offered?



✓ **THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED VIA
A SPECIFIC
APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMME**



✓ **THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED ON
THE BASIS OF THE
SCHOOL-BASED VET
PROGRAMME**



✓ **THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED
BASED ON THE VET
STANDARDS (VALID
GENERALLY FOR
ALL VET SCHEMES)**



✓ **OTHER**

Substantial work has been done to link VET courses to occupations.

Q22. Is the company hosting apprentices required by regulation to follow a training plan at the workplace?



✓ **YES, THE
TRAINING PLAN IS
BASED ON THE
NATIONAL/SECTORAL
REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE IN-
COMPANY
TRAINING**



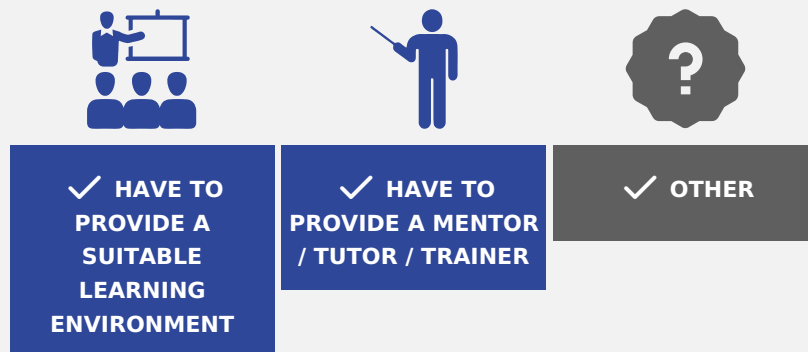
✓ **YES, THE
TRAINING PLAN IS
AGREED AT THE
LEVEL OF SCHOOL
AND COMPANY**



✓ **NO, IS NOT
REQUIRED
FORMALLY**

As per 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' (Cap. 576) the employer enters into a tripartite agreement together with the VET provider and the learner which agreement includes a defined training programme plan.

Q23. What are the requirements on companies to provide placements, as per regulation?



Refer to the 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' (Cap. 576).

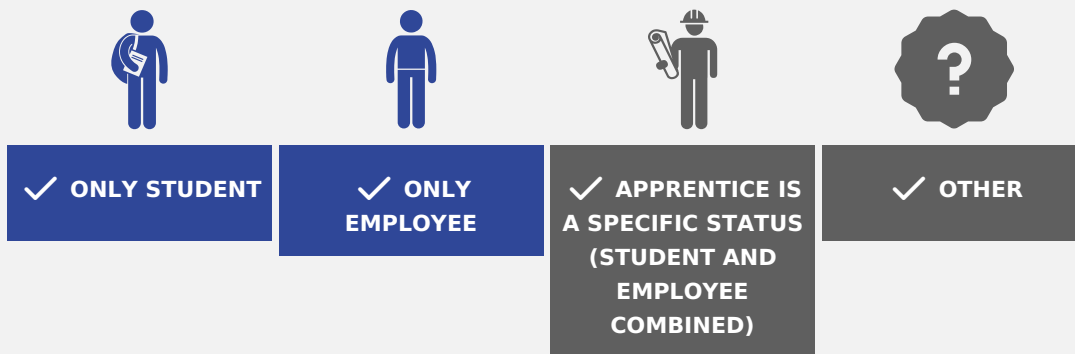
Q25. Are there any sanctions on companies that do not provide training to apprentices at the workplace?



Participation in the apprenticeship scheme is voluntary and MCAST uses a positive approach by giving a label to those employers who have apprentices. According to the Article 49 of the 'Employment and Training Services Act' (Cap. 343), "any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of an agreement of apprenticeship or traineeship or any provision of a scheme which is binding up him <...> shall be guilty of an offence against this Act". Article 51 stipulates that the general penalty for a person guilty of an offence against this Act is a fine of not less than EUR 46.59 and not more than EUR 931.75.

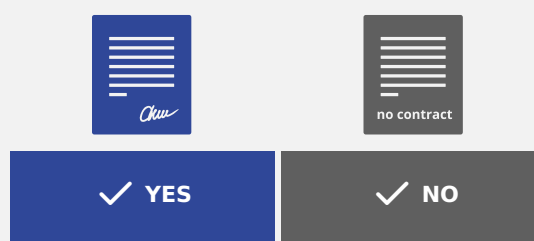
⑥ CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION

Q26. What is the status of the learner?



According to the 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' (Cap. 576) the learner has the statutory rights of a student enrolled by the VET provider. In addition, according to the 'Employment and Training Services Act' (Cap. 343) the learner has the statutory of an employee recruited by the employer.

Q27. Is there any written arrangement between the learner and company, required as per regulation?



The Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act defines the general conditions for the training agreements between the employer and the apprentice. The agreement contains information which is regulated in terms of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap.), the Young Persons (Employment) Regulations (S.L. 452.92), if applicable, and the Social Security Act (Cap. 318) with regards and not limited to: probation period; work-based learning hours; overtime; cost of living increases; occupational health and safety; vacation leave and sick leave; maternity leave, parental leave and leave for urgent family reasons; public holidays falling on weekly day of rest; wages to be paid at regular intervals; payment of statutory bonuses; rights to social security benefits; hours a learner spends with the sponsor shall be considered as the hours spent on the work-based learning component of the training programme as defined in the training programme plan.

Q28. What is the nature of the written arrangement?







The learning agreement is drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the 'Work-Based

Q29. Where is the contract or the formal agreement registered?

 ✓ AT THE SCHOOL	 ✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT	 ✓ AT THE CHAMBERS	 ✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
 ✓ OTHER			

The formal agreement is registered at the MCAST or the educational institution offering the accredited training programme incorporating an apprenticeship opportunity. Furthermore, the employer must register this formal agreement with Jobsplus in accordance to Article 32 of the 'Employment and Training Services Act' (Cap 343).

Q30. Do apprentices receive a wage or allowance?

 ✓ YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE A WAGE (TAXABLE INCOME)	 ✓ YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE AN ALLOWANCE (NOT A FORM OF TAXABLE INCOME)	 ✓ APPRENTICES RECEIVE A REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES	 ✓ NO FORM OF COMPENSATION IS FORESEEN BY LAW
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The apprentice receives a wage from the employer and an allowance from the State as established in the 'Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (Cap. 576). As per Article 14 (3) (a) of Cap.576, the employer is obliged to "pay a remuneration to the learner in accordance with the rate established by relevant legislation, for the duration of the time the learner spends at the place of work as part of the work-based learning component, as predefined in the training plan." Then, the allowance funded by the State is stipulated in the same Act as per Article 15, "(a) learners may be eligible to benefit from student's maintenance grant in terms of the Student Maintenance Grant Regulation; (b) learners on apprenticeship programmes have the right to an income equivalent to the national minimum wage per hour for the hours spent at the workplace as stipulated in the training programme plan. The income per hour is calculated as the income derived from the [employer] and from the student maintenance grant". MCAST apprentices receive remuneration from their sponsor and Students' Maintenance Grants. Whilst working with their sponsor, all MCAST students doing an apprenticeship always receive

remuneration directly from their sponsor according to the hours worked. On the other hand, Students' Maintenance Grants are calculated as follows:

October to June (covering lecture attendance)

- a. Stipend rates of €89.40 every four weeks
- b. Initial Grant (credited once after the students confirms the online application)
- c. Top-up Stipend Rates *

July to September

- a. Summer Special Stipend rates of €235.06 every four weeks
- b. Top-up Stipend Rates *

*Top-up Stipend Rates vary greatly according to the level, year and course being followed and according to the number of days the student is attending lectures at MCAST.

Q31. How is the apprentice wage (taxable income) set?



Apprentices may benefit from a flat rate of 15% as per conditions indicated by the Commissioner for Revenue in the following website

<https://cfr.gov.mt/en/inlandrevenue/FAQs/Pages/Income%20from%20Part%20T...>

⑦ FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

Q32. Who covers the cost of the wage or allowance of the apprentice?



✓ EMPLOYERS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

The employer pays wages, and the government pays a maintenance grant.

Q33. What are the sources of financing of the direct costs for the in-company training part of the apprenticeship scheme?



✓ SINGLE EMPLOYERS HOSTING APPRENTICES



✓ TRAINING FUNDS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

As Article 14. (3) (a) of the 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' the employer has to, "Pay a remuneration to the learner in accordance with the rate established by the relevant legislation, for the duration of the time the learner spends at the place of work as part of the work-based learning component, as pre-defined in the training programme plan." The company pays a wage to the apprentice and half the annual statutory bonus payable by the employer [1]. Companies also cover indirect costs (materials and tutors, who are high level managers and/or experienced workers). The government has a tax rebate for employers who take apprentices (however, employers are not really motivated by it to take on apprentices). The training of the apprentice is paid partly by the employer who gives the apprentice some payment as well as government who gives a scholarship to the apprentice, even during studies.

[1] Employers in Malta are obliged to pay annual statutory bonuses to every full-time employee or a prorata amount in the case of part-time employees that work at least 20 hours per week. The full statutory bonus payable every six months is as follows: end of June: EUR 135.10; from 15 to 23 December: EUR 135.10. Hence apprentices are entitled to get half of this and employers are legally obliged to pay. <https://dier.gov.mt/en/employment-conditions/wages/Pages/Bonus-and-week...>

Q34. Are there any financial incentives for companies that offer apprenticeship places?



✓ YES, SUBSIDIES



✓ YES, TAX DEDUCTIONS



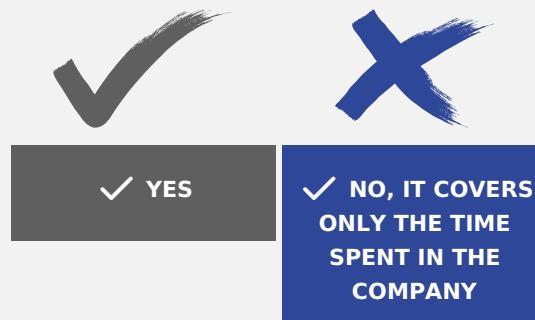
✓ YES, OTHER INCENTIVES



✓ NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Government supports companies and employers for apprenticeships by contributing directly to the apprentice's wage making expenses less than what a normal employee would cost. In 2014, government introduced financial incentives in terms of tax rebates for each and every apprenticeship offered by employers. This tax rebate amounted to EUR 1200 for each apprenticeship as per INCOME TAX ACT (CAP. 123) Deduction (Apprentices and Work Placements) Rules, 2014 (L.N.179 of 2014).

Q35. Does the wage or allowance of the apprentice cover both the time spent at school and in the company?



The government maintenance grant covers both school and time spent in company. The employer's part of the wage is paid only for the time spent at the place of work.

Q36. Are there any incentives for learners?

