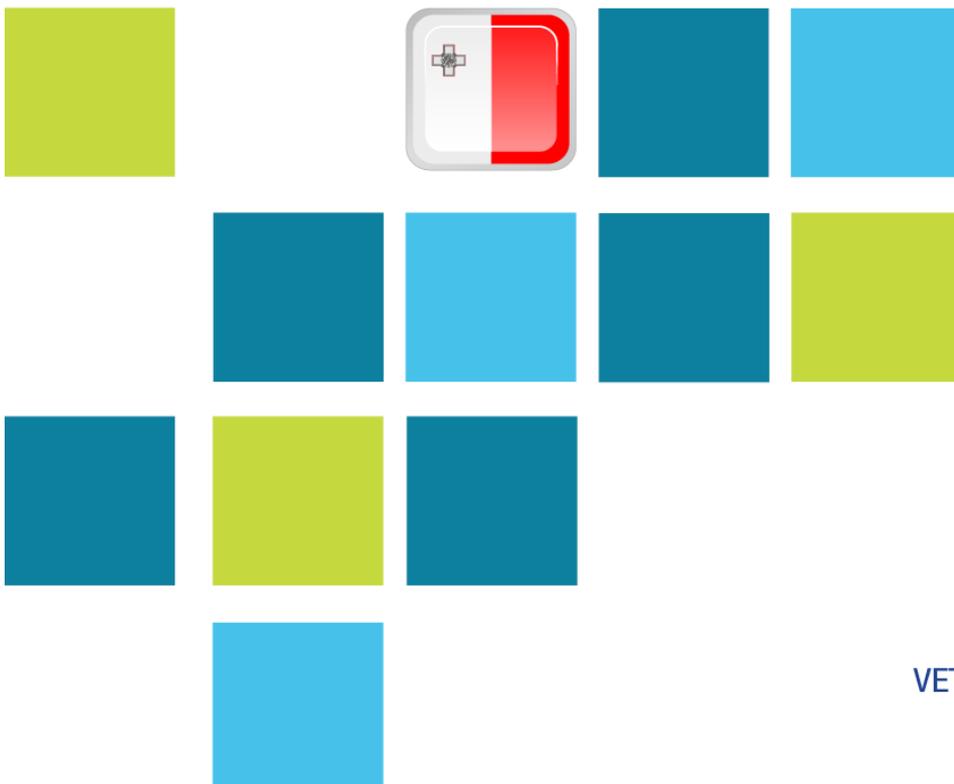


VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE
MALTA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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Contributors: Ministry for Education and Employment (ReferNet Malta) and Nikolaos Georgiadis (Cedefop)

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CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Malta comprises the following main features:

- the overall responsibility for VET lies within the Ministry for Education and Employment. The Ministry for Tourism is in charge of VET for the tourism sector. There are two main State providers of further and higher education ([1]);
- the number of private VET providers has been increasing;
- a reform of the legal framework for education is underway;
- VET is available from lower secondary education onwards.

Distinctive features ([2])

Stakeholders strongly support VET. The chamber for commerce, enterprise and industry, the Malta employers' association and the unions are involved and sit on the boards of state VET providers. Many employers promote apprenticeships, with dialogue between VET providers and industry as a key feature in qualification design.

Developing excellence in VET and higher education through research, effective licensing, programme accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications has been entrusted to a single institution established in 2013: the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) ([3]).

The commission acts as a broker between the government and VET and higher education institutions, encourages stakeholder dialogue, and oversees the implementation of the Malta qualifications framework (MQF).

Malta was the first EU country to reference its qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework (EQF ([4]) and the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) ([5]) in 2009. The Malta qualifications framework has been a catalyst for moving from previously used British qualifications to national qualifications and has become widely used in education and training and the labour market. Its development has gone hand-in-hand with strengthening the quality culture in VET, evidencing its value as a systemic tool and a sound basis for skill validation.

The recent establishment of several sector skills units is another step towards fostering quality, enabling designing occupational standards, acknowledging non-formal and informal learning in more sectors, and setting standards for VET providers.

Forecasting skill needs is essential for evidence-based policy but also challenging, as one sectoral investment may cause substantial economic shifts. Skills intelligence is gradually developing, with recent initiatives expanding the evidence base and helping VET providers better meet labour market needs. The 2015 employability index and graduate tracer study led to more insights on the transition of VET learners to the labour market and informs education and career choices.

In 2016, Jobsplus ([6]), the national commission for further and higher education and Malta Enterprise (ME) launched a skills survey among employers to map their current and future skill needs([7]).

-
- [1] There are two main State providers: (a) the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and Arts (MCAST) and (b) the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). They are self-accrediting institutions offering VET free of charge.
- [2] Adapted from Cedefop (2017). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Malta*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8106_en.pdf
- [3] The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) was officially launched on 14 September 2012 and is legislated by the revised Education Act which came into force on 1 August 2012. <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx>
- [4] European qualifications framework of lifelong learning (EQF).
- [5] Qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA).
- [6] Jobsplus is the National Employment Authority of Malta. Jobsplus is the new name, since June 2016 of the Employment and Training Corporation member of the network of European Public Employment Services.
- [7] The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), Jobsplus and Malta Enterprise (ME) embarked on an Employee Skills Gap Survey. The objective was to gauge the extent of the existing skills gap, to contribute effectively to improvements in the educational system in Malta to make it more responsive to the needs of the labour market and to provide policy makers with the information necessary to identify the potential shortcomings of the Maltese labour market that could be hindering companies from finding employees with adequate skills. This exercise is deemed particularly important in light of the relatively strong and sustained growth recorded by the Maltese economy over recent years which requires an increasingly diversified set of skills to enable companies to meet market demand. The National Employee Skills Survey full report, published in 2017 is available at:
<https://secure.etc.gov.mt/JobsplusFlipbook/#p=2>

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Skills shortages are experienced because of population ageing, low unemployment and strong economic growth driven by tourism and trade and emerging sectors such as i-gaming, financial services, legal and accounting services and aircraft maintenance. Employers already face difficulties recruiting skilled workers in the healthcare, financial and ICT sectors and frequently rely on foreign workers to meet their needs.

The focus of VET and employment policies is to increase skilled workforce supply by helping more young people complete education or training – and make a successful transition to a job – and to increase employment among inactive ageing people.

New legislation strengthening the regulation of apprenticeship and work-based learning – spearheaded by Cedefop’s apprenticeship review – is part of the measures.

Early school leaving from education and training has decreased faster than in many other countries, but at 17.5% in 2018 ([8]) it is still the second highest in the EU.

Measures to reduce it include a national 10% early school leaving target, to be achieved by 2020, a strategic prevention plan, launched in 2014, and strengthened coordination and progress monitoring in the education and employment ministry. New second chance options, including work-based learning, have been established and support for teachers has increased.

Introducing vocational subjects in lower secondary education has also been an important step in preventing early school leaving by providing alternative learning pathways.

Following the inclusion of VET subjects within the framework of the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) in 2015, VET and general/academic education qualifications started enjoying parity of esteem.

The reform planned for 2019/20 intends to make learning more inclusive, flexible and without dead-ends, to give more young people opportunities to develop employability and skills for personal and social development.

The implementation of the reform is being preceded by the following preparations:

- the development of VET and applied learning programmes based on the Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF);
- professional development sessions for VET teachers;
- investment of EUR 10 million in the building and equipping VET labs in all secondary state schools. Offering the latest technologies and facilities for the teaching of vocational and applied subjects;
- agreements between the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) and various economic operators to provide workplace experience for VET students to ensure deep learning.

Stepping up participation in lifelong learning is a government priority. The national lifelong learning strategy 2020, adopted in 2014, paves the way for empowering people through more personalised and innovative learning approaches. Recently introduced, free of charge online modules at Malta, College of Arts Science and Technology expand the learning offer.

A National Skills Council (NSC) ([9]) has been set up in 2016 to improve governance of skills anticipation and coordinate work that, until now, has been fragmented across several

organisations without a clearly defined and dedicated budget to develop and coordinate new initiatives aimed at creating better conditions and incentives for lifelong learning.

Data from VET in Malta Spotlight 2017 ([10])

- [8] Early leavers from education and training, Eurostat t2020_40 [extracted 16.5.2019]: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_40&plugin=1
- [9] The National Skills Council (NSC) was setup by means of Subsidiary Legislation 327.547 of the Laws of Malta with the aim to first review the past and present available skills within the Maltese labour work force and evaluate the changes required to meet current and future needs. The main aim being that to minimise the skill gaps that exist in some of the demanding and rewarding sectors such as the digital, technical and financial sectors. It is the council's task to recommend policy changes to the government that would reduce these gaps and prepare the labour force with the right skills, to meet the future challenges. <https://education.gov.mt/en/Pages/National-Skills-Council.aspx>
- [10] ReferNet Malta contribution and adaptation from Cedefop (2017) *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Malta*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/8106>

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

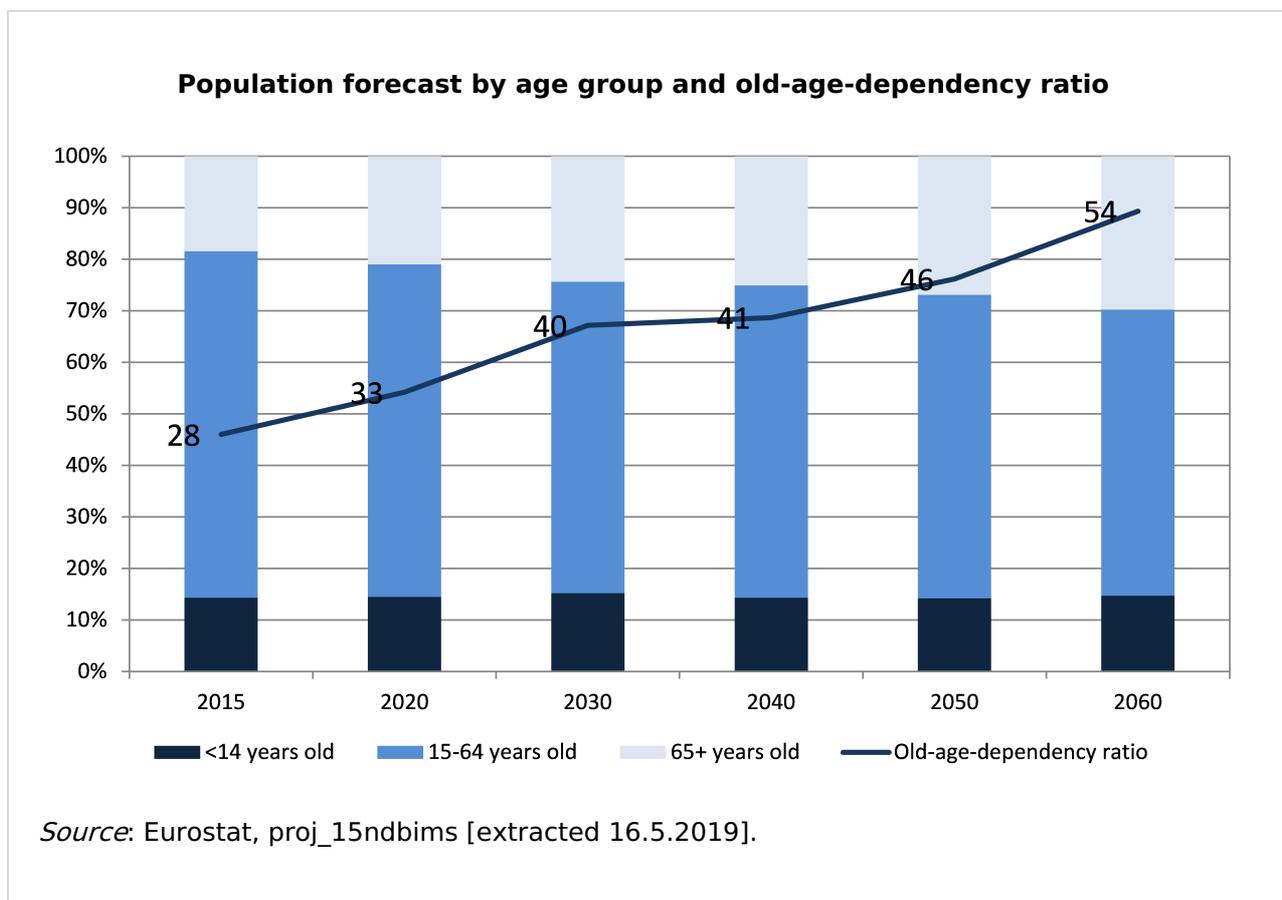
3.1. Demographics

Population in 2018: 475 701 ([11])

It increased since 2013 by 12.6% mostly due to immigration (increased birth rate contributed to a lesser extent) ([12]).

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing.

An old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase from 28 in 2015 to 54 in 2060.



The increase in school enrolment due to the increase in migration flows will have an impact on VET as more students take the VET option. This would require more educators and learning facilities.

Not applicable

3.2. Economics

In 2017, there were only 113 firms in Malta that employed more than 250 persons. Small and medium enterprises constituted 99.9% of all firms, with the vast majority, 97.3%, being micro firms employing less than 10 persons. Small firms, employing between 10 and 49 workers,

accounted for 2.2% of all enterprises, while 0.5% of all firms were medium-sized.

Maltese small and medium enterprises in the business economy sector generated nearly two thirds of all growth in value added and half of the rise in employment. This is a healthy development as growing dependence on many small and medium enterprises is making the Maltese economy less susceptible to idiosyncratic shocks ([13]).

Main economic sectors ([14]):

- financial, insurance and real estate;
- professional, scientific and technical;
- arts, entertainment and recreation;
- agriculture, forestry and fishing;
- construction;
- manufacturing and utilities.

Economic actors play an active role in linking VET to the needs of the economy. They are represented on the board of directors of the Institute of Tourism Studies and Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology contributing to the development of VET courses at all levels. Both Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and Institute of Tourism Studies have developed bespoke courses for certain industries requiring specific skills e.g. avionics, block chain and distributed ledger technologies.

Besides, an increasing number of enterprises offer apprenticeships, internships and work-based learning to VET students in both institutions.

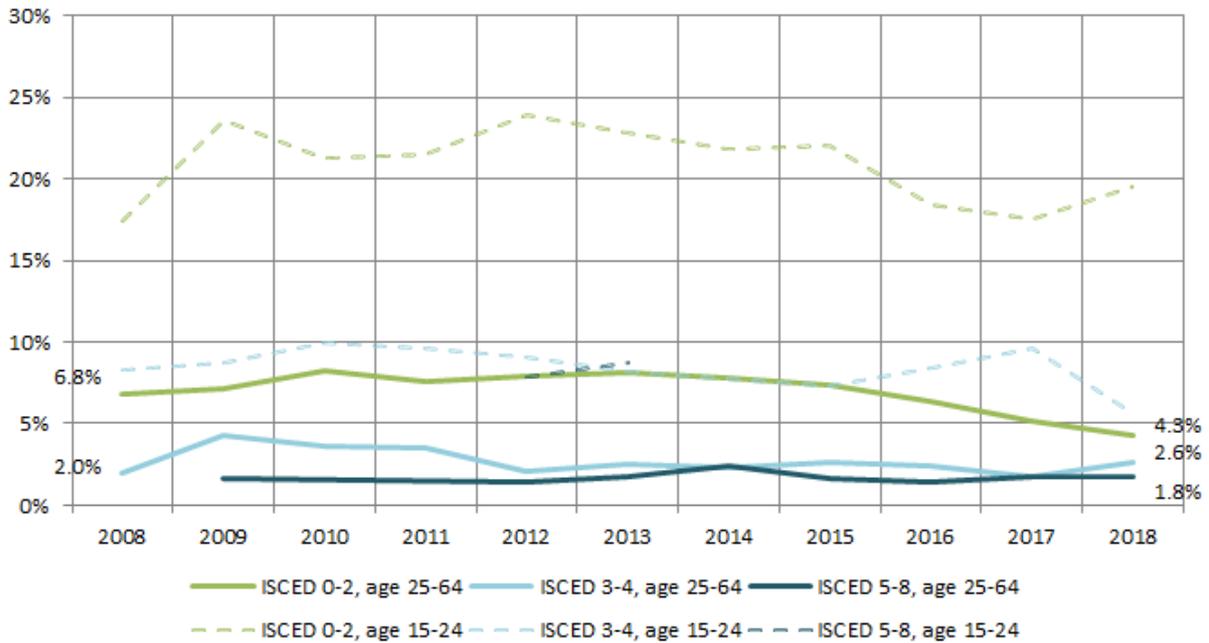
3.3. Labour market

Depending on the job, employers usually ask for qualifications, competencies and skills.

The labour market is considered flexible. However, a number of occupations/professions is regulated (e.g. engineers and accountants require a professional warrant).

Total unemployment ([15]) (2018): 3% (6% in EU-28); it decreased by 1.8 percentage points since 2008 ([16]).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2008-18



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 3-4 and 5-8, both age groups.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

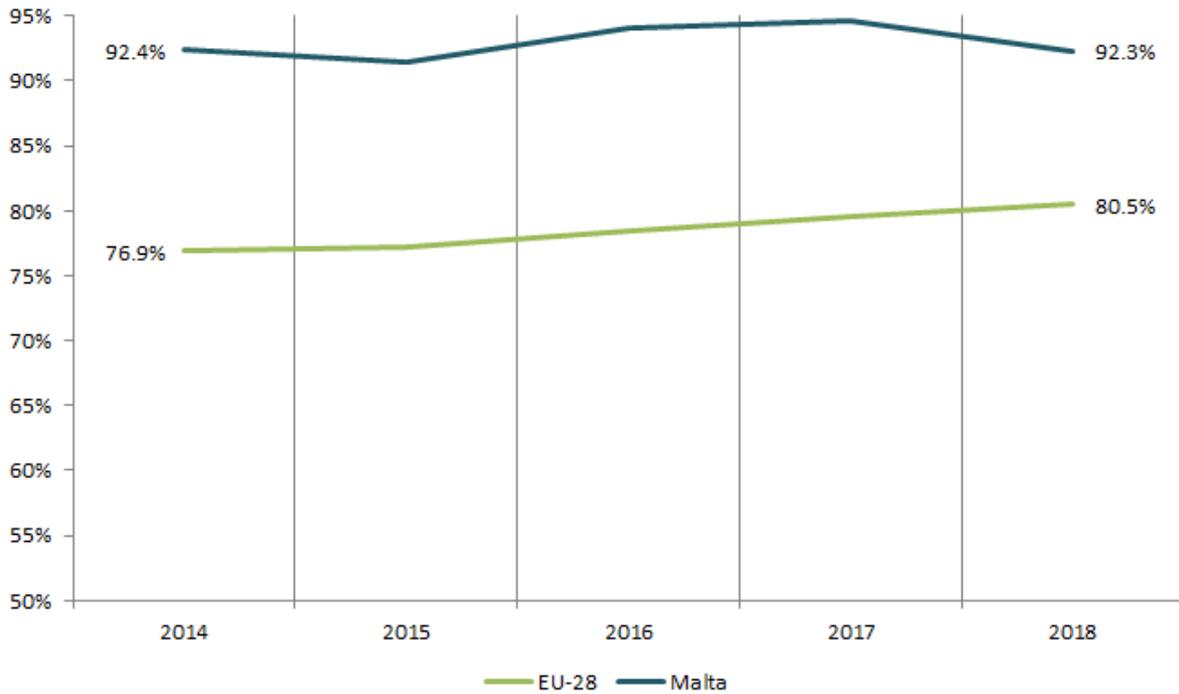
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

The impact of education on unemployment is significant. The unemployment rate for the low-skilled (20 to 64) has been decreasing and is now almost three times higher than the corresponding rate of people with tertiary education. The unemployment rate for those with a medium level qualification, has, in most years, been less than half of the unemployment rate of the low-skilled. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of persons aged 15 years and over having a low level of education dropped by 9.1 percentage points. Over the same period, there was an increase of 4.7 percentage points and 4.4 percentage points in the number of persons attaining a medium or a high level of education respectively ([17]).

Employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates decreased from 92.4% in 2014 to 92.3% in 2018.

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

The decrease (-0.1 pp) in employment of 20-34 year-old VET graduates in 2014-18 was lower compared to the increase in employment of all 20-34 year-old graduates (+4.1 pp) in the same period in Malta ([18]).

[11] NB: Data for population as of 1 January, Eurostat tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[12] NB: Data for population as of 1 January, Eurostat tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

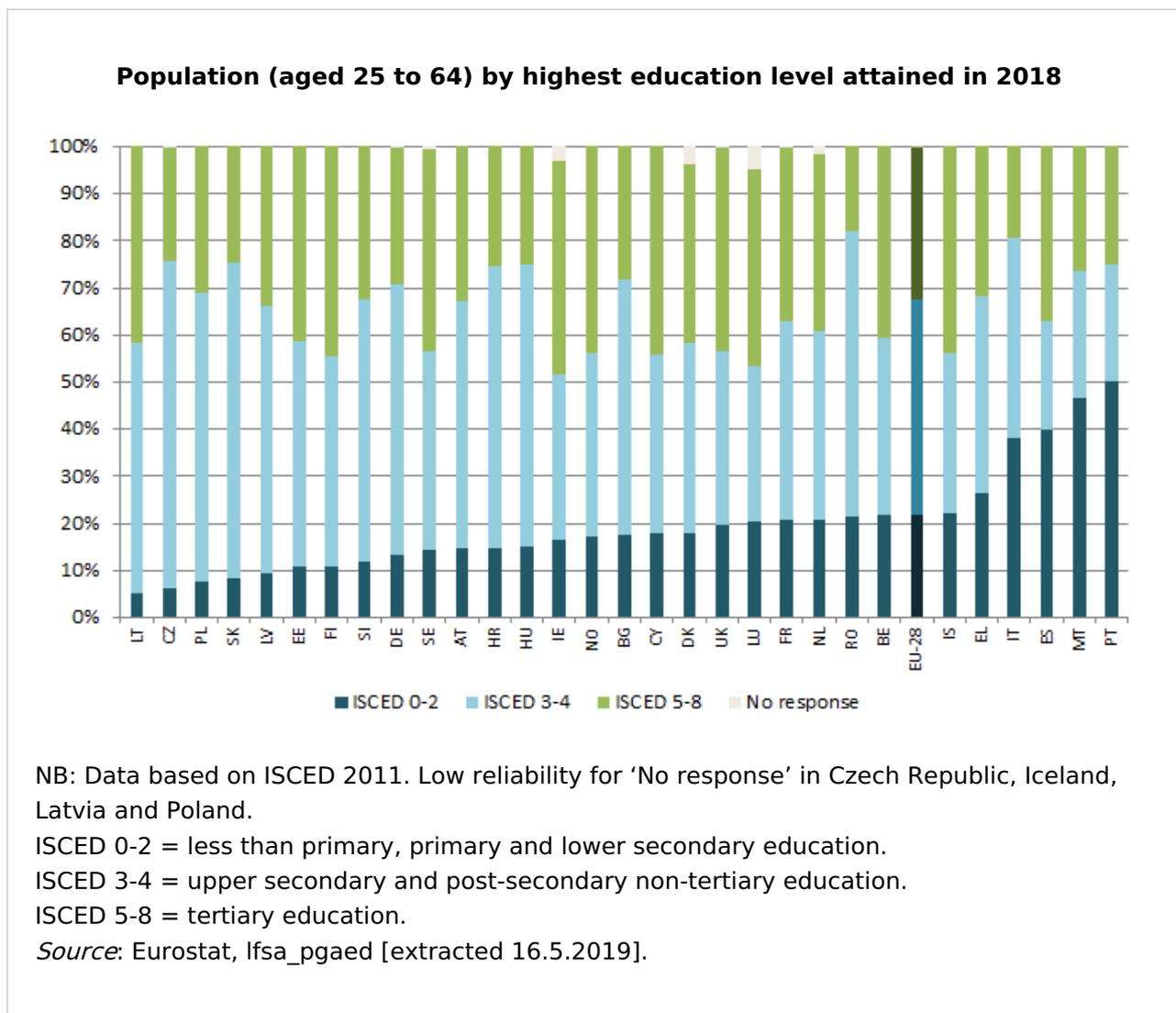
- [14] Recent GDP growth is mostly driven by services. Between 2015 and 2016 professional, scientific and technical activities together with administrative and support service activities increased by 12.1 per cent. For arts, entertainment and recreation, repair of household goods and other services the increase was 10.2%. The value of non-marketed services (public administration and defence, education, human health and social work activities) increased by 6.2%. Source: MFIN, 2018. Contrary to the trend observed in the services sector, a steady decline in the share of manufacturing in terms of gross value added was noted, with the ratio shrinking by around half since Malta joined the EU in 2004. The relative contribution of construction to the economy has also declined considerably. The already marginal share of value added by agriculture has decreased further, keeping the country heavily dependent on imported food supplies. On the other hand, the shares of sectors such as i-gaming, financial services and IT services, legal and accounting services, and aircraft maintenance have increased significantly. Supported by the traditionally strong tourism sector, retail and wholesale trade, and public services, these expanding activities are becoming the new growth drivers in the economy.
- [15] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.
- [16] Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 20.5.2019].
- [18] NB: Breaks in time series, Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

4.1. Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2018, 46.7% of the 15+ population has an ISCED 0-2 level of education, 27% ISCED 3-4 and 26.3% a tertiary qualification ISCED 5-8. Developments in the last 15 years reflect extensive investment in education and training. The inflow of foreigners also contributed to rising attainment levels; they often have a tertiary qualification and relatively few are low-skilled ([19]) ([20]) ([21]).



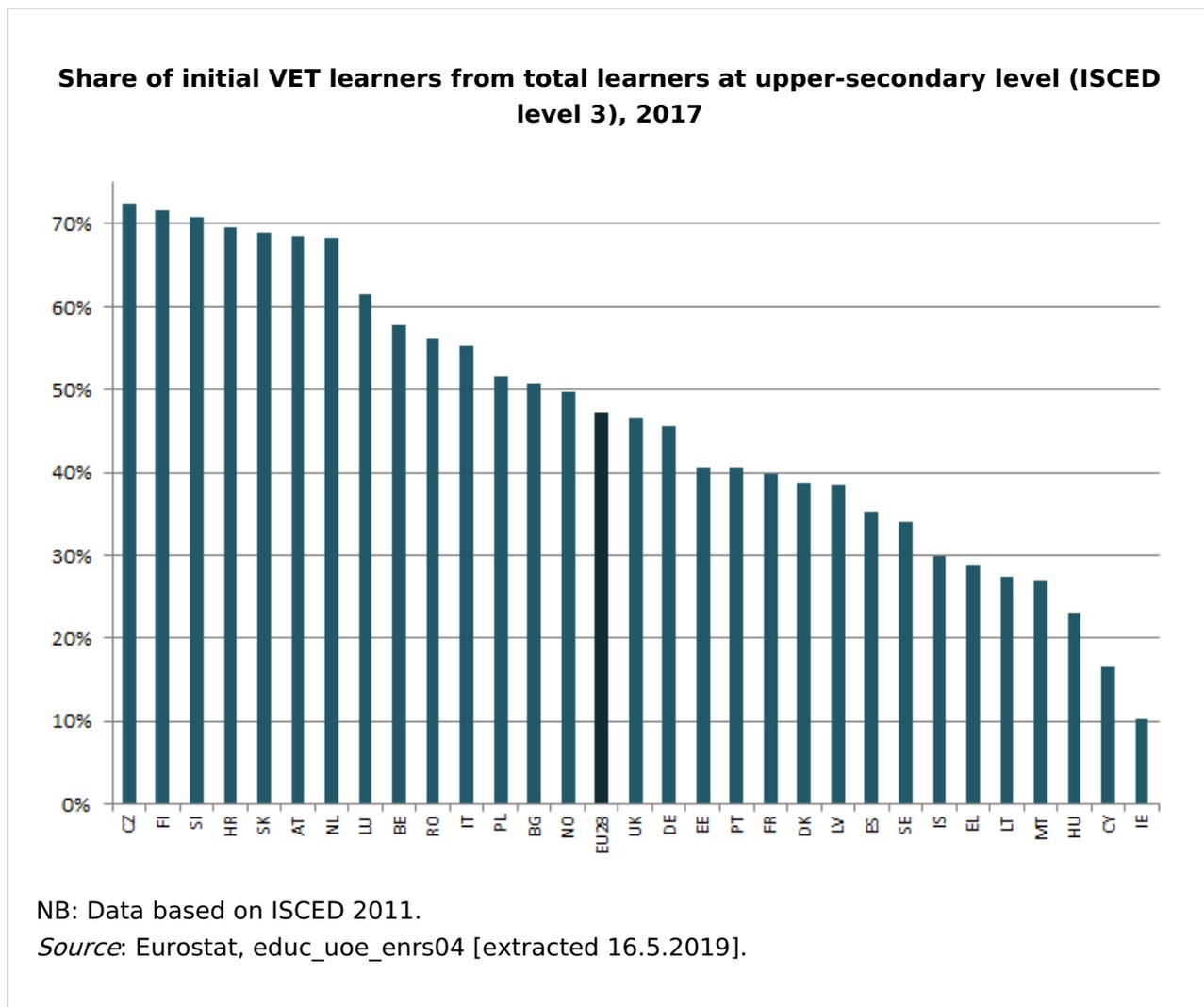
4.3. VET learners by level

Share of learners in VET by level in 2017

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
0.5%	27.1%	Not applicable

NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uae_enrs01, educ_uae_enrs04 and educ_uae_enrs07 [extracted 16.5.2019].



4.4. Female share

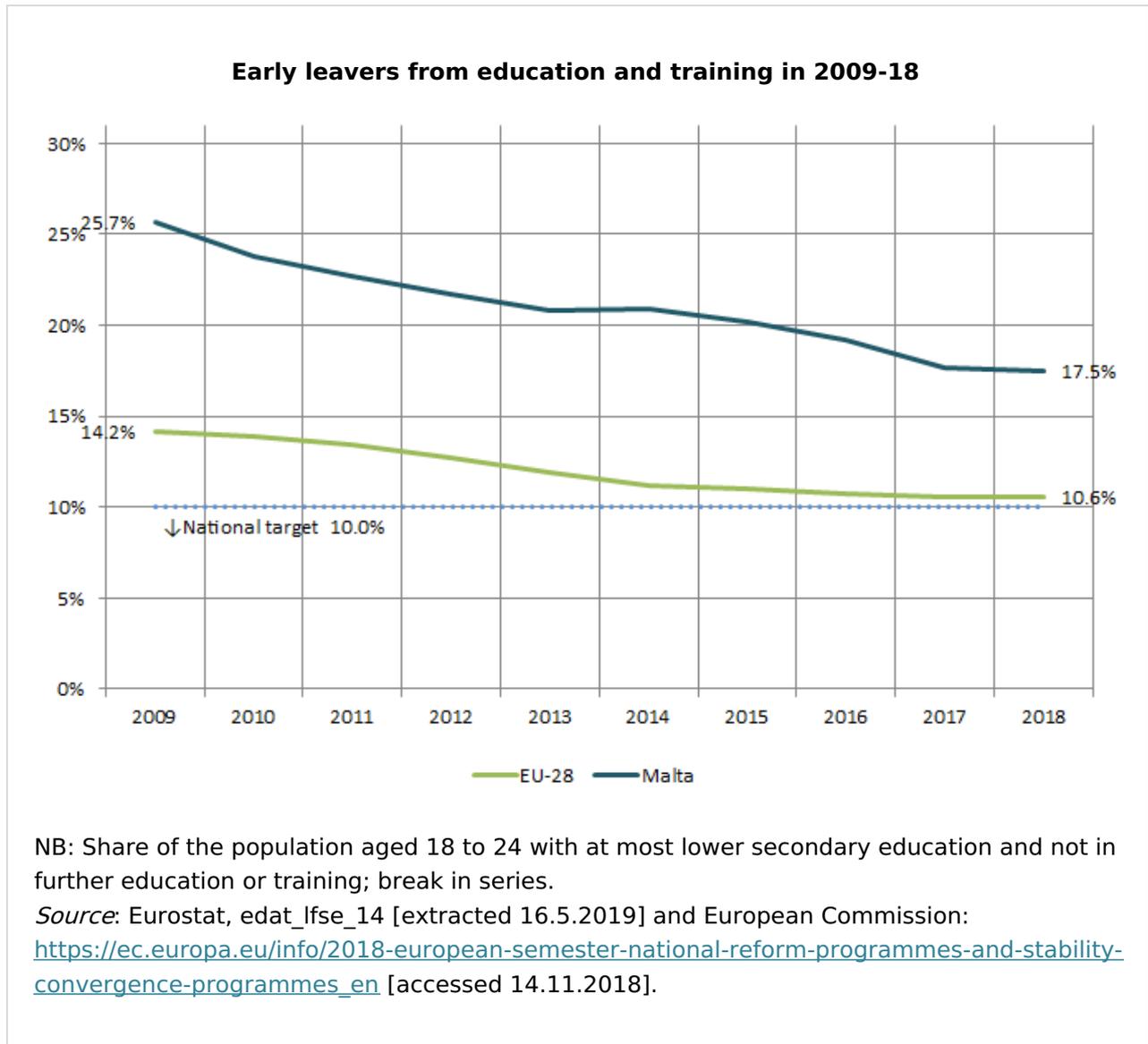
Up to 2014, there were more males in further vocational education (53%). In 2015, female participation in further VET, surpassed male participation with females accounting for 53%. In 2016, the participation rate in further VET by sex was 50% for males and females. Females dominate in programmes in the arts and humanities (27.7%) and health and welfare (13.6%), while males are overrepresented in programmes in engineering, manufacturing, construction (13.5%), information, and communication technologies (10.7%). Like in further education, gender differences are also evident in subject area choices at higher education level.

Females dominate in programmes in health and welfare (22.6%) and education (15.7%), while males are over represented in programmes in engineering, manufacturing and construction (13.9%) and information and communication technologies (12.0%) ([22]).

4.5. Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased from 27.2% in 2008 to

17.7% in 2018. It is above the national target for 2020 of not more than 10% and the EU-28 average of 10.6%.



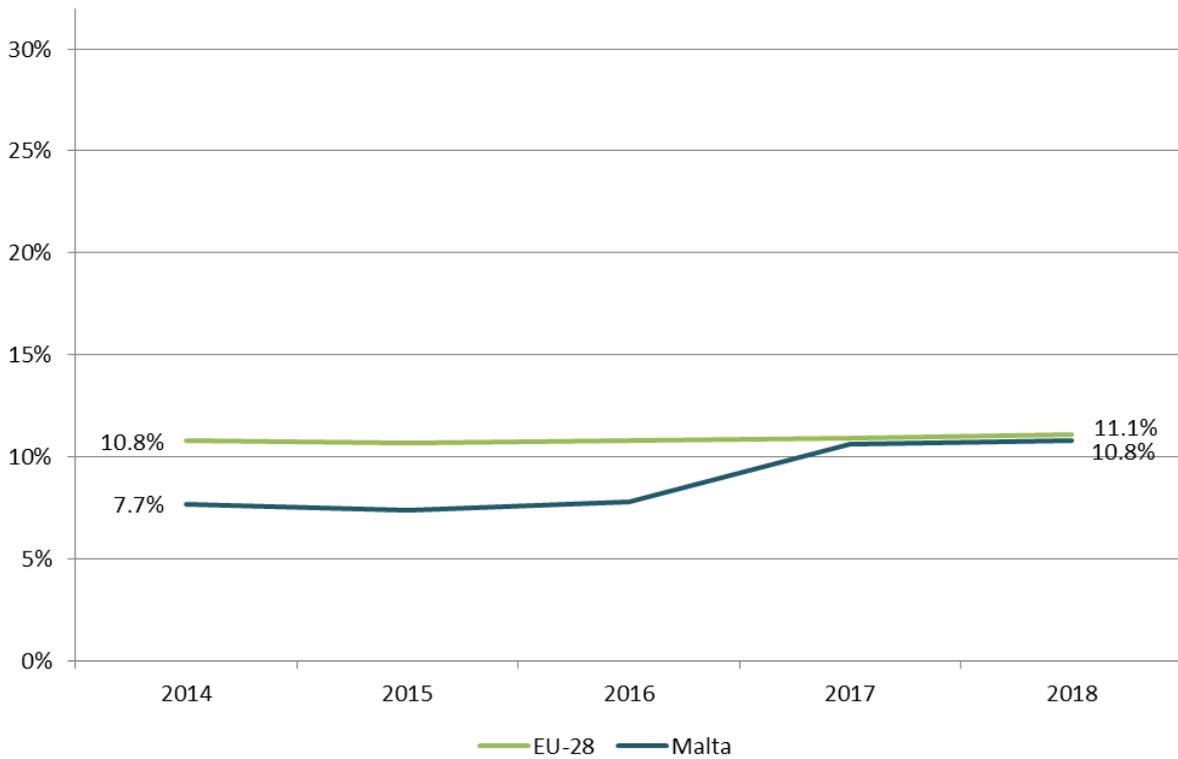
Drop-out rate in VET

Information not available

4.6. Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning offers training opportunities for adults, including early school leavers from education. The older unemployed groups are also covered.

Participation in lifelong learning in 2014-18



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training; break in series.

Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [extracted 16.5.2019].

Participation in lifelong learning in Malta has been increasing. From 7.7% in 2014, it reached 10.8% in 2018 just 0.3 percentage points below the EU-28 average (11.1%).

4.7. VET learners by age

Information not available

[20] Eurostat table t2020_41 [extracted 22.10.2018].

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED 0);
- primary education (ISCED Level 1);
- secondary education (ISCED Levels 2 and 3);
- post-secondary general education (ISCED Level 3);
- post-secondary vocational education and training (ISCED Levels 3 and 5);
- tertiary education (ISCED levels 6,7 and 8).

Early childhood education and care, available for children from the age of 3 months up to 2 years and 9 months, is provided at centres run by both the state and private entities. As from April 2014, families with both parents in full-time or part-time employment or in education are entitled to free childcare. Children between the ages of 2 years and 9 months and 5 years attend kindergarten classes that are operated by State, church and independent schools.

Compulsory education is distributed over 11 years and covers the ages from 5 to 16 years. It consists of two cycles: the primary cycle (from age 5 to 11) and the secondary cycle (from age 11 to 16) which consists of middle schools (from age 11 to 13) and secondary schools (from age 13 to 16). Around 50% of students in compulsory education attend state schools, another 36% go to church schools and around 14% are in independent schools.

Primary education consists of a six-year programme that addresses general and vocational themes. Learners are streamed in the last two years and sit for the national end of primary benchmark assessment in year 6 to determine their level of education.

As from 2014, co-education has been introduced in the secondary cycle. The phasing in of middle schools (from age 11 to 13) ensures that smaller sized school communities result in more individual attention and a more caring environment that promotes better student-teacher relationships. Parent involvement is encouraged with a view of preventing disengagement. The curriculum addresses general and vocational skills.

All secondary schools (from age 13 to 16) provide general education courses and also options for students who want to follow a vocational career pathway. At the end of secondary education students are awarded a Secondary School Certificate & Profile (SSC&P) that recognizes formal, non-formal and informal education. Students may sit for the secondary education certificate exams that are a prerequisite for taking up many of the programmes available at upper-secondary and post-secondary level.

Following compulsory education students can choose to follow either a general or a vocational post-secondary education path (from age 16 to 18). General and some vocational education programmes are intended to lead to tertiary education. The main institutions at post-secondary level are the Malta junior college, the Giovanni Curmi Higher secondary school, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Institute of Tourism Studies, the latter providing hospitality courses.

The University of Malta (UoM) ([23]), also an autonomous institution, offers tertiary general education programmes ranging from certificate and under-graduate level to doctoral level. Tertiary vocational education is provided by Malta college of arts, science and technology's university college. It is envisaged that Institute of Tourism Studies will also start to provide degree courses. Private organisations also provide post-secondary and tertiary education ([24]).

- For students with an EQF level 1 qualification: one-year introduction and foundation programmes (lower secondary, ISCED-P 253) leading to an EQF level 1 or 2 certificate. They integrate key competences within the vocational aspects of the curriculum, include work experience, and give access to studies at the next EQF level in the same field. The most popular fields of study are manufacturing, construction and arts and humanities. Foundation certificate holders can continue VET in one- to two-year apprenticeship schemes (upper secondary, ISCED-P 353) leading to a VET diploma (EQF level 3);
- for students with an EQF level 2 compulsory education qualification: two-year, mainly school- (college-) based programmes (upper secondary, ISCED-P 353) leading to a VET diploma (EQF level 3). These programmes include work-based learning and give access to programmes at the next level;
- for those with an EQF level 3 compulsory education qualification: VET programmes (post-secondary, ISCED-P 454) leading to an advanced VET diploma (EQF level 4). There are school (college)-based two-year programmes and two- to three-year apprenticeship schemes. Some programmes can be followed either college-based or on apprenticeship. VET diploma (EQF level 3) holders can enter these programmes as well.

VET in higher education includes:

- two-year college-based programmes (ISCED-P 554) leading to higher VET diplomas at EQF level 5. A VET advanced diploma (EQF level 4) is required for entry. Higher VET diplomas are equivalent to a degree after the first two years of a university programme; they allow entry to the third year of VET bachelor programmes provided graduates meet entry requirements. Higher VET diploma graduates from the Institute of Tourism Studies can also pursue a bachelor in tourism programme at the university of Malta;
- three- to four-year bachelor programmes (ISCED 655, leading to EQF level 6) which open up progression opportunities to selected academic master programmes. Institute of Tourism Studies offers three VET bachelor programmes. VET bachelor programmes are open to:
 - sixth-form graduates with two advanced and two intermediate level passes;
 - Malta College of Arts Science and Technology advanced diploma (EQF level 4) graduates;
 - VET higher diploma programme graduates (see above);
 - Institute of Tourism Studies diploma (MQF level4);
 - Institute of Tourism Studies Higher National Diploma (MQF level 5)
- three-year part-time VET master programmes (EQF level 7) at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. In 2016/17 an MBA for small business and a master of business informatics programmes were offered for the first time. Graduates with an academic bachelor degree from the University of Malta or a Malta College of Arts Science and Technology VET bachelor degree can enter these programmes. By February 2019, the suite of Master’s programmes offered at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology will go up to thirteen.

Government’s ambition is to become a learning society by developing adult education especially continuing VET and easing access to these forms of learning. The education and employment ministry’s department for employment, research, lifelong learning and employability ([25]) is the main provider of part-time adult learning courses. Its adult learning unit offers over 500 EQF level 1-5 courses in community-based learning centres, local councils and community centres. Most courses develop basic key competences, but the offer also includes continuing VET and visual and performing arts courses.

State VET providers also offer continuing VET courses. Around 300 part-time courses at Malta college of Arts, Science and Technology cater to adults who cannot take part in full-time programmes due to employment, business, family or other commitments. They support career development and, in some cases, enable participants to take up more specialised jobs.

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology provides tailor made courses to industry, on demand. In view of the general shortage of workers, industries are resorting to upskilling their own employees rather than solely seeking readily-skilled employees from outside their firm. During 2015, 62% of enterprises provided some form of continuous vocational training. These included; in-house continuing VET courses, job rotation, exchanges, secondments, study-visits, conferences, workshops, learning circles or self-directed learning.

Firms might well provide in-house training to their employees but partnering with Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology gives them the opportunity to provide employees with level-rated courses and Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology -badged certification, either for full qualifications or for partial awards, both pegged to the Malta qualifications framework. As a result, the population of part-time students at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology is increasing, with Maltese and foreign workers choosing to upskill themselves, directly or through their employers, in order to get higher accredited and Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology -badged certification.

[23] <https://www.um.edu.mt/>

[24] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/malta_en

[25] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

Reform of apprenticeship was launched in 2014 following 2013 and 2014 European semester country-specific recommendations. It merged off-the-job education and on-the-job learning in a single apprenticeship scheme and helped place more emphasis on quality. It also strengthened the role of employers in assessment and set the stage for fully implementing a three-tier framework comprising work placements (EQF levels 1-4), apprenticeships (EQF levels 3-4) and internships (EQF level 5 and above). Attracting more learners to VET by expanding work-based learning and motivating them to stay in labour market relevant programmes, the reform contributes to reducing early leaving.

Malta college of arts, science and technology took over administration of apprenticeships from the public employment service Jobsplus in 2014 and renamed it the national apprenticeship scheme. The enactment of the work-based learning and apprenticeship act, which came into force in March 2018 ([26]), further consolidated the reform in apprenticeship and work-based learning. It is based on research conducted by Cedefop together with local learners, educators, employers and trade unions. The research included also a review of international legislation on traineeships and benchmarking of best practices within countries leading in the field of vocational education and training.

The Act aims at strengthening work-based learning and apprenticeship by:

- setting definitions and operational parameters for work placements, apprenticeships and internships;
- outlining responsibilities and governance structures (such as the national skills council);
- defining rights and obligations for VET providers, employers and learners;
- highlighting the role of employers as responsible learning partners;
- setting a compulsory minimum number of hours for all forms of work-based learning and linking remuneration to the minimum wage;
- using ECVET/ECTS in all forms of work-based learning;
- introducing a single EQF-based apprenticeship qualification replacing the dual certification currently in place;
- launching a training agreements register to support data collection and policy-relevant analysis by the national skills council.

Recent developments at Malta college of Arts, Science and Technology, reflecting the ambition to ensure quality work-based learning opportunities (apprenticeship, internship or work exposure) in all its programmes, include:

- mainstreaming pilot projects (placements, apprenticeship and internship) into full-time programmes;
- developing work-based vocational competences for all apprenticeship programmes, serving as assessment benchmarks (apprenticeships office);
- making internship compulsory in all EQF level 6 programmes;
- launching an entrepreneurship centre (in collaboration with Malta enterprise) to give learners opportunities to transform innovative ideas into profitable and sustainable business ventures.

Malta College of Arts Science and Technology offers also work placement opportunities abroad and includes entrepreneurship training in its VET bachelor degree courses.

At the Institute of Tourism Studies, work-based learning in the form of 14-week local industrial trade practice during summer is compulsory for/in programmes up to EQF level 3 (ISCED 353).

EQF level 4 (ISCED 354) and 5 (ISCED 554) Institute of Tourism Studies programmes include a mandatory 12-month internship abroad. Work-based learning in higher VET takes the form of internships and/or entrepreneurship training.

Apprenticeship has expanded to new sectors and participation has increased reaching 890 in 2018. Students following courses at the Institute of Engineering and Transport account for 50% of apprenticeship placements. In 2018, around 36% of diploma courses at Malta qualifications framework level 3 (European qualifications framework level 3) and 72% of advanced diploma courses at Malta qualifications framework level 4 (European qualifications framework level 4) are on apprenticeship. The remaining courses at both Malta qualifications framework level 3 and levels 1 and 2 (European qualifications framework levels 3 and levels 1 and 2) include other forms of work placement.

Apprenticeships will also be introduced through other providers, including private ones, to tap new areas of expertise. The aim is to make apprenticeships more inclusive and more flexible for learners, for instance by offering part-time schemes.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

[26] <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=28680&l=1>

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The education and employment ministry is in charge of VET in compulsory education and at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology ([27]). The Institute of Tourism Studies ([28]) falls under the responsibility of the tourism ministry.

As the official regulatory body for post-compulsory education, the national commission for further and higher education supports excellence through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta qualifications framework. It also acts as a broker between the government and VET and higher education institutions, structures stakeholder dialogue, and oversees Malta qualifications framework implementation.

Social partners sit on the boards of the state VET providers. Given the small size of the country, governance structures at provider level are important; efforts to optimise them have largely been steered by providers themselves.

The thematic organisation of Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology in six institutes has helped encourage focused stakeholder dialogue and has provided a platform for employers and employee representatives to be involved in steering VET.

The foundation, technical and university colleges – which structure the programme offer by programme level – were introduced in 2015. They complement the thematic structure with a view to being in a better position to develop focused strategies that balance addressing learning needs of students at different levels with employer interests and other stakeholder needs.

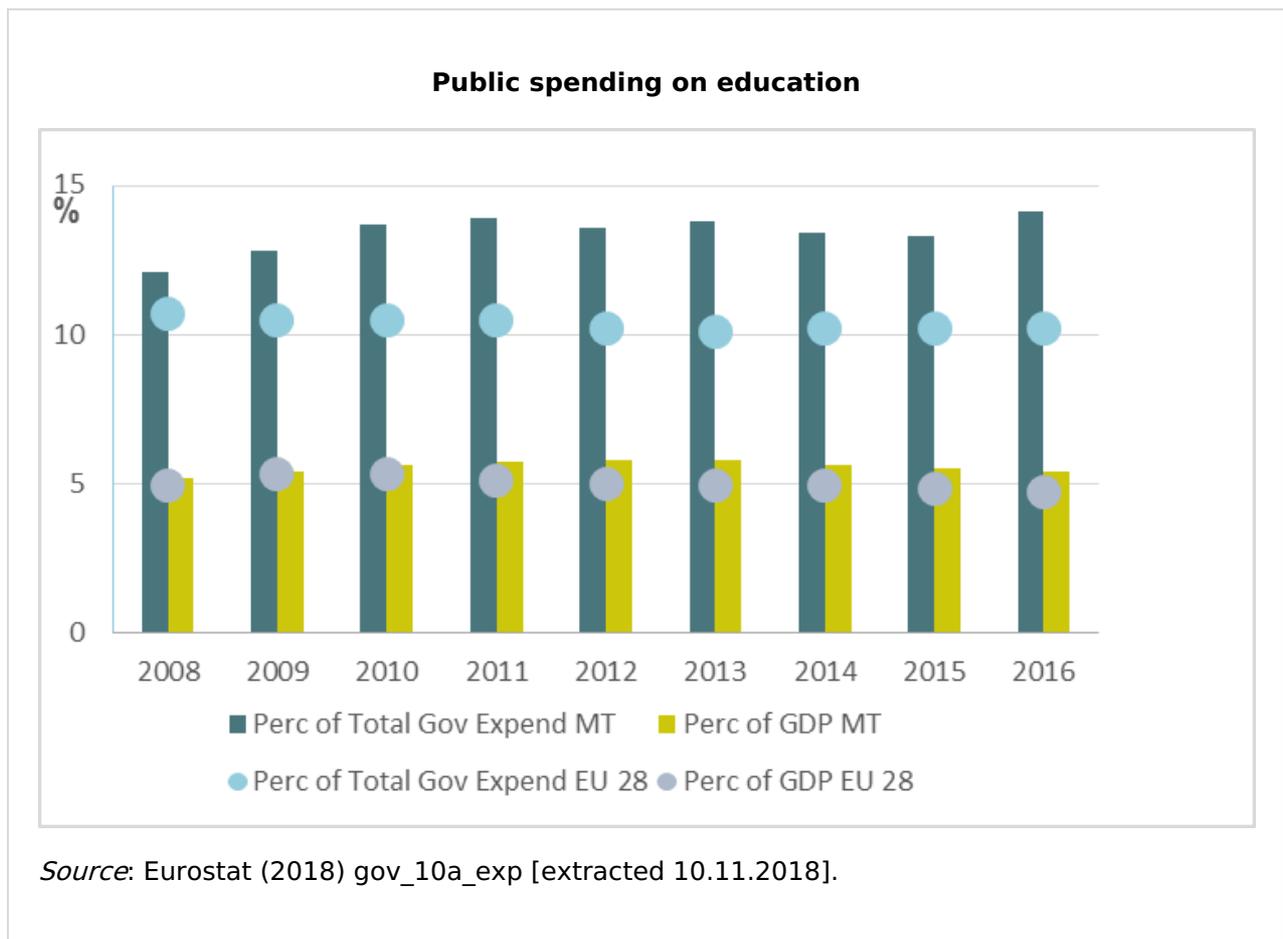
[27] <https://mcast.edu.mt/>

[28] <https://its.edu.mt/>

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

Public education from early childhood education and care up to tertiary level, including all initial vocational education and training offered by schools and state providers up to European qualifications framework level 6, is financed by the government. The budget for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Institute of Tourism Studies is part of government education expenditures. Tuition fees paid by participants in continuing VET courses generate extra revenue for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Institute of Tourism Studies.



CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1. VET teacher types

In Malta VET teachers are present in the following areas ([29]):

- within compulsory education teaching vocational subjects. These teachers are delivering their subjects at the secondary level of education; they are employed within the grade of teacher and enjoy the same salary scales and conditions as any other teacher employed at compulsory level within the public sector. There is no distinction in teacher employment grades and qualifications required for these grades between general education subjects and vocational subject teachers;
- at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology is the main state VET provider, provides courses from Malta qualifications framework level 1 on the Malta qualifications framework up to Malta qualifications framework level 7 which is equivalent to Master's degree. There are specific standards applied to the qualifications of VET teachers teaching the different qualification levels within Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. VET teachers catering for up to level 4 qualifications need to have a minimum of a level 5 qualification. Those teaching at level 5 and higher need to have a minimum of a level 6 qualification. It is not legally necessary for VET teachers to possess teacher training qualifications at recruitment stage. This is mainly the case as there is no official provision of initial teacher training for post-compulsory VET education. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology offers to its VET teachers a teacher training course (the Malta qualifications framework level 6) in order to complement for the lack of initial teacher training. The course is offered on a part-time basis and takes place in the evenings;
- at the Institute of Tourism Studies. The Institute of Tourism Studies is a state funded organisation which provides training in the hospitality industry at post compulsory level like Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. VET teachers at the Institute of Tourism Studies are not required to have a teacher training qualification on recruitment, even if a qualification in the sector is required. In the past the Institute of Tourism Studies offered an European qualifications framework level 5 qualification in teacher training organised by the faculty of education, university of Malta, to all its staff in order to ensure that all staff has received a teacher training. Current teachers at the Institute of Tourism Studies follow the teacher training courses offered by Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology;
- within private VET providers who cater for post- compulsory and adult learners. There is no specific regulation of qualifications for VET teachers in the private sector. However, qualifications and courses accredited by the national commission for further and higher education specify that accredited vocational courses at Malta qualifications framework levels 1-4 should have tutors/VET trainers qualified at least with a relevant full qualification at level 5. In the case of vocational courses at Malta qualifications framework levels 5 and 6 as well as academic courses at levels 6 and 7, tutors should have a full relevant qualification at least one level up from the course provided. The clarification issued by the national commission for further and higher education also states that in the case of vocational courses up to level 5, when there is clear evidence that the local market does not provide tutors of the required qualification level, the national commission for further and higher education will consider proposals for twinned provision. This involves namely that a highly-experienced and effective tutor with a lower qualification level is mentored by a colleague with a qualification at the appropriate level, who is preferably also involved in co-delivery, to ensure that the required level of learning outcomes delivery and assessment is maintained. Private VET providers are regulated further and higher education in Malta which specifies that all further and higher

education institutions need to ensure that teaching staff are qualified as one of the standards for internal quality assurance ([30]). Since quality assurance audits are still in their early stages, no general understanding about what auditors expect in terms of VET teachers' qualifications has yet developed;

- at the workplace, i.e. apprenticeship tutors and mentors. Apprentices are supported by two different groups of professionals during their workplace learning experience. When an apprentice obtains an apprenticeship contract with an employer, the employer is legally bound to assign a mentor to each apprentice. The mentor is usually a trusted employee, often with a supervisory role within the company and who has the responsibility of training the apprentice and supervising his work. The mentor is responsible for ensuring that the agreed learning programme for work-based learning is implemented. In addition to this mentoring, the apprentice is visited at work by VET teachers who are experts in the sector. The objective of these visits is to monitor the apprentice's progress with respect to the learning of skills related to the course of study. The visits also serve to ensure that the apprentice is being provided with good learning work experience, and if any problems arise, these are tackled by the VET teacher. Thus, there are two roles within the apprenticeship scheme: tutors (VET teachers) and mentors (company employees). Visits by VET teachers to companies are part of the new reform in apprenticeship and have only started taking place during the 2014/15 academic year. There is currently no national legislation that regulates the qualification of mentors.

Higher education is an entry-level requirement for the teaching profession.

For compulsory (not-primary) education teachers, there have traditionally been two routes: a dedicated four-year bachelor of education degree programme and a one-year postgraduate certificate in education programme (European qualifications framework level 7) following a bachelor degree in a subject field. In October 2016, the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta introduced a Master's degree in teaching and learning for first cycle degree graduates. For the first time vocational subjects have been included as areas of specialisation.

As from October 2018, the Institute for Education (IFE) is providing a bachelor's and a master's degree programme with specialisation in the teaching of VET subjects. The courses are being offered part-time after school hours and using a blended learning modality. This has been done in order to increase accessibility for those who are already working full time and wish to upgrade their qualifications and professional competences. The Institute for Education also acts as a platform for sharing experience and promoting educational leadership. Its activities include developing a wide array of accredited teacher training opportunities and establishing international partnerships, are financed by ministry and EU funds.

9.2. Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

The new sectoral agreement between the education and employment ministry and the Malta union of teachers, which was signed in December 2017 ([31]) and covers the years 2018-22, gives greater emphasis to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This new agreement broadens the concept of continuing professional development to include all development opportunities that nurture and cherish the creation of a Community of Professional Educators (CoPE). Continuing professional development encompasses as of October 2018 all initiatives that facilitate professional discussion and growth amongst community members, such as school development planning sessions, continuous professional development and links with the internal and external community.

Management has at its disposition a maximum of 40 hours-driven Community of Professional Educators time annually (out of 80 hours). All educators are being encouraged to participate in

self-sought Continuing Professional Development. Since January 2018 this is compensated by accelerated salary progression.

As from September 2018, progression of teachers to the next salary scale may be accelerated from eight to six years if they cumulate an aggregate of 360 hours recognised self-taught Continuous Professional Development (CPD) time over six (6) years.

Continuing VET development has placed teacher continuing professional development high on the agenda of State providers. To prepare for the nationwide introduction of VET subjects in 2015, VET subject teachers and university graduates expressing interest in teaching VET subjects were trained to teach the newly introduced VET subjects at compulsory level were given the opportunity to take part in a training programme comprising content, practical pedagogy and new assessment methods, as well as guidance to help prevent early leaving from education and training.

Community of professional educators training sessions for teachers of all mainstream subjects in compulsory education, including VET teachers, are being held throughout 2018/19. All learning programmes including VET ones, are being written as learning outcomes.

Malta College of Arts Science and Technology provides continuous Continuing Professional Development opportunities for its lecturing staff. It regularly offers staff with European qualifications framework level 6 qualifications in vocational areas the opportunity to do an European qualifications framework level 6 30-credit graduate teaching certificate in VET, which gives VET lecturers the opportunity to acquire pedagogical skills.

Given that Malta College of Arts Science and Technology is also fast developing its portfolio of bachelor's and master's degrees, the research activity in the college is becoming always more important. To this end Malta College of Arts Science and Technology has also developed a post graduate certificate in research methods and a post graduate diploma in research methods. The aim of both European qualifications framework level 7 qualifications is to equip its lecturing staff with the necessary competences to carry out research together with their undergraduate and graduate students.

In 2019, Malta College of Arts Science and Technology introduced the master's degree in vocational education applied research to equip specialists and leaders in vocational education and training with current and future competencies needed to prepare learners for the world of employment. This proposes to bring about a shift towards innovative practices that link teaching and impact research within the context of vocational, further and higher education. It offers participants an experiential learning experience in vocational education through the interlinked fields of competence-based development and research-based development.

This innovative approach drives towards developing the scholarship of teaching through systematic engagement, systematic reflection and systematic research, ultimately aimed at increasing the educational capacity for teaching and research.

Quality assurance standards govern continuing professional development and drive efforts aimed at sustaining quality in teaching and learning at the Institute of Tourism Studies. In 2015, the institute started collaborating with Haaga Helia ([32]). A process for validating informal and non-formal prior learning was designed using European guidelines to help customise lecturing staff training programmes leading to top-up degrees in hospitality services.

Upskilling staff via the degree programme in hospitality management developed by Haaga Helia ([33]) puts the Institute of Tourism Studies in the position to offer bachelor degree programmes in the hospitality and tourism sector from 2017 onwards.

To raise the profile of adult educators, the directorate for research, lifelong learning and

employability ([34]) of the education and employment ministry launched an European qualifications framework level 5 national diploma programme in teaching adults in 2014. The work is part of the implementation of the national lifelong learning strategy and was kick-started with funds for implementing the EU agenda for adult learning.

As a driver of quality and student results, teacher continuing professional development is a strategic priority. Continuing professional development also contributes to meeting demand for teachers, foreseen in the near future, by making the profession more attractive. Government encourages teacher continuing professional development through incentives such as sabbaticals and paid study leave schemes, the endeavour scholarship, Malta government undergraduate and postgraduate schemes, and reach high post-doctoral scholarships.

More information is available in the Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspective on teachers and trainers ([35])

[29] Information taken from <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers>

[31] The previous sectorial agreement between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) included a statutory requirement for teachers to attend an in-service course (INSET) of three days duration every two years. Educators could also attend CPD on a voluntary basis. This agreement increases the duration of CPD as well as widens the range of CDP provision. It also places responsibility of the school to cover at least 40 hours of CPD out of 80 hours.

[32] Haaga Helia is a Finnish private educational institution: <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/about-haaga-helia/organization?userLang=en>

[33] <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/frontpage>

[34] Directorate For Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE): <https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>

[35] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers>

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1. Anticipating skill needs

Labour market and skills analysis in Malta has for long mostly been based on labour force survey (LFS) statistics, administrative data on employment and registered unemployment collected by Jobsplus([36]) and its predecessor, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), and ad hoc surveys. These sources help monitor the labour market situation and quantify past trends; they continue to be used to provide insight on how employment is changing.

Forward looking information on skill needs has been scarce and limited in scope. Sources offering insight into future employment needs include regular industry trends surveys among employers in the manufacturing, investment, retail, services and construction sectors ([37]) and the annual attractiveness survey ([38]) among Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies and investors in Malta. These surveys and other sectoral foresight exercises tend to be qualitative, with a short-term focus and offering few possibilities to produce more specific information on skills. This limits their potential to contribute to forward-looking education and employment policies and their use by employers to plan ahead for future human resource needs.

Malta is working towards developing a coherent system for producing and interpreting skills intelligence to understand future skill needs better. The national skills council is in the process of setting up an econometric model/mechanism for skills forecasting. This process is being guided by the outcomes/results of the national employee skills survey report (published by Jobsplus, national commission for further and higher education and Malta enterprise). The national skills council is also drafting a national skills strategy that aligns itself to the existing strategies (including the lifelong learning strategy) while identifying individual transversal skills that should be integrated into all streams of education and training.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast ([39]) and European Skills Index ([40]).

10.2. Designing qualifications

The Malta qualifications framework was launched in 2007 by the qualifications council. It covers Initial VET and continuing VET and encompasses qualifications at all levels, attained through formal, non-formal and informal learning. In 2009, Malta was the first country to reference its framework to the European qualifications framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). Legislation adopted in 2012 established its legal basis and made the national commission for further and higher Education responsible for all aspects of the Malta qualifications framework.

Unlike qualifications frameworks in many other Member States, the Malta qualifications framework also covers programmes not leading to full qualifications. Accredited programmes (courses) with level rated-learning outcomes not meeting requirements of a qualification, in terms of credits offered, lead to 'awards'. The distinction was introduced to help learners and employers better understand different types of certification and their role in recruitment and career advancement.

The structure of qualifications and the procedure of accrediting programmes is to be found in the referencing report 2016 ([41]).

The referencing report states that courses that can be accredited as 'qualifications' up to Level 7 need to fulfil the following criteria:

- learning must be in line with the level descriptor equivalent to the specific qualification level targeted;
- learning must fulfil the number of credits required; and
- in the case of initial VET qualifications, the number of credits includes the indicated percentage of the course dedicated to key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

It is important that training courses are pitched at the right level of difficulty of learning in terms of knowledge, skills and competences covered and the learning outcomes to be achieved following the learning experience. Both the state and private sector offer short courses that do not have the necessary number of credits to be called a qualification. These courses are usually of different duration, and consequently have different credit allocations. Any course which fulfils the level of learning but not the required number of credits to qualify for the title of 'qualification' are to be called 'award'.

The requirements for courses to be considered as 'awards' are the following:

- the learning outcomes need to reflect the level of learning indicated in the specific Malta qualifications framework level descriptor;
- the number of credits assigned to the course are either less than those specified for a qualification at the particular Malta qualifications framework level, or in the case of VET, do not reflect the required distribution of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

[36] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

[37] Organised by the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Findings are frequently used in Central Bank of Malta reports.

[38] For the latest edition, see Ernst & Young Limited (2016). The survey includes information on recruitment problems and skill mismatch.

[39] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast>

[40] <https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index>

[41] <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The Malta qualifications framework development has gone hand-in-hand with strengthening VET quality culture. Establishing and maintaining standards in the context of the qualifications framework falls within the remit of the education and employment ministry.

Upper secondary and higher initial VET and continuing VET

The national commission for further and higher education is responsible for quality assurance in VET and higher education. The national quality assurance framework ([42]) launched in 2015 was a significant step forward and the first of its kind in Europe. The framework covers upper secondary and higher VET (initial VET), continuing VET as well as other types of further, higher and adult formal education offered by state and private providers.

The framework implements legal provisions on internal quality assurance and periodic external quality audits (Subsidiary legislation 2012/327.433) and provides the conceptual context for this work. The culture of good quality assurance practice at provider level and providers' readiness to take on board a more systematic quality assurance approach – two key findings of a 2014 scoping study – informed the approach to its development: fostering a quality culture by complementing internal quality assurance mechanisms already in place with an external quality assurance system adapted to national and stakeholder needs.

The framework is based on European quality assurance standards and guidelines and enriched by EQAVET and its quality criteria and indicators. It provides guidance for areas which are vital for quality without prescribing how quality assurance is to be carried out. An internal quality assurance system, accreditation and initial and follow-up external provider and programme quality audits by the national commission for further and higher education are mandatory requirements for licensing. Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, the Institute of Tourism Studies and the university of Malta were the first to undergo external quality assurance audits in mid-2015. As self-accrediting institutions, they are not subject to provider and programme accreditation.

Arrangements at provider level supporting quality assurance include the online employer satisfaction survey by Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology's quality assurance office and regular contacts with sectors. VET providers use EQAVET indicators to plan quality programmes, and the national commission for further and higher education encourages them to evaluate programme outcomes and to use findings for continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an important development in Malta. Recognition of prior learning is a form of assessment which is the process of recognising a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, education, work and/or general life experience.

The benefits of recognition of prior learning may be the reduced time a learner has to spend attending classes, undertaking assessments or relearning what they already know. The evidence the applicant provides must be authentic (something they have prepared, produced or has been written about them by a relevant third party), and must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to grant credit for a subject, module, course or qualification.

In 2015, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology started collaborating with Haag Heliia ([43]).

A process for validating informal and non-formal prior learning was designed using European guidelines to help customise lecturing staff training programmes leading to top-up degrees in hospitality services. Candidates must clearly identify the degree, unit and module learning outcome or competences they wish to be assessed through recognition for prior learning on the application form. Only a maximum of 50% of the total European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) or European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) for a degree programme or unit may be rewarded through credit transfer of the recognition of prior learning([44]).

Upskilling staff via the degree programme in hospitality management developed by Haag Heliia ([45]) puts the Institute of Tourism Studies in the position to offer bachelor degree programmes in the hospitality and tourism sector from 2017 onwards.

Recognition of prior learning is the basis for the validation of informal and non-formal learning. Validation of informal and non-formal learning in Malta is regulated by Subsidiary Legislation 327.432, Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Learning Regulations of September 2012 ([46]).

The national commission for further and higher education provides validation services and for this purpose has set up seven Sector Skills Units (SSUs) and is currently working on establishing other new sector skills units. The current sector skills units cover the following industries/ sectors:

- automotive;
- health and social care;
- education support;
- printing and digital media;
- hospitality and tourism;
- hair and beauty;
- construction and building services.

The national commission for further and higher education has already published 13 National Occupational Standards (NOSs). These national occupational standards consist of a set of job-related standards that highlight the performance expected from an individual when carrying out a specific function.

These standards are pegged to the Malta qualifications framework and are therefore drawn up using the learning outcomes approach. The national occupational standards are of important use to both employers and employees as they stipulate the related knowledge, skills and competences required in the different occupations and the aligned levels of these occupations.

The national commission for further and higher education is also currently in the process of finalising another 6 national occupational standards that have been drafted by the hospitality and tourism sector skills unit.

In 2017, the national commission for further and higher education signed memoranda of understanding with Jobsplus ([47]) and the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) ([48]) to carry out the assessment procedures and tests for validating informal and non-formal learning, for the national occupational standards listed above. The national commission for further and higher education has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Institute of Tourism Studies to carry out the validation assessment procedures for the hospital and tourism national occupational standards.

It is to be noted that validation in Malta takes place in four distinct stages: identification, documentation, assessment and certification as per the European guidelines issued by Cedefop in 2015 ([49]).

[43] <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/frontpage>

[44] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%20016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.

[45] <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/frontpage>

[46] <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11928&l=1>

[47] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

[48] <https://bicc.gov.mt/en/Pages/HOME.aspx>

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

Initial VET

Maltese and EU students enrolling in full-time initial VET programmes up to European qualifications framework level 6 do not pay tuition or registration fees. There are additional financial incentives for VET learners. Maltese students over 16, including those in VET programmes at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology or the Institute of Tourism Studies, benefit from maintenance grants. EU and EEA citizens, as well as third country nationals, are entitled to the same rights, provided they have resident or refugee status and meet several other requirements. The maintenance grant scheme includes:

- a yearly initial grant (EUR 232.94) for purchasing textbooks and other educational materials. For students progressing to Malta College of Arts Science and Technology top-up degree programmes the initial grant is doubled and complemented by a one-time grant amounting to EUR 465.87 ([50]);
- a stipend (every four weeks between October and June) of EUR 88.44;
- a supplementary grant (every four weeks between October and June) for learners facing financial difficulties and/or disability (EUR 74.50).

Other support measures include a contingency fund assisting students facing extraordinary circumstances and higher grants for single parents receiving social assistance; the grant amount increases with the qualification level achieved by the programme they take part in.

On the strength of the Work-based and Apprenticeship Act (2018) ([51]) an apprentice now has the legal status of a paid employee rather than of an unpaid student. 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 sponsor ([52]) and from the student maintenance grant.

Apprentices receive maintenance grants on top of the wage and half the annual statutory bonus ([53]) paid by employers.

Recent and continuing changes are increasing grants to make apprenticeship a more attractive learning path. Increased stipends for the summer months introduced in 2015 discourage apprentices from taking on a better paid summer job instead. The next step is topping up the grants by an amount that makes total income per hour (wage plus grants) spent learning at the workplace equal to the national minimum wage. The Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act introduces the proposal to implement the grant increase.

Maintenance grants in higher VET are used to steer learners towards programmes that educate them to become professionals in areas with labour market shortages. Students in so-called 'prescribed' and 'priority' VET bachelor degree programmes at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and other providers are entitled to higher maintenance grants. The 2016 amounts for prescribed degree programmes are EUR 151.99 (stipend), EUR 698.81 (initial grant) and EUR 698.81 (one-time grant).

Learners in high priority programmes receive a stipend of EUR 302.10. In 2016, prescribed and priority VET degree programmes included all those leading to a bachelor in mechanical engineering, electrical and electronics engineering and communications technology.

A students' maintenance grants board manages the maintenance grant scheme, evaluating

eligibility of applications, checking student attendance to ensure compliance with regulations, and paying the entitlements. Students making insufficient progress partly or fully lose their right to receive the grants.

Continuing VET

Education and employment ministry promotes continuing VET to increase adult participation in learning.

The directorate also regularly promotes its offer of lifelong learning courses to the wider public using social media and other channels.

- continuing VET and adult learning courses organised by the directorate for research, lifelong learning and employability ([54]) are subsidised by the government. Participants are charged a modest tuition fee ranging from EUR 11.65 to EUR 58.23;
- entry-level courses in Maltese, English, mathematics and science are offered free of charge. Migrants from EU Member States and elsewhere benefit from free basic literacy courses and subsidised English and Maltese as a foreign language courses.

Incentives for learners taking part in training for jobseekers and other continuing VET opportunities offered by Malta's public employment service Jobsplus ([55]) include:

- free provision of training courses;
- a training allowance for employed persons that earn less than EUR 300 (basic) per week and who successfully complete a Jobsplus' course (scheme known as the average wage earners scheme);
- an allowance for participants; in the traineeship scheme, bridging the gap scheme and work exposure scheme (80% of the minimum wage in both) and work exposure schemes;
- a subsidy scheme to cover childcare costs (EUR 1.50 per hour of childcare services) for participants in Jobsplus training courses;
- learners who follow a training programme that is: (1) recognised up to European qualifications framework level 5, (2) offered by a licensed training service provider, and (3) not offered by Jobsplus may benefit from the training pays scheme. This scheme offers a grant of 75% of the cost of training capped at EUR 1 000.

Learners paying tuition fees for courses offered by private providers, which often lead to qualifications issued by foreign accredited bodies, can benefit from scholarship schemes and grants, such as the endeavour scholarship scheme managed by the education and employment ministry. The get qualified scheme run by Malta enterprise grants tax deductions to cover the cost of programmes (European qualifications framework level 5 or higher) required by employers.

[50] Students who progress to a top-up degree course at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology will have EUR 465.87 made available every year in which they follow a top-up degree course, instead of EUR 232.94, to partly cover expenses related to educational material and equipment and a one-time grant of EUR 465.87.

[52] The term 'sponsor' refers to organisations or individuals registered and approved by a VET provider to provide the work-based learning component as part of a training programme leading to a qualification.

[53] In Malta, government bonuses are mandatory quarterly payments made by the employer to the employee, regardless of industry or organization type. These bonuses are paid in addition to the monthly wage. Over the period of a calendar year an employee would therefore be paid EUR 512.48 under this bonus scheme.

- [54] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [55] <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Tax deduction

Employers providing work-based learning opportunities lasting at least six months in their trade or business are entitled to a tax deduction of EUR 600 for each work placement they offer and EUR 1200 for each apprentice they take on (Regulated by Legal notice 2014/179).

Other incentives

Malta's Public Employment Service (PES) offers work-based learning opportunities through the work exposure scheme and the trainee scheme. During the exposure phase ([56]), employers are given the opportunity to train prospective employees without incurring any financial costs ([57]). Participants are matched in accordance with the industry demands of the employers. This matching suggests that the occupational preferences of the jobseekers are relevant to employers' requests.

The training aid framework, in place between 2008 until 2015, gave the private sector grants to finance staff training, with the level of support depending on the type of training and enterprise size.

Its successor, investing in skills, was launched in 2017. Since its launch there were a total of 130 entities which benefitted from the scheme.

The knowledge transfer incentive introduced in 2016 helps address skill mismatch and shortages by supporting employers to train and reskill their staff. The scheme also covers newly recruited employees. Employers in manufacturing and several other sectors (including computer programming, research and specialised design) can apply for tax credits to cover part of the costs of analysing training needs, developing training programmes, providing or outsourcing training, and wage costs for the hours their employees are in training. The share of eligible costs (70%) in small establishments (<50 employees) is higher than the corresponding share large establishments (250+ employees) are entitled to (50%).

Subsidy schemes make it easier for employers to provide work experience to young people and adults. Access to employment helps employers recruit jobseekers and the inactive (under some conditions including ex-apprentices) furthest from employment. The duration of the EUR 85-a-week subsidy (26, 52 or 104 weeks) depends on the target group.

Employers taking on disabled persons are entitled to a weekly subsidy of EUR 125 for maximum 156 weeks. Employers not benefitting from the access to employment scheme, will be eligible to claim a fiscal incentive of 25% of the disabled person's basic wage up to a maximum of EUR 4 500 for each person with disability. In addition, employers may apply to be exempted from paying their share of the National Insurance contribution in relation to the disabled employee.

[56] The term 'exposure phase' refers to the on-the-job training that takes place at the employer's premises where the trainee is placed. During the scheme the trainee must attend 240 hours of placement within a maximum period of 12 weeks.

[57] Jobplus subsidies prospective employee's training through European social fund.

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

Annual tracer studies provide evidence on educational and career choices and pathways of students after completing compulsory education in state and non-state schools. Since 2010 more students are continuing educations after leaving compulsory schooling. System and institutional changes make identifying longer-term trends difficult, but comparing most recent data with the situation before 2000 suggests an increasing share of learners choose VET after compulsory education, despite academic education remaining the most popular choice. As some learners would be better able to reach their potential through VET, it is important to develop guidance services further.

Compulsory education

Proposals in the career guidance policy for schools underpin current practice and recent developments of career guidance services in compulsory education ([58]). Career guidance in state schools is offered by college career advisors, trainee career advisors, school counsellors and guidance teachers. The service covers curricular, vocational and career guidance for students and their parents. Counsellors collaborate closely with VET institutions.

Career-related learning is provided through the personal, social and career development (PSCD) subject .Personal, social and career development 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.

Since 2014, careers education has become more important. The personal, social and career development strand on career exploration and management aims at helping learners manage their learning and career paths beyond school. Personal, social and career development has been increased from one to two hours per week. 15-year-olds take part in transition programmes offering one- week hands-on experience in industry. Together with final year schoolmates, they also benefit from orientation visits to workplaces and VET colleges.

The new career guidance platform will help to facilitate career choices for secondary school students between the ages of 11 and 16.

VET providers and Jobsplus

Different departments at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology provide student support services including: career guidance, personal counselling and learning support. There is also an information service that provides students with information about the training programmes offered by the college's institutes as well as the support services available both prior to enrolment and during their studies. Similar services are in place at the Institute of Tourism Studies.

Jobsplus guidance services 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 - introduced in 2016- Jobsplus has placed more emphasis on career guidance and individualised its services through profiling, personal employment advisors, and individual action plans. Support for individuals with a job 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 career path.

Towards a national guidance service

A recently established committee works on implementing the 2007 career guidance policy for schools. Plans are under way to set up a national lifelong guidance service responsible for sustaining quality services at all levels of education. Envisaged future developments include measures to widen access to guidance services measures (online portal) and to streamline provision across education and employment sectors. Besides complementing, supporting and integrating existing services, the national career guidance service will increase the interaction between education, industry and other stakeholders. The intention is to move from guidance services with a supply focus to a demand-led system; this will cater better to those in need of career information or advice on career-related information.

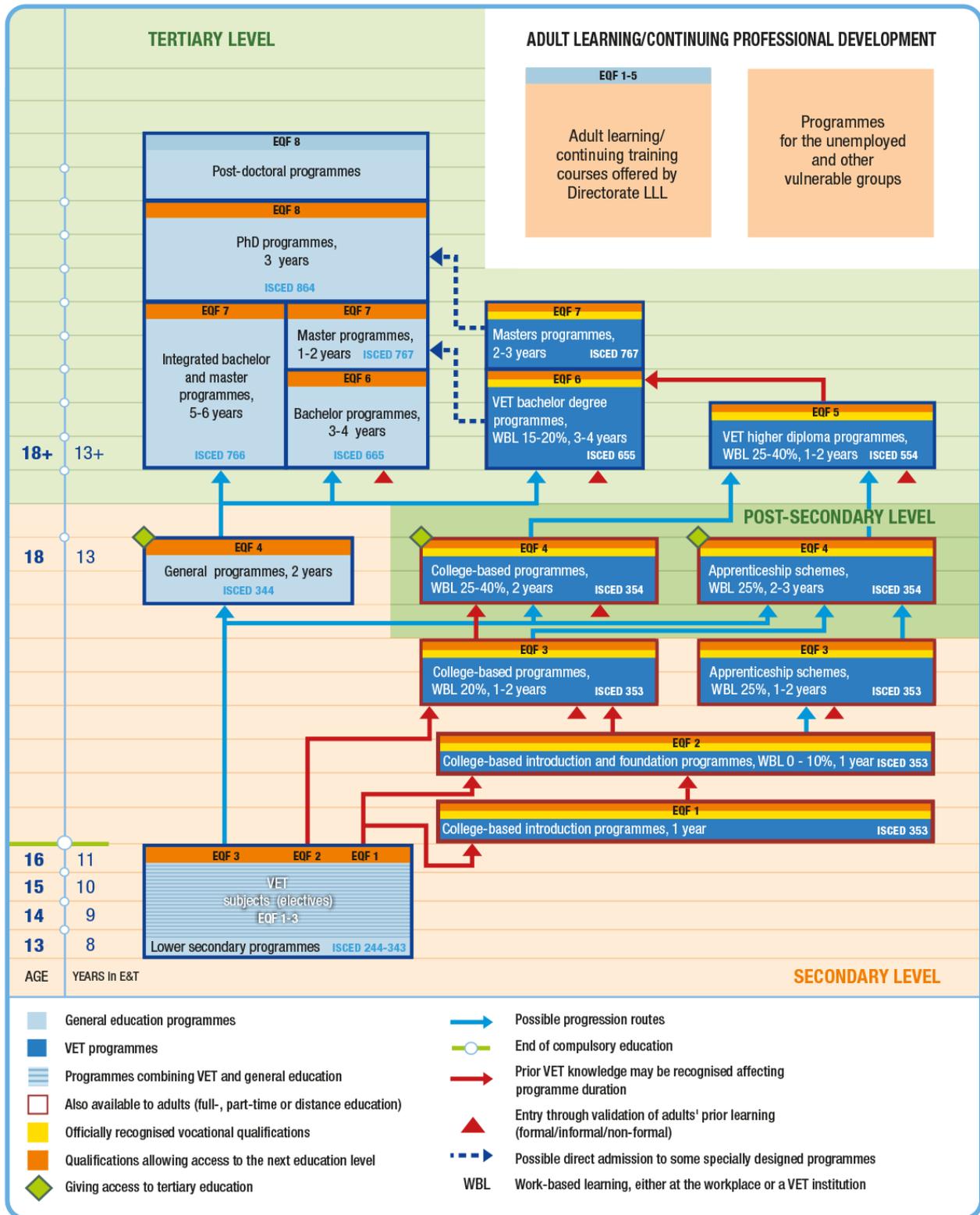
Please see:

- guidance and outreach Malta national report ([59]);
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit ([60]);
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices ([A1]).

[59] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>

[60] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Malta, 2019.

VET programme types

EQF 1	
College-based introduction programme, 1 year ISCED level 353	
Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 1, ISCED level 353	
EQF level 1	ISCED-P 2011 level 353
Usual entry grade 12	Usual completion grade 13
Usual entry age 16	Usual completion age 17
Length of a programme (years) 1	
Is it part of compulsory education and training? ❌	Is it part of formal education and training system? ✅
Is it initial VET? ✅	Is it continuing VET? ✅ Continuing VET courses are provided on a part-time basis.
Is it offered free of charge? ❌ Full and part-time courses offered by private provider are against payment. Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([62]) are at a nominal tuition fee.	Is it available for adults? ✅

ECVET or other credits VET level 1: 40 credits

From MQF/EQF Levels 5-8 credits are ECTS ([61])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)

- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies 10%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)

- practical training at school
- in-company practice
- work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs
- in-company, practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace

Main target groups

Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.

As from October 2016, the foundation college within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has developed a number of skills kits courses which offer more flexible, customised pathways towards achieving a certification. This programme is intended for learners who prefer to study at their own pace and explore different vocational areas. It is made up of a number of skills kits (small bite-size topics) covering various vocational areas as well as personal skills and employability skills. The programme gives the learners the possibility to choose how many skills kits to study over a period of time. It also gives the opportunity to choose from a combination of skills kits. These courses consist of short 20 hour programmes which individuals can achieve at their own pace and according to their needs.

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)

Learners must be at least 16 years old and in possession of the Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSCP). This is the certificate of accomplishment awarded at the end of compulsory education. Students are all given an initial assessment test.

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology also offers the award in vocational skills introductory A and B. This is a structured programme of study for students with learning disabilities/learning difficulties to consolidate the skills necessary to gain and maintain employment or to further their education.

Learners are trained in one of the following vocational areas: hospitality, office skills, production and retail. They are also assessed in key skills that include Maltese, English, mathematics, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), IT, and daily living and community skills.

A work placement experience within the college is also provided according to the vocational area being studied.

Before enrolling in the programme, students are required to attend for a three-day evaluation period to assess the suitability of the course and identify the vocational area according to their abilities.

This award is allotted 30 credits.

Assessment of learning outcomes

All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. Assessment is based on a mixture of formative and summative assessments.

Formative assessment includes take-home assignments and class-

based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.

Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.

Students have the possibility to have a resit.

Should they fail the resit, they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.

Certification is available at any stage.

Diplomas/certificates provided	Introductory certificate
Examples of qualifications	Shop assistant, commis waiter, back office assistant ([63])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>Those who complete this type of VET programme may continue their studies at EQF level 2 in a VET institution.</p> <p>Those learners who complete the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology award in vocational skills introductory A and B can progress to MQF/EQF Level 1 programmes.</p>
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	7.8 %([64])

[61] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.

- [62] Directorate For Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [63] As described in national context. MCAST Prospectus 2018/19 available at
https://www.mcast.edu.mt/rfm/source/Prospectus/Prospectus_2018/index.html#p=1. ITS
Prospectus 2018/19 available at: <https://its.edu.mt/courses-admission/its-prospectus.html>
- [64] The latest data is 7.8% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education
publication:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 2

College-based
introduction and foundation
programmes,
WBL 0-10%,
1 year
ISCED 353

Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 353

EQF level	2	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	17
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓

Full and part-time courses offered by private provider are against payment.

Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.

Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([66]) are at a nominal tuition fee.

ECVET or other credits 60 credits(ECVET)([65])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	10%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • in-company practice • work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs • in-company, practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace
Main target groups	<p>Programmes are available for young people and for adults.</p> <p>As from October 2016, the foundation college within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has developed a number of skills kits courses which offer more flexible, customised pathways towards achieving a certification. This programme is intended for learners who prefer to study at their own pace and explore different vocational areas. It is made up of a number of skills kits (small bite-size topics) covering various vocational areas as well as personal skills and employability skills. The programme gives the learners the possibility to choose how many skills kits to study over a period of time. It also gives the opportunity to choose from a combination of skills kits. These courses consist of short 20 hour programmes which individuals can achieve at their own pace and according to their needs.</p>
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Finished compulsory education and in possession of the Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSCP). This is the certificate of accomplishment awarded at the end of compulsory education.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology introductory certificate MQF/EQF level 1.</p> <p>Together with an initial assessment test.</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit.</p> <p>Should they fail the resit, they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.</p> <p>Certification is available at any stage.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Foundation certificate</p> <p>Level 2 (60 credits - ECVET)</p>
Examples of qualifications	<p>Hairdressing assistant, beauty therapist assistant</p> <p>stone mason/tile layer/ plumber/ welder/ assistant ([67])</p>
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>Those who complete the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology level 2 certificate can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF 3 initial VET institution.</p>

Information not available

Destination of graduates information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning ✓

The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.

General education subjects ✓

Key competences ✓

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners 3.9% ([68])

- [65] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [66] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE).
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [67] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [68] The latest data is 3.9% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 3

College-based
Programmes,
WBL 20%,
1-2 years
ISCED 353

Initial, College-based VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	17	Usual completion age	18-19
Length of a programme (years)	From 1 to 2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓
	<p>Full and part-time courses offered by private provider are against payment.</p> <p>Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.</p> <p>Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([70]) are at a nominal tuition fee.</p>		

ECVET or other credits 60 credits (ECVET) ([69])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice)

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • in-company practice • work practice at school takes place in workshops and labs • in-company, practice is carried out in company training premises and in the workplace
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Learners must hold at least 2 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area.</p> <p>(For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma in sport, the preferred subjects are: English language, biology and physical education).</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology foundation certificate</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit.</p> <p>Should they fail the resit, they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.</p> <p>Certification is available at any stage.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 3 certificate/diploma (60 ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Beauty specialist in a salon, hairdresser, security/enforcement/protection officer ([71])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Learners who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 4 or general education.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p>✓</p> <p>The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.</p>
General education subjects	✓

Key competences ✓

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners 7.7% ([72])

-
- [69] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [70] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [71] As described in national context with the exception of hairdresser (described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08,
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>)
- [72] The latest data is 7.7% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 3

Apprenticeship schemes,
WBL 25%,
1-2 years
ISCED 353

Initial-apprenticeship schemes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	17	Usual completion age	18-19
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓

Full and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment.

Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.

Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([74]) are at a nominal tuition fee.

ECVET or other credits 60 credits (ECVET) ([73])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- apprenticeships

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by 25%

schools and companies

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• practical training at school• work placement• apprenticeship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold at least 2 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area. (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma in sport, the preferred subjects are: English language, biology and physical education). Or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology foundation certificate
Assessment of learning outcomes	All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based. Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit. Students have the possibility to have a resit. Certification is available at all levels.
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 3 certificate/diploma (60 credits-ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Motor vehicle panel beater, motor vehicle sprayer, plasterer, tile layer, plumber ([75])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programme can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 4 or general education.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓

7 7% ([761])

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners**

- [73] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1> The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [74] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE):
<https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [75] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08,
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [76] The latest data is 7.7% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication accessed at:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 4

College-based programmes,
WBL 25-40%,
2 years
ISCED 354

Initial college- based VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16-18	Usual completion age	18-20
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓

Full and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment.

Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.

Part-time courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([78]) are at a nominal tuition fee.

ECVET or other credits 120 credits (ECVET) ([77])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- full-time on apprenticeship

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25-40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • in-company practice • apprenticeship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Learners must hold at least 4 EQF level 3 certificates preferably related to the study area.</p> <p>(For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in sport development, coaching and fitness, the preferred subjects are: English language, biology and physical education).</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Compulsory (For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in financial services: EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications in these subjects have to be presented: English language and mathematics together with any other two EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit.</p> <p>Certification is available at all levels.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 4 advanced diploma qualifications (120 credits-ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Assistant veterinary, laboratory technician, accounting technician ([79])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF levels 5-6 (either of VET or General education orientation)
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p>✓</p> <p>The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is</p>

still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.

General education subjects ✓

Key competences ✓

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners 18.1% ([80])

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- [77] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [78] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE): <https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [80] The latest data is 18.1% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication: https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 4

Apprenticeship schemes,
WBL 25%,
2-3 years
ISCED 354

Initial- Apprenticeship schemes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16-18	Usual completion age	18-20
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 to 3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
	<p>Unless a private provider is chosen by the learner</p> <p>Full and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment.</p> <p>Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.</p> <p>Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([82]) are at a nominal tuition fee.</p>		

ECVET or other credits 120 credits (ECVET) ([81])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- apprenticeships

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology;
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	25%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • in-company practice • apprenticeship <p>Since March 2018, apprenticeship schemes in Malta are regulated by the Work-Based Learning And Apprenticeship Act ([83]).</p>
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Learners must hold at least 4 EQF level 3 certificates, preferably related to the study area.</p> <p>(For example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in joinery, furniture design and manufacturing, the preferred subjects are: English language, mathematics, technical drawing, engineering drawing, engineering technology.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Compulsory: (for example, for Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma in graphic design and interactive media: EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications in art have to be presented: together with any other three EQF/MQF Level 3 qualifications. Moreover, in this case applicants may be asked to sit for an interview and/or present a portfolio.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology advanced diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit.</p> <p>Certification is available at all levels.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	EQF/MQF Level 4 Advanced Diploma Qualifications (120 credits-ECVET)
Examples of qualifications	Pharmacy technician, food technologist, office secretary ([84])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies to EQF level 5 or 6 (either VET or General education orientation).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior	

learning The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.

General education subjects ✓

Key competences ✓

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners 18.1% ([85])

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- [81] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%20016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [82] Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLE): <https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx>
- [83] <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12801&l=1>
- [84] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [85] The latest data is 18.1% as per National Commission for Further And Higher Education publication: https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%202015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 5

VET higher diploma programmes,
WBL 25-40%,
1-2 years
ISCED 554

Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	20+
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓
	<p>Full and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment.</p> <p>Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment. Courses provided by the directorate for lifelong learning, research and employability ([87]) are at a nominal tuition fee.</p>		

ECVET or other credits 120 credits (ECVET) ([86])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- full-time and part-time

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies 25-40%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • internship • work placement
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Learners must hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • either 4 EQF/MQF qualifications; • or Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology/Institute of Tourism Studies advanced diploma as per internal progression eligibility table.
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit.</p> <p>Should they fail the resit they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.</p> <p>At this level, students are generally expected to carry out an industry-based research project.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology higher diploma</p> <p>Institute of Tourism Studies diploma</p>
Examples of qualifications	Quantity surveyor, restaurant manager, kindergarten/learning support educator ([88])
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF levels 6, 7.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p>✓</p> <p>The evidence the applicant provides must be sufficient to demonstrate competence against the unit/s of competence. The applicant must also be able to demonstrate that this evidence is still current and relevant. This may be through a variety of means such as a portfolio of evidence, interviews, voluntary work, written answers, or a practical demonstration. The evidence of these skills and knowledge may be used to acquire partial qualification.</p>
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓

5 9% (1891)

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners**

- [86] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%20016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [87] Directorate for research, lifelong learning and employability(DRLLE)
[.https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx](https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Research%20and%20Innovation.aspx)
- [88] As described in national context.
- [89] The latest data is 5.9% as per National Commission for Further and Higher Education publication:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/Research/NCFHE%20Statistics%20Report%2002015-2016_synopsis.pdf

EQF 6

VET bachelor degree
Programmes,
WBL 15-20%,
3-4 years
ISCED 655

Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	655
Usual entry grade	18+	Usual completion grade	21+
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	21+
Length of a programme (years)	From 3 to 4		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓
	<p>Unless a private provider is chosen by the learner</p> <p>Full and part-time courses offered by private providers are against payment.</p> <p>Part-time courses at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are offered against payment.</p>		

ECVET or other credits 180 credits (ECVET) – Three-year bachelor course
240 credits (ECVET) – Four-year bachelor honours course ([90])

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer)
- internship

Main providers

- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- private VET providers

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies 25%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school • internship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an EQF level 4 certificate.
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p> <p>Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.</p> <p>Students have the possibility to have a resit. Should they fail the resit they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.</p> <p>Students are generally expected to go on an internship that is monitored by college-based staff as well as by tutors provided by the employer.</p> <p>Assessment also includes the presentation of a dissertation.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	VET bachelor degree
Examples of qualifications	Environmental engineer, mechanical engineer, marine engineer ([91]).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies to EQF level 7 (either VET or General education orientation)
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	>1% ([92])

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- [90] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations:
<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.
- [91] As described in ILO: international standard classification of occupations: ISCO 08, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/>
- [92] 2016

EQF 7

Masters programmes,
2-3 years
ISCED 767

Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 767

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	767
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	22+	Usual completion age	25+
Length of a programme (years)	3 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	90 ECTS ([93])		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face classroom tuition • Blended on-line learning 		
Main providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology private VET providers		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	0		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical training at school 		
Main target groups	Programmes are available mainly for graduates who have also had some years of work experience.		
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an EQF level 6 qualification.		
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>All VET programmes are based on a number of study units, each of which is based on learning outcomes. This course includes both formative and summative assessment.</p> <p>Formative assessment that includes take-home assignments, and class-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based.</p>		

Summative assessment is in the form of controlled assessment (examinations) for every unit.

Students have the possibility to have a resit. Should they fail the resit they will be given the possibility to repeat the study unit.

Assessment also includes the presentation of a dissertation.

Diplomas/certificates provided	Master's degree
Examples of qualifications	Specialist in product design, specialist in mechatronics, specialist in environmental engineering ([94]).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this type of VET programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 8 (general education orientation).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	> 1% ([95])

[93] Both ECTS and ECVET are regulated by Subsidiary Legislation No 327.431 - The Malta qualifications framework for lifelong learning Regulation: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11927&l=1>. The authority is vested in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. According to the referencing report (4th revised edition available at <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf>) one (1) ECTS/ECVET is defined as being equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of total learning. Out of these 25 hours, a minimum of five hours need to be contact hours. The rest can be self-learning.

[94] As described in national context.

[95] 2016

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