



MALTA

VET in Europe - Country Report

2010

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Malta. Information is provided for each of the following themes:

1. General Content – Framework for the Knowledge society
2. Policy Development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. VET in times of Crises
4. Historical Development, Legislative and Institutional Framework
5. Initial Vocational Education and Training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for Adults
7. Training for VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Guidance and Counselling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing – investment in human resources
11. National VET statistics – allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2010 and references are those of 2009.

Keywords:

Geographic term:

Malta

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Theme 1: General context – framework for the knowledge society

1.1 Political and socio-economic context

Malta's political system is a parliamentary representative democratic Republic, with the President of Malta as the constitutional Head of State. The executive powers are in the hands of the Prime Minister of Malta who is the head of government and the cabinet. Legislative power is vested in the Parliament of Malta which consists of the President of Malta and the House of Representatives of Malta. The Speaker is the presiding officer of the legislative body. Since Malta's Independence in 1964, the main party electoral system has consisted of two main political parties: the Nationalist Party (*Partit Nazzjonalista*); and the Labour Party (*Partit Laburista*).

Malta consists of the islands of Malta, Gozo (*Ghawdex*), Comino (*Kemmuna*), Cominotto, Selmunett, and Filfla, and a few tiny islets. Only the first three are inhabited. Malta is divided into a number of regions: Central, Northern, South Eastern, and Southern regions in Malta. The Gozo region corresponds to all of the other islands. Malta is a small economy, naturally confined within its geographical limits. It has no natural resources, but it has succeeded in attracting and maintaining strong manufacturing firms, mainly owned by big international companies. The Maltese economy is service oriented as well as has a strong tourism industry.

During 2008 and 2009 as a consequence of the global crisis, there was an increase in the number of unemployed persons. The majority were aged between 15 to 24 years, followed by those in the 35-44 age-group. Within the unemployed population, 44.0% had been seeking work for 12 months or more. The unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2009 stood at 7.4%¹. Globalisation has hit the export sector adversely, resulting in the closure of a number of manufacturing companies, particularly those within the textiles industry. On the other hand, Malta experienced a growth in the service sector such as financial services. Youth unemployment (under 25s) reached its peak in September 2009 at 14.3% and then went down to 13.6% the following month. This then went up to 0.2% increase in November 2009.

As a result of industrial restructuring and inadequate continuous vocational training (CVT), there is a mismatch of skills at national level between industrial requirements and skills available². There have been a number of projects funded under the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund which invested in skills analysis, professional development of teaching staff as well as investment in better training infrastructure within the vocational sector.

¹ National Statistics Office (NSO), News Release: Labour Force Survey: Q4/2009, 4th May Malta: National Statistics Office.

² Zammit E. & GHK Consulting Ltd., 2009, An Employment Passport for School Dropouts: Peer Review on *Project Learning for Young Adults: A social integration programme helping young people back into work and education*, Mutual Learning Programmes – Peer Country Comments Malta.

1.2 Population and Demographics

Malta is a southern European country, situated centrally in the Mediterranean Sea, 93 km south of Sicily and 288 km east of Tunisia. Malta covers just over 300 km² in land area, and is one of Europe's smallest and most densely populated countries. Malta can be considered a city-state. The country has two official languages: Maltese and English, with Maltese being the national language.

Country	2003	2006	2009	2010
EU 27	486,647,831	493,226,936	499,723,520	5011,259,840
Malta	397,296	405,006	413,609	416,333

*Source of Data: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics)

The population of Malta in 2009, as estimated basing on figures obtained from the 2005 Population and Housing Census, totaled slightly over 400,000. Just over half the population then were females. The total population included Maltese citizens, estimated at 396,278 (96%) and foreigners residing in Malta, at 16,692. Children under 18 comprised nearly 20% of the total population, while persons aged 65 and over made up 15%. The Northern Harbour district remained the most populated district in Malta, having a total of 121,450 residents, or 29% of the total population³.

Age Range	2009	2015	2025	2010
0-24	122996	112,100	102,700	
25-64	230640	230,400	226,600	
65+	59654	72000	75,500	
TOTAL	413290			

*Data collated from Demographic review 2009, National Statistics Office

According to population projections produced by the National Statistics Office with the 2009 population as base, the total population is expected to decrease to 380,242 in 2050. Projections also reveal a continuously ageing population, with the share of elderly persons increasing in comparison with their younger counterparts. In 2050 the percentage of persons aged less than 20 is expected to decrease from 22%, as recorded in 2009, to 17% per cent. On the other hand, the share of individuals aged 65 and over is expected to increase significantly in the coming 40 years to 24% from the current 15%.

Country	2003	2006	2009	2010
EU 27	486,647,831	493,226,936	499,723,520	5011,259,840
Malta	397,296	405,006	413,609	416,333

*Source of Data: Eurostat (EUROPOP2008 – Convergence scenario, national level)

Projected old-age dependency ratio: population age 65+ divided by population aged 15-64.

³ National Statistics Office, 2010, Demographic Review 2009, Malta: National Statistics Office.

Malta is facing an aging population which poses a challenge on CVT. This has been reflected in the expansion of VET courses as evening-courses by the main vocational education provider.

1.3 Economy and Labour Market Indicators

With a GDP of €5.7 billion and a trade to- GDP ratio of 82%, Malta is the second most open economy in the Union. Malta's economy is closely related to its main trading partner, the EU, which accounts for 61% of its exports of goods and services. Malta has a narrow export base and a dependence on strategic imports, such as fuels and industrial supplies. These characteristics constitute a challenge for policymakers in that the economy's performance is highly sensitive to external events and to sector specific shocks⁴.

Country	Primary sector & utilities		Manufacturing		Construction		Distribution & Transport		Business & other services		Non marketed services	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
EU 27	15192.8	7.0	35068.2	16.1	17290.9	7.9	57470.5	26.4	38557.9	17.7	53201.2	24.4
MT	6.8	4.2	23.9	14.7	11.7	7.2	54.4	33.6	23.1	14.3	40.6	25.0

Source Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Although membership to the Eurozone helped cushion the impact of recession, the shock was transmitted primarily through the trade channel as external demand shrank, particularly in tourism and manufacturing. Tourism declined by 8.4% in 2009 while the manufacturing industry's gross value added fell by more than 18%. The unemployment rate rose moderately from 6% at the end of 2008 and has stabilized at around 7% since then. Malta has also been affected by the global financial crisis and the subsequent recession, and the latest forecasts suggest that it is recovering modestly. This is mainly due to reforms implemented in recent years that have made the economy more resilient to external shocks.

⁴ Bonello, M.C., 2010, **The Maltese economy – the recession and the challenges beyond**, Speech by Mr Michael C Bonello, Governor of the Central Bank of Malta, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Attard, 28 May 2010.

Table 5: Employment rates⁵ by age groups and highest level of Education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2009 for Malta

ISCED	2003			2006			2009		
	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
0-2	47.0	57.0	37.4	38.3	56.3	33.6	38.1	60.4	33.7
3-4	52.2	80.4	72.7	50.4	86.0	68.0	51.3	85.0	68.4
5-6	74.6 (U)	89.7	72.4	74.4	90.0	62.7	73.1	92.0	61.7
TOTAL	49.6	63.7	41.5	44.2	66.6	38.3	44.1	70.5	38.2

Source Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Malta has used the recession to support innovation and training in its major manufacturing companies. It has also invested in building dialogue between VET providers and enterprises through the use of European Social Fund (ESF) projects. There has also been investment in the local vocational education system by offering school leavers without any qualifications alternative pathways through foundation courses leading them to Level 2 qualifications on the Malta Qualifications Framework and allowing youths to gain access to higher level vocational education courses.

Table 6: Unemployment rates⁶ by age groups and highest level of Education attained (%), 2003, 2006 and 2009 for Malta

ISCED	2003			2006			2009		
	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
0-2	18.1	6.7	:	19.5	7.4	:	18.6	7.8	5.7 (u)
3-4	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
5-6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
TOTAL	17.4	5.5	:	15.9	5.0	:	14.4	5.6	5.1 (u)

Source Eurostat (Labour Force Survey), : data not supplied

⁵ Worked out as number of employed persons as percentage of the total population.

⁶ Worked out as number of unemployed persons as percentage of the active population (employed + unemployed).

Table 7: Total public expenditure⁷ on Education as % of GDP, at secondary level of Education (ISCED 2-4), 2001-6

Country	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU	2.27(S)	2.32(S)	2.35(S)	2.29(S)	2.25(s)	2.23 (s)
MT	2.13	2.09	1.58	1.92	2.92 (b)	:

1.4 Educational Attainment of Population

Malta has registered an increase in the percentage of young people staying on at school following the end of compulsory education at the age of 16. This resulted in a drop in early school leavers from 53.2% in 2002 to 36.8% in 2009. None the less, Malta still lags behind the EU27 average at 14.4% and is far from both the Lisbon target of 15% and the EU2020 target of 10% . Early school leavers remain a great challenge for compulsory education. Improvement has been registered due to government’s investment in the provision of vocational education sector. Government, in its National Reform Programme update⁸, is committed to focusing on four key objectives, one of which is that of raising the general qualification level, reducing early school leavers and attracting more students and adults into further and higher education within a lifelong learning context. Recent years have seen the implementation of a Foundation Course which allows young people finishing compulsory education without any formal qualifications to follow a course of learning. These courses are mainly dedicated to the key competences as well as sector skills.

Table 8: Early school leavers⁹ (%) 2002-2009

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4
MT	53.2	49.9	42.1 (b)	38.9	39.9	38.3	39.0	36.8

Source Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

⁷ Total public expenditure on education, at Isced level 2-3-4, by programme orientation (million PPS, % of GDP, % of public expenditure)

⁸ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

⁹ Early school leavers are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

Table 9: Graduates at ISCED Level 3 and Level 4 of Education, programme orientation and sex (numbers), 2005 and 2007

Year	2005						2007					
MT	3GEN	3PV	3VOC	4GEN	4PV	4VOC	3GEN	3PV	3VOC	4GEN	4PV	4VOC
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1527	0	1042	0	0	135
M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1130	0	1774	0	0	468
T	0	0	0	0	0	0	2657	0	2816	0	0	603

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data Collection)

The National Reform Programme update of 2009¹⁰ indicated that measures are being taken across all levels of education sectors to address the dual objective of raising the attainment rate of post secondary level education as well as that of reducing early school leavers. Government is working to attract more students and adults into further and higher education within a lifelong learning context. Within compulsory education (≤ 16 years of age) there is currently a review of the national curriculum at secondary level to include vocational/technical subjects. There are also plans to introduce additional certificates to the current Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) level examinations for vocational and technical subjects and levels lower than the SEC which will enjoy the same parity of esteem as SEC subjects.

Table 10: Graduates at ISCED Level 5 and Level 6 of Education, programme orientation and sex (numbers), 2005 and 2007

Year	2005						2007					
MT	3GEN	3PV	3VOC	4GEN	4PV	4VOC	3GEN	3PV	3VOC	4GEN	4PV	4VOC
F	923	233	506	0	0	1662	1009	296	257	0	3	1565
M	623	244	207	0	5	1079	695	225	238	0	6	1164
T	1546	477	713	0	5	2741	1704	521	495	0	9	2729

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data Collection)

¹⁰ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

Table 11: Youth Education Attainment Level by Sex (%), 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009												
Year	2002			2005			2008			2009		
	T	F	M									
EU27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.5	81.3	75.6	78.6	81.4	75.9
MT	39.0	42.2	36.1	53.7	57.0	50.5	53.0	57.3	49.1	52.1	56.7	48.2

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Youth education attainment for Malta is far behind than the EU27 average and the Lisbon Targets, even though there was an improvement over the past 7 years. None the less, there is much more work which needs to be done in order to raise percentages to European standards. Initiatives in further Education, including vocational and general education streams (≥ 16 years of age) highlighted in the National Reform Programme update included:

- Developing more programmes at National Qualifications Framework levels 1-3 to provide wider entry points into post-secondary (on completion of compulsory education in Malta at age 16) education to attract early school leavers back to education (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), Giovanni Curmi and Sir M. Refalo higher secondary schools.
- Developing alternative modes of delivery for those school leavers who choose to work on a full-time basis, to pursue part-time/evening programmes at MCAST and ITS.
- Providing open, distance and e-learning programmes by MCAST and ITS.
- Expanding Junior College spaces and facilities and refurbishing of science laboratories;
- Implementing the MCAST master plan for a new campus.
- Retaining and enhancing the student maintenance grants scheme (Measure 19.9) in place as an incentive for students to continue their studies at Masters and Doctorate level. More than 14,000 students benefit from this scheme, with an annual expenditure of €20 million. For 2009, it was forecasted that expenditure would have increased to €21.8 million with beneficiaries increasing to 14,50015
- Referencing vocational education and training programmes to the Malta Qualifications Framework, to ensure standards and quality, comparability and permeability and facilitate mobility.
- Developing policy on the validation of informal and non-formal learning and setting up of Sector Skills Units to conduct validation of prior learning and work experience.
- Developing professional standards for vocations and trades using Competence Matrices and Occupational Standards in nine identified sectors (hospitality, heritage; construction; community care; agribusiness; art & design; electrical and mechanical engineering; business & commerce and information technology) by MQC.

- Giving more visibility and status to Vocational Education and Training using a career guidance tool called “Vocational Qualification Package” (VQPACK)¹¹.

Year	2002			2005			2008			2009		
	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9.0	9.5	10.4	8.7	9.3	10.4	8.7
MT	4.4	3.8	4.9	5.3	4.5	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.1	5.8	6.0	5.6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Participation in lifelong learning in Malta has improved over the last 10 year period from 4.4% to 5.8%. However, this is still lower than the EU27 average and Malta needs to further promote adult education. Similar to patterns across the EU, more females than males participate in lifelong learning. With regard to Life Long Learning, the National Reform Programme update of 2009 indicates the following actions being undertaken to include:

- Establishing the Directorate for Life Long Learning and developing a strategy for Lifelong Learning.
- Opening of a new Lifelong Learning Centre and providing a wider choice of programmes.
- Entering into partnerships with Local Councils and voluntary organisations for the provision of adult training programmes.
- Integrating qualifications awarded by various creative art schools into the MQF.
- Measuring and tracking formal, informal and non-formal learning activities in Malta.
- Providing scholarship schemes for supporting adults in access to specialist higher education and training.
-

Mobility type	No. of Mobilities 2007	No. of Mobilities 2008	No. of Mobilities 2009	TOTAL
IVT	86	49	87	222
PLM	14	69	74	157
VETPRO	37	45	41	379
TOTAL	137	163	202	758

Source: European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) – National Agency for the Lifelong Learning programme

¹¹ Extracted from Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

The vocational and training institutions in Malta has a good track record in promoting the mobility of both students and teachers within the vocational sector. This is the result of the good participation in the Leonardo mobility programme financed by the lifelong learning programme.

Table 92: Distribution of mobilities across gender taking place 2007-9¹²

Table 14: Distribution mobilities across gender taking place 2007-9¹³			
Mobility type	Males	Females	TOTAL
IVT	54	70	124
PLM	36	50	86
VETPRO	81	75	158

1.5 Definitions

There are no official VET-related definitions and the meaning of many terms is the result of shared understanding of the local education system and ways of working between the key players in education. The Malta Qualifications Council, in order to facilitate understanding among a wider audience and open access to opportunities and reforms currently taking place within the country has published definitions for a number of terms. These definitions help to facilitate similar understanding of the system by the different players and clients of Lifelong learning.

- **General Education:** This term is used as in the definition given by UNESCO¹⁴ and is taken to refer to those academic areas of studies within compulsory education as well as at post-compulsory level which lead to further in-depth studies in particular subjects, and which lead to entry into University;
- **Pre-vocational education:** This term is not used within the Maltese education system. There once existed one institution by this name which prepared students for entry into healthcare vocational courses, but the institution was closed as part of the reform in vocational education.
- **Vocational education:** Vocational education in Malta is used similarly to that given by UNESCO¹⁵ to refer to that type of education and training which is related to a trade and which is closely related to the world of work. The main provider of vocational education at post-compulsory level is the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). There is currently no provision of vocational education at compulsory (secondary) level education although there are plans to provide vocational educational subjects in compulsory education soon;

¹² Values quoted may be less than in table as not all mobilities of approved projects would have taken place by end of 2009.

¹³ Values quoted may be less than in table as not all mobilities of approved projects would have taken place by end of 2009.

¹⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1997, International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED 1997, Paris, November 1997.

¹⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1997, International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED 1997, Paris, November 1997.

- **Technical education:** This term is often used in conjunction with the term vocational education. However, technical education tends to refer more specifically to particular trades (crafts, carpentry etc.) and electrical areas. The term vocational education is wider than technical education;
- **Tertiary education:** This term is used similarly to that defined by Cedefop¹⁶ and taken to refer to University studies and leading to University degrees;
- **Higher education:** This term is often used interchangeably with tertiary education but is wider in that it includes all forms of studies at level 5 and higher on the Malta Qualifications Framework. Some vocational education courses are often included under Higher Education;
- **Further education:** This term is used to refer to those studies which are at levels higher than compulsory education in Malta;
- **Post-secondary non-tertiary education:** This term describes that level of study in general education which is at a higher level than compulsory education and which leads to entry into University studies;
- **Training:** This describes any organised learning experience as part of formal or non-formal education;
- **Initial vocational education and training (IVET):** This term is used to refer to that training normally undertaken after full-time compulsory education to promote the acquisition of the necessary knowledge skills and competences for entry into an occupation or group of occupations. In Malta IVET may or may not involve apprenticeship;
- **Continuous vocational education and training (CVET):** This term refers to professional or vocational development through education and training after having completed initial vocational education and training.
- **School-based programmes:** This term is used to describe, as indicated by UOE¹⁷, instruction which takes place in educational institutions;
- **Alternance training:** This term is not usually used in the local education context although this type of education and training provision as defined by Cedefop¹⁸ exists within the local apprenticeship training;
- **Apprenticeship:** This term is used in the local system to describe, as defined by Cedefop¹⁹, systematic, long-term alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace, where the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance);

¹⁶ Terminology of vocational training policy, Cedefop, 2008

¹⁷ UNESCO, OECD, & EUROSTAT, 2005, UOE Data Collection on Education Systems, Volume 1, Manual: Concepts, definitions, and classifications, Montreal, Paris, Luxembourg.

¹⁸ Terminology of vocational training policy, Cedefop, 2008

¹⁹ Ibid.

- **Curriculum:** is a set of actions followed when setting up a training course: it includes defining training goals, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers. In Malta there is a National Minimum Curriculum which is drawn up and the Minister of Education has the responsibility to ensure that each and every student in Malta receives²⁰;
- **Qualification:** is achieved when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. A qualification is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process. In Malta qualifications are being referenced to the Malta Qualifications Framework²¹;
- **Skills:** are the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)²²;
- **Competences:** A competence is taken to represent the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and other abilities to perform a function against a given standard in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the EQF 'competence' is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy²³.

²⁰ Malta Qualifications Council, 2006, Glossary of select terminology of Qualifications Framework, Malta: Malta Qualifications Council – which referred to definition included in the EQF

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Theme 2: Policy Development -objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities

2.1 Objectives and Priorities

There is currently no official Lifelong Learning Policy for Malta. None the less, Malta's policy with respect to education, and particularly with respect to vocational education can be identified within the Strategic Plan 2007-9 of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology²⁴, the National Reform Programme Update of 2009²⁵, as well as the pre-budget document²⁶.

The Strategic plan for MCAST highlights the recognition that Malta needs to have vocational education and training provision that would provide a meaningful experience for the individual and establish a credible alternative to the university education without the duplication of provision or wasteful competition. It provides a vision that places a greater emphasis on the importance of vocational education and training related to Malta's current and emerging competences and skills-base, competitiveness and economic development within the context of a global economy. The MCAST strategic plan has been designed and developed to ensure synchronisation with the Government's drive towards better quality and accountable education and training system whilst ensuring relevance to the economy and due care and consideration for the environment.

The strategic aims for MCAST for the period of 2007 to 2009 were identified to include:

- increasing and widening the participation of young people and adult learners, raising retention and achievement whilst ensuring progression and equal opportunities;
- promoting efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and value for money and generate income;
- providing a safe, welcoming, friendly, client focused and high quality teaching and learning environment;
- working with employers, professional bodies and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) to meet the training demands/needs of the economy;
- developing a single coherent internal quality assurance framework across all MCAST courses and provision and to facilitate and respond to external quality assurance;
- ensuring the holistic development of all MCAST students and an overarching entrepreneurial ethos, encouraging appropriate and relevant student initiatives;

²⁴ MCAST, 2006, Strategic Plan 2007-09: The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, a new era, a College with a clear focus, Malta: MCAST.

²⁵ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment

²⁶ Ministry of Finance, 2005, A Better Quality of Life: 2006-2010 Pre-budget Document, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance.

- further developing the Management Information System to ensure the efficient and effective management of information and data;
- working with other stakeholders to maximize European Union Funding and thereby create education and training opportunities for Maltese and Gozitan citizens and promote life-long learning;
- building effective local and international partnerships, school links, university links, collaborative arrangements;
- committing to continuous professional development for all MCAST staff;
- expanding and building the College's infrastructure and services to facilitate the effective delivery of programmes; and
- becoming a centre of vocational excellence in the Mediterranean Region providing internationally recognized qualifications and promoting international understanding and peace.

The 2010 pre-budget²⁷ document reports the surge in investment in medium and higher education levels, which has seen, amongst other things, the formation of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), the opening up of new courses at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) as well as the award of student support schemes at undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels. These policies underline the importance that Government attaches to the nourishment of skills, particularly formal education, as an important vehicle towards increasing productivity and competitiveness more generally.

2.1.1 National lifelong Learning Strategy

There is currently no national lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta.

2.1.2 Policy Development in the main VET Policy areas

The main VET policy developments are outlined in the National Reform Programme update of 2009²⁸. The government of Malta recognizes that improvements are still needed in relation to lifelong learning among lower skilled and for further reduction of early school leavers. It highlights a number of measures being taken across all levels of education to address this challenge.

²⁷ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2009, Pre-Budget Document 2010: Growth, Jobs, and Social Cohesion, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

²⁸ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment

The policy developments included in the National Reform Programme update of 2009 provide input in the following aspects:

- **Governance and funding:** Government is committed to retaining and enhancing the student maintenance grants scheme in place as an incentive for students to allow them to continue their studies. More than 14,000 students (in both vocational and tertiary education) benefit from this scheme, with an annual expenditure of €20 million. For 2009, it was forecasted that expenditure would increase to €21.8 million with beneficiaries increasing to 14,500. With respect of governance, the policy is to develop the referencing of vocational education and training programmes to the MQF, to ensure standards and quality, comparability and permeability and facilitate mobility of workers in the European labour market. There is also the plan to develop professional standards for vocations and trades using Competence Matrices and Occupational Standards in nine identified sectors (hospitality, heritage; construction; community care; agribusiness; art & design; electrical and mechanical engineering; business & commerce and information technology) by MQC. There is also the policy to invest in MCAST infrastructure through the use of European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). Government has also consequently embarked on the implementation of the MCAST New Campus Master Plan for the physical restructuring of the Corradino main campus to incorporate the nine (9) institutes currently spread over five locations. The Master Plan will turn the current infrastructure into a state-of-the-art campus that will satisfy the ongoing growth in the number of students;
- **guidance and counseling:** It is also government's policy to give both more visibility as well as more support to those interested in following the vocational education stream. The visibility and status to Vocational Education and Training is to be promoting through the use of a career guidance tool called "Vocational Qualification Package" (VQPACK) which has been funded under ESF (European Social Fund). MCAST has expanded its career guidance service and, following government's policy, is also opening up its courses to adults under the maturity clause which allows learners of a certain age to be admitted to courses even if they do not possess the required entry requirements;
- **teacher and trainer training:** Government is committed to the professional development of vocational education and training staff whereby ESF funding is being used to provide further training to MCAST vocational staff, through pedagogical training, thus improving their professional competence and ensuring a better quality training provision;
- **curriculum reform and innovative approaches to teaching and assessment:** It is the government's projection that there will be a process involving the development of more programmes at National Qualifications Framework levels 1-3 to provide wider entry points into post-secondary education to attract early school leavers back to education at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), Giovanni Curmi and Sir M. Refalo higher secondary schools. Another policy direction is that of developing alternative modes of learning delivery for those school leavers who choose to work on a full-time basis, and who will be able to pursue part-time/evening programmes at MCAST and ITS. There is also the plan to provide open, distance and e-learning programmes by MCAST and ITS²⁹.

²⁹ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment

- **Skills needs strategies:** Government is committed to identify and overcome skills shortages in the local labour market. MCAST, ITS and UoM have been working at addressing skills mismatches in several industries. These institutions have ongoing communication with Malta Enterprise (ME) , the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and business sectors to address various links between business and vocational education and training. Projects such “Addressing skills mismatches in the aviation industry”, “Launch new evening programmes at MCAST for adults addressing skills gaps in emerging growth sectors”, and “Higher Education Courses to Address Skill Mismatches in Gozo” are examples of initiatives contributing towards the matching of skills;
- **Validation of informal and non-formal learning:** It is also government’s policy to develop policy on the validation of informal and non-formal learning through working towards its implementation and start with the setting up of Sector Skills Units to conduct validation of prior learning and work experience. This has been reflected in the publication of a policy document by the Malta Qualifications Council and a Leonardo project which is developing the tools and process for validation;

2.1.3 Current debates

There is no particular debate of great concern which is currently attracting a lot of attention with respect to the provision of vocational education and training. The issues raised for discussion this past year included the following themes:

- The effort of MCAST to introduce vocational degrees at level 6 on the Malta Qualifications Framework in comparison and possibly in competition with the University of Malta; and
- The greater focus by MCAST on Level 6 provision and less on the lower level qualifications.

Otherwise, there is an overall agreement on the developments and reforms which are taking place within the provision of both initial and continuous vocational education and training in Malta in order to be in line with education reform which is taking place at European level. The Malta Qualifications Council has invested in a lot dialogue and discussion between the different key players and this is bearing fruit and reforms are being received with enthusiasm and understanding of the long-term goals which are to be achieved.

2.2 The latest developments in the field of European tools

Malta is experiencing development in the field of vocational education and training as a result of developments and reforms which are taking place at European level. These latest development and their impact can be considered to include the following aspects:

- Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF):** Malta has been among the first to draw up and develop its national qualifications framework, now known as the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)³⁰. This qualifications framework is based on 8 levels and is linked to the EQF. The Malta Qualifications Council has also published a series of policy document 'Valuing All Learning'^{31, 32} two of which discuss the National Qualifications Frameworks specifically and the other on vocation and education qualifications with respect to this framework. In November 2009, the Malta Qualifications Council has also published its draft Referencing Report³³ which describes the method that the country intends to adopt in order to be able to reference all types of qualifications (national and international) offered in Malta on to the Malta Qualifications Framework. The Malta Qualifications Framework has been adjusted and evolved to accommodate and include more qualifications from its first launch in 2007 and is still evolving as reforms in both the vocational and other sectors of education are being mapped on to it. Although to date, the Malta Qualifications Council does not yet have the legal capacity to accredit qualifications, it has already started level rating qualifications and short courses on to the MQF;
- Quality Assurance in VET:** Since the main VET provider in Malta, MCAST, offers many courses leading to a BTEC qualification, then the quality assurance standards for these examinations need to be respected. MCAST is also currently working on improving the quality assurance mechanisms for its own home grown courses. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), on the other hand, have their own quality assurance document but are not yet aligned to EQARF. The Malta Qualifications Council has been working in this area and has already published a policy document³⁴ where it describes the principles and direction that it wants to take with respect to quality assurance. The Malta Qualifications Council has now also applied for funding under the Leonardo call to work on piloting the application of EQARF to some local VET providers and based on this experience, to develop a manual for other vocation and education training providers to assist them with reforming and aligning their quality assurance systems to those identified by EQARF.

³⁰ <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/>

³¹ Malta Qualifications Council, 2007, Valuing all learning Volume 1: A National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, Malta: Malta Qualifications Council, <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/documents-publications?!=1>

³² Malta Qualifications Council, 2007, Valuing all learning Volume 2: Guidelines for a Vocational Education and Training system for Malta's National Qualifications Framework, Malta: Malta Qualifications Council, <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/documents-publications?!=1>

³³ Malta Qualifications Council, 2009, Referencing Report: Referencing of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA), Malta: Malta Qualifications Council, <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/referencingreport?!=1>

³⁴ Malta Qualifications Council, 2007, Valuing all learning Volume 3: A Quality Assurance Policy for Vocational Education and Training, Malta: Malta Qualifications Council, <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/documents-publications?!=1>

- **Accumulation of learning outcomes in mobility:** The Malta Qualifications Council has been promoting the use of learning outcomes for a number of years. It has also included this approach in the application forms which are submitted by training providers when applying for level rating their courses. However, so far, although advocated, this approach has as yet not been taken up at a national level and more work needs to be done. The Malta Qualifications Council has, in fact, dedicated part of its activities as the EQF National Contact point, to learning outcomes;
- **Initiatives for implementing a unit-based credit system for VET:** There have already been initiatives in the local provision of vocation and education training to implement the use of ECVET in courses. ECVET are currently being used in the foundation courses which are being offered by MCAST at level 2 of the MQF. In addition, the Malta Qualifications Council has submitted a proposal for funding under the Leonardo project to pilot the conversion of both IVET and CVET, full qualifications and short courses, as well as in a number of different sectors, existing provision into the ECVET system. The project, if funded, is to involve the main players in IVET (MCAST and ITS) as well as CVET (Employment and Training Corporation) and will lead to the development of a manual which will provide support to all VET providers in Malta on how to convert their existing courses into ECVET;
- **Geographical mobility in VET:** MCAST has been very active in taking advantage of the opportunities for mobility which the Lifelong Learning Programme provides to vocational education and training in the case of Initial vocational training (IVT Leonardo Mobility). The same can be said for the ITS where students need to spend one year abroad as part of their training. In addition, both MCAST and ITS have also started to participate in the ERASMUS mobility programme, even if to a much smaller extent. The lifelong learning programme has been used to also enable the mobility of teachers and trainers.

Theme 3: Vet in time of Crisis

3.1 Overview

The Maltese economy felt the impact of the international and financial crisis in 2009, particularly as a result of the sharp drop in global trade and the economic downturn in Malta's main trading partners. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 1.5 per cent during 2009. The Maltese economy only showed signs of improvement in the last quarter of 2009 with a real GDP growth of 1.3 per cent³⁵. The decline in real GDP during 2009 reflected a negative contribution from domestic demand.

The sectors which were particularly hit by the international crisis in 2009 were the manufacturing and the tourism industry. There was also a contraction registered by the construction industry as well as the wholesale and retail trade sector. However, despite the crisis, there were a number of emerging service activities which still managed to experience growth.

3.2 Effects of the Crises on VET and corresponding measures

The decrease in the manufacturing, tourism, construction, as well as wholesale and retail sectors impacted the labour market. The twelve months prior to December 2009 have seen the fulltime gainfully occupied population decrease by 1.2%, whilst the unemployment rate increased from 4.2% to 5.1%³⁶.

Tourism

2009 saw a drop in tourist inflows. In the same year, cruise passenger arrivals (excluding Maltese passengers) declined by around 22%. Declines in arrivals were mainly recorded from the Spanish, British and Italian markets, while a significant increase was recorded only from Germany and France. On a monthly basis, declines were registered in the first ten months of the year whereas in November and December increases were recorded over the previous corresponding months. The result was a hard hit tourism industry.

External Trade in Goods

Industrial supply imports fell by €380.6 million in 2009, largely reflecting the lower level of manufacturing exports. These decreases were registered in fuel and lubricants imports, as well as in

³⁵ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, Pre-Budget Document 2011: Ideas, Vision, Discussion, Malta: Government of Malta.

³⁶ Ibid.

consumer goods particularly in the durable goods category. On the other hand, there was an increase in capital goods and other imports reflecting an exceptional increase in imports in the aircraft category.

The downturn in the international economic environment resulted in lower exports in machinery and transport equipment; food, beverages and tobacco; fish; chemical products; as well as in semi-manufactured goods.

Impact on Employment

The crisis had an impact on the labour market during the twelve months to December 2009, with labour supply registering a decrease of 0.3%. The full-time gainfully occupied population declined by 1.2% and the number of unemployed persons rose to 5.1% at the end of December 2009. Part-time employment increased by 5.6%. The increase in part-time employment is mainly attributable to market service employment. The most hit groups were the manufacturing sector with a decline of 1,270 employees. There were also significant declines recorded for employment in the manufacture of radio, television and communication equipment, manufacture of other transport equipment, manufacture of rubber and plastic products, manufacture of furniture and the manufacture food products and beverages subsectors. These drops were not as great as they would have been had not Government supported those enterprises encountering difficulties in the course of the last two years³⁷.

Those mostly hard hit were thus workers with low skills as well as young persons with low skills trying to enter the labour market. Although during the crisis some service sectors still registered a growth, such as in the case of financial services and i-gaming, these sectors demand highly skilled employees which could not be filled by those losing work from the manufacturing sector.

3.2.1 Trends in Learners' behavior

Due to the fewer opportunities of work in the labour market, many young people were encouraged to further their studies and stay on at school. This was made possible through the development of **Foundation courses** at MCAST which are open to young persons with just a school leaving certificate but no other formal qualifications. This has made it possible for many youths to choose a sector they would like to work in, and while they acquire key competences at Level 2 on the MQF, they can also start training in their preferred sector skills. Successful completion in this course also opens a pathway to higher level vocational courses which were before not possible due to the lack of formal qualifications.

The Employment and training Corporation has also launched the **Work Trial Scheme** which seeks to integrate unemployed persons in a workplace for a period of 12 weeks so that these persons are able to receive additional work experiences. This scheme thus offers on-the-job training to adults looking for work.

³⁷ Details in this section were extracted from Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, Pre-Budget Document 2011: Ideas, Vision, Discussion, Malta: Government of Malta.

Another initiative was the **Community Work Scheme** which provides long-term unemployed persons (over five years) with the opportunity to increase their income up to 75 per cent of the minimum wage. Participation is mandatory, and those who refuse to work without providing a valid reason are struck off the unemployment register, consequently losing their benefits. Participants need to work for 30 hours a week, with a total of 780 hours for each participant. It is proposed that such an initiative be extended to all persons who have been registering for more than six months, with participants' skills being matched with the community work or training selected for them.

The overall impact was an effort by government which resulted in more and more young persons as well as unemployed adults following some form of vocational training programmes with the aim of improving their skills as well as increasing their chances of finding employment.

3.2.2 Trends in Enterprise Behaviour

In the case of enterprises, there were different responses. While the basic manufacturing sector saw the closure of a number of factories and the sudden increase of low skilled workers becoming unemployed, a different pattern was observed in the case of the higher-end manufacturing requiring better skilled workers. Since the first manufacturing companies to experience the impact of the crisis were the low level manufacturing factories which could not compete with the Asian market, government invested in the retraining of these workers for higher-skilled work. This was achieved either through direct vocational training opportunities offered by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), or in direct investment in the upper-end manufacturing companies which received financial support for every worker which they took up from closing down factories and which covered the training period in order to have them learn to perform higher-skilled work within their company.

A different response was used in the case of the upper-end manufacturing companies, mainly in the electronics sector, where companies went down to four-day week employment and used this low-activity period to invest in further training of their own workers in order to boost their innovative and competitive edge for when the economy starts to pick up. The government developed the **Employment Aid Programme** scheme, launched in February 2009 and is expected to be completed by September 2013. Through this scheme, through the use of social funds, private enterprises can apply for support from government for investment in the training of their own workers. Thus, there was a strong incentive to invest in CVT, which was to the benefit of the individual workers, the enterprises, as well as to the country's economy.

3.2.3 Measures taken at governance level

Government has responded to the economic crisis in different ways. Part of the response related to market flexibility with an adjustment in hours worked. This was a key response during the crisis,

especially in certain manufacturing sectors which went down to four-day week employment during the crisis but did not lay off any workers. Government has also used this 'low economic activity' period to invest in further training of workers with the opening of tailor made courses at MCAST. One particular successful example is the aviation industry which has flourished and grown during the financial crisis through direct government investment in attracting companies to Malta, but also in the wise and responsive provision of VET courses provided by MCAST in the sector which ensured a continuous supply of competent workers to the newly established companies.

Government has also recognized the need to strengthen further education and is committed to drafting a law on further and higher education in order to differentiate it from lower levels of education and to realize the full potential of this sector. Vocational education falls within this sector and the proposed legislative structure will allow the further development of quality provision of vocational education.

Government has also recognized the need and contribution of quality career guidance education and has used European Social funds in order to offer professional development to career guidance professionals who can either work in the vocational sector, or else have the professional knowledge to offer quality guidance to secondary students wishing to pursue vocational education courses.

Government is also committed to promoting the mobility of workers for further education and training, and although so far it has mainly invested in offering scholarships, is also now committed to engage into agreement with companies and entities to help promote worker mobility.

Through the restructuring of the Malta Qualifications Council and the achievements through the Malta Qualifications Framework, government is committed to developing more flexible pathways and better transitions between education and vocational training. This commitment comes along with the development of new Vocational Degrees by MCAST which were first offered in September 2009. A closer link between vocational education provision and industry is currently part of a project financed by the European Social Fund. This report aims to make vocational education more responsive to industry needs by building links between the two.

3.3 Longer term consequences and future responses

It is government's policy that education be encouraged in order to close the technical skills gap and to restructure the economy towards higher value added activities. It is the Prime Minister's personal view that *'it is therefore essential that every effort be made to have an economy founded on key competences, skills and excellence, promoting individuals as the main assets of society, and managing better the economic transitions afflicting societies'*.

The government is determined to work in collaboration with the Public Employment Service and the social partners to invest in programmes and measures that attract people to work, improve their skills, and train them towards reaching the quality standards required in a competitive and dynamic market. The aim is to guide individuals through profiling tools and skills matching techniques. This is already

being done by the Employment and Training Corporation, but needs to be strengthened further. Government is also determined to develop entrepreneurship skills through educational services, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

Government recognizes the need to restructure and strengthen adult education in Malta with the aim of promoting employability and ensuring a supply of skills to match demand in the labour market by means of key competences. Government has thus embarked on a long-term strategy to reform this sector as well as build collaboration with communities and vocational institutions such that there will be wide spread opportunity for further training across all sectors of education and particularly within the vocational sector.

Theme 4: Historical background, legislation and Institutional Framework

4.1 Historical background

Traces of technical education in Malta may be found between the 14th century, and 1854³⁸. It mainly involved training in skills and craft work related to the building trade, cabinet and furniture making, silver work etc. The first state school dedicated to technical instruction, the 'Technical and Manual school' opened its doors at Valletta in 1893. It catered for young apprentices in carpentry, joinery, carving and stuccowork. However, attendance to this school was low and it was eventually closed down in 1906. A technical school was opened in 1930. By 1934, the syllabuses were raised to City and Guilds levels and students qualified as teachers of hand craft.

Following the end of the Second World War, provision of technical education was strengthened, making it also available to adults in the evening. The Industrial Training Act in 1952 provided regulation of the employment and training of apprentices. It placed a new responsibility on employers to invest in the training of their workers. The White Paper for Future British Defence Policies published by the British government in 1957 led the opening of a number of technical schools and the number of students following technical education increased steadily.

In 1960 funds from the United Nations to build the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) were approved. It offered courses in the areas of Hotel Administration, Commerce and Business Studies, and Civil, Mechanical and Electrical engineering. It was eventually closed down and transformed into a 'New' University in 1977. Economic challenges in Malta during the 70s and international ideas on education led to restructuring of the compulsory educational system. Trade schools were set up with 75% of the time allocated to vocational skills for students of ages 14-16 and technical institutes were consolidated³⁹.

The late 1990s and early 2000 have seen a gradual dismantling of trade schools for 13-16 year olds and the strengthening of vocational education at post-secondary level. The result was limited and uncoordinated provision of vocational education at post-secondary level during the 1980s and 90s. This was due to vocational education not receiving the same investment as general education during this period. Consequently it did not grow in the same way as tertiary education and the result was a number of separate institutions which were remnant of past vocational education provision.

There was a major investment in vocational education beyond compulsory schooling at age 16 and older in 2001 with the re-setting up of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). MCAST served to bring together a number of institutes, some of which already existed as separate vocational schools. This was done following recommendations made by an ad hoc working group set up by the

³⁸ Sultana R., 1992, Education and National Development: Historical and critical perspectives on Vocational schooling in Malta, Malta: Mireva Publications

³⁹ Zammit Mangion, 1992, Education in Malta, Malta: Studia Editions

Ministry of Education as well as the contribution which the European Training Foundation (ETF)⁴⁰ gave to the Malta Professional and Vocational Awards Council.

The ETF report identified local needs in vocational education to include the need:

- to set up a national system of qualifications;
- to strengthen the role of social partners;
- to support further involvement of employers;
- to develop training in new economic growth areas; and
- to invest more in the provision of vocational education.

The report recommended that these necessities could be tackled by streamlining all existing provisions for vocational education under a common umbrella within a college. Hence, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology was re-opened again in 2001 with this new remit. Today MCAST consists of 9 institutes.

4.2 Legislative framework for IVET

The provision of vocational education by the State in Malta is regulated by Chapter 327 of the Education Act (2010) which describes how the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is to function. This Act is divided into 11 parts with Part VIII being dedicated to the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. Out of 136, articles 85-112 refer to describing the different structures of MCAST their responsibilities.

The Act details the roles and responsibilities of MCAST, the areas of training that it is to offer, as well as the roles of the Board of Governors, the Council of the Institutes, the Administrative Bureau, the Boards of Studies of the Institutes, and the Partnership office.

The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) is also regulated by Chapter 327 of the Education Act of 2010. Article 132 states that the Minister is to ensure the existence of an institution to provide courses and programmes of education and training, including practical and work experience at the levels of further and higher education, that leads to recognised qualifications in trades, skills and professions as may be necessary in the tourism, restaurants and the catering industry and services. It also gives the Minister the power to make regulations to regulate the bodies, administration and all other aspects related to the running and management of the Institute of Tourism Studies.

The Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH) is regulated by the same Act but under Part VII which also regulates the running of the University of Malta.

⁴⁰ European Training Foundation (ETF), 1999, An Overview of Vocational Education and Training: Malta

4.3 Institutional Framework for IVET and Organigram

The main providers of vocational education and training in Malta at post-compulsory or post-secondary level are the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH). There are currently also plans to include vocational subjects at compulsory or secondary education level but this is still at a very early stage.

Decisions with respect of vocational education at lower secondary education falls under the responsibility of the central education system and thus under the control of the two Education Directorates: the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education; and the Directorate for Education Services.

Decisions within MCAST, as highlighted by the Education Act⁴¹, are taken by its various bodies, with the Board of Governors being the highest level at which major decisions are taken. The Board of Governors has as members, representatives of the different social partners as well as employers such that links with industry are ensured. There are also members of the Tourism industry within the Board for the Institute of Tourism Studies, with the current chairman coming directly from the sector. The Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage, as part of the University of Malta, will also have different types of representatives on its Board.

MCAST⁴² today strives to work within its mission statement ‘to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy’. MCAST houses nine institutes. Courses offered vary in the type of study as well as training. Not only is there a difference in the level of study, but also in the work experience offered. Some courses form part of apprenticeship schemes while others have different forms of work placements or exposure. The institutes include:

- **Agribusiness**⁴³: This institute offers courses related to agriculture and animal husbandry. It offers courses at Foundation level, BTEC-First Diploma and BTEC- National Certificate;
- **Art and Design**⁴⁴: This institute offers training in art and design, offering courses from basic level at certificate level or MCAST access course which prepares students for higher level courses within the same institute;
- **Building and Construction Engineering**⁴⁵: This institute offers training in trades related to the construction industry. Courses are offered in skills areas such as painting and decorating, plastering,

⁴¹ Government of Malta, 2010, **CHAPTER 327, EDUCATION ACT**, ACT XXIV of 1988, as amended by Legal Notices: 98 of 1988, 63, 64, 135 and 136 of 1989, 153 and 156 of 1990 and 10 of 1991; Act X of 1991; Legal Notices: 66 and 153 of 1991, 67, 89, 90 and 105 of 1992, 21 and 117 of 1993, 5, 12, 110 and 149 of 1994; Act II of 1995; Legal Notices: 79 of 1995 and 165 of 1996; Act XVIII of 1997; and Legal Notices: 177, 181, 183, 184, 189 and 202 of 1997, 9, 30 and 172 of 1998, and 41, 101 and 102 of 1999; Acts VI of 2001, XVIII of 2002 and III of 2004; Legal Notices 144 and 363 of 2004; Acts II of 2005 and XIII of 2006; Legal Notices 293 of 2006, and 327, 391 and 424 of 2007; Act XXXII of 2007; Legal Notices 212 of 2008, and 21 and 85 of 2009; Act XXIII of 2009; and Legal Notice 102 of 2010.

⁴² <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

⁴³ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_agribusiness.asp

⁴⁴ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_artanddesign.asp

⁴⁵ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_buildingandconstructionengineering.asp

tile laying, air-conditioning, masonry, and construction. These are offered at different levels ranging from Foundation courses which require no qualifications, to Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma and National Diploma;

- **Electrical and Electronic Engineering**⁴⁶: This institute offers courses related to electronics, ranging from electrical installations, industrial electronics, computer engineering to electronic engineering. These courses are offered at different levels;
- **Business and Commerce**⁴⁷: This institute offers courses in areas related to business such as insurance, retail, administrative and secretarial studies, as well as applied science. Courses are also offered at different levels;
- **Community Services**⁴⁸: This institute offers training in the service related sector. Courses offered are mainly in hairdressing and beauty sector, child-care services, as well as sport and leisure;
- **Mechanical Engineering**⁴⁹; This institute offers training in the area of mechanical engineering, motor vehicle engineering, aerospace as well as motor vehicle repairs. Most of the Certification offered is at City and Guilds, but there are also other courses at Certificate level leading to an MCAST Certificate;
- **Information and Communication Technology**⁵⁰; This institute offers training in the area of ICT. Courses are offered from a very basic level such as Foundation Certificate to higher levels;
- **Maritime Institute**⁵¹; This institute offers training to those who are interested in taking up a career in the maritime sector, whether within the Armed forces or as an officer sailing ships. The institute offers courses in National Watch, Engineering Watch, Chief Mate, Second Engineer, Master Mariner, Chief Engineer as well as Probationary Cadet.

MCAST also has its Gozo Centre⁵² where it offers a range of courses. It offers some of the courses that are also provided by the mainland institutes, thus eliminating the need for students from Gozo to travel to Malta for their studies.

Besides MCAST, the Institute of Tourism Studies⁵³ (ITS) provides tertiary, higher and vocational education in the field of Tourism. ITS is responsible for providing the Hospitality Industry with personnel trained to international standards. Courses are offered at different levels, ranging from Foundation Level, to Certificate, Diploma, and Higher Diploma. They also offer apprenticeships under the ESTS programme. There is training offered in a variety of services within the tourism sector, these ranging

⁴⁶ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_electricalandelectronicsengineering.asp

⁴⁷ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_businessandcommerce.asp

⁴⁸ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_communityservices.asp

⁴⁹ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_mechanicalengineering.asp

⁵⁰ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_informationandcommunicationtechnology.asp

⁵¹ http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_maritimeinstitute.asp

⁵² http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_gozocentre.asp%22

⁵³ <http://www.its.edu.mt/>

from food preparation, food and beverage, restaurant services, accommodation, hotel operations, travel agency to Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Vocational courses are also offered by the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage⁵⁴ (ICMCH) which promotes and co-ordinates the pursuit of interdisciplinary training at professional, technical and craftsman levels in all aspects of conservation, restoration and management of cultural heritage. ICMCH makes use of Heritage Malta's Conservation Division's extensive facilities, providing courses leading to degrees conferred by the University of Malta as well as certificates awarded by the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology.

A number of IVET courses offer apprenticeship schemes. In this case, the apprenticeship is not regulated by the training providers, but the Employment and Training Services Act gives this role to the Employment and Training Corporation. Part VII of the Act is all dedicated to Apprenticeships. This section gives the Employment and Training Corporation the power to regulate and oversee apprenticeships and describes its roles and responsibilities.

⁵⁴ <http://www.heritagemalta.org/icmch/index.html>

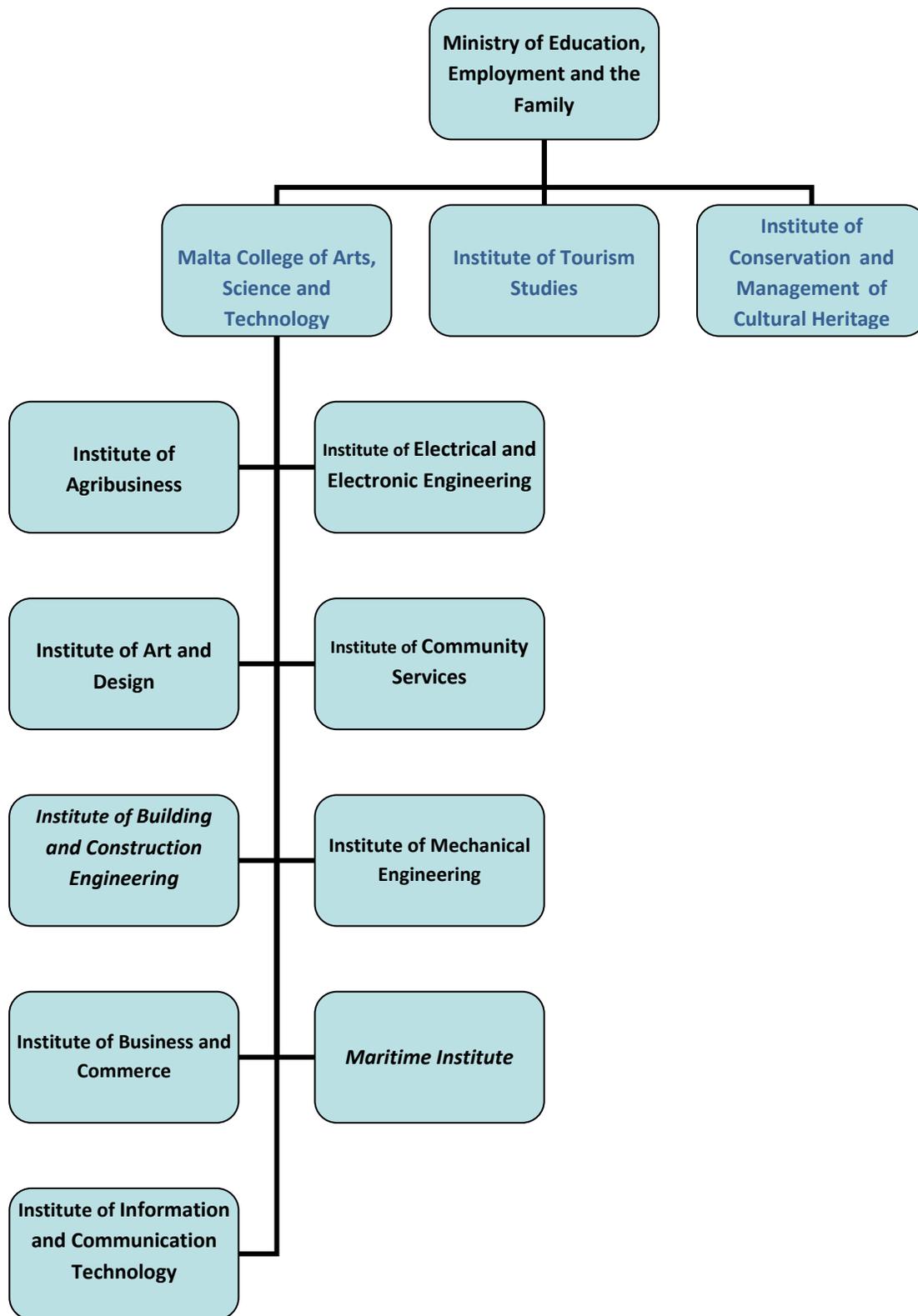


Figure 1: Organigram of the provision of IVET in Malta

4.4 Legislative Framework for CVET

Laws relating to CVET include mainly the Employment and Training Services Act (Chapter 343)⁵⁵. The Employment and Training Services Act provides the legal framework for a National Employment Authority, for the establishment of an Employment and Training Corporation and for the regulation of employment and training services. Article 16 describes the role of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) with respect to training to provide training courses or schemes for the purpose of assisting persons desiring to find work or improve their position, as well as ask employers about the number, educational level, skills and aptitudes of persons required for employment both in the short term and in the long term in order to provide training courses or other schemes to fill gaps. ETC also has the ability to pay persons participating in its schemes. Article 17 allows ETC to provide training courses and other schemes as it may consider adequate as well as approve such courses and schemes provided by other persons. It can also publish recommendations with regard to the nature and length of the training for any such employment, the further education to be required with the training, the persons by and to whom the training ought to be given, the standards to be attained as a result of the training and the methods of ascertaining whether those standards have been attained. ETC can also make arrangements for the application of selection tests and of tests or other methods for ascertaining the attainment of any standards recommended by it and may award certificates of the attainment of those standards.

Legal Notice 347 of 2005 as part of the Employment and Training Services Act also describes the role and responsibilities of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC). Although MQC does not regulate CVET or IVET directly, it regulates qualifications, particularly in the VET sector.

There is limited legal framework for the regulation of private CVET training providers. They fall under the regulations of licensing of schools as determined by the Education Act 2010 which includes all forms of educational providers. Quality assurance falls under the Malta Qualifications Council which so far does not have the legal power of official accreditation.

4.5 Institutional Framework for CVET and Organigram

CVET in Malta is provided through the different system and institutions. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) provides training in vocational areas mainly to unemployed persons although its courses are open also to those who wish to further their education to improve their employment opportunities. MCAST has in recent years invested in offering more courses in the evening which serve as opportunities for CVET. Then one also finds a number of private training providers who offer courses in various vocational areas on part-time basis in order to allow people in employment to attend as part of CVET. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning with the Directorate for Educational Services also provides adult education in both general education, but also in a number of vocational areas as evening courses.

⁵⁵ Government of Malta, **CHAPTER 343**, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES ACT, *ACT XXVIII of 1990, as amended by Acts XV of 1995, XVI of 1997, II of 2005, VII of 2006 and XXXII of 2007; and Legal Notice 424 of 2007.*

The role of social partners is through the presence of representatives of unions as well as employers within the sector on the Boards of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) as well as on the Board of Governors for the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Their presence ensures relevant decisions to be taken with respect to the provision of vocational education.

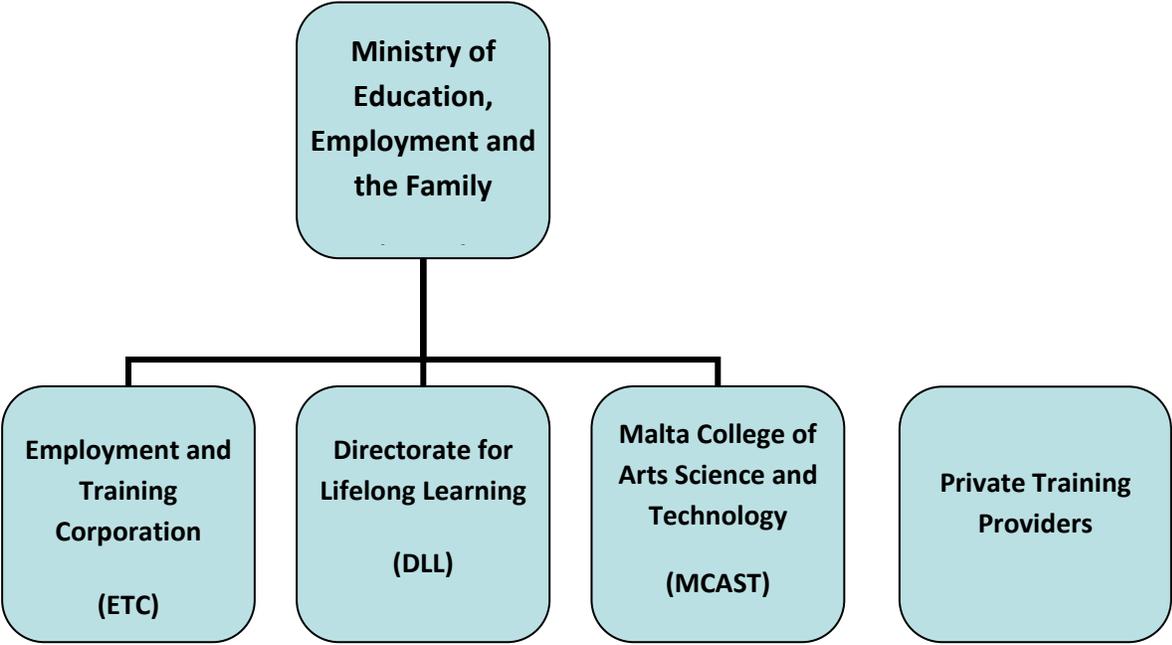


Figure 2 : Organigram for the provision of CVET in Malta

Theme 5: Initial Vocational Education and Training

The last decade has seen a great investment in IVET in Malta with the setting up of MCAST – the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. This is the umbrella institution which houses different institutes providing vocational education and training in a range of different sectors.

5.1 Background to the IVET system and diagram of the education and training system

Compulsory education in Malta is from age of 5 to 16. Compulsory schooling starts with primary education at the age of 5 years. However, there is provision of schooling for children from the age of three, with more than 85% of the children attending pre-school.

Primary education is six years long and consists of two cycles. The first cycle is called the early years and the final three years are called the Junior years. Education in the early years is based on play while in the Junior years it is more formal. At the end of primary education, children up to June 2010, sat for an 11+ examination in May with those who are successful moving on to Junior Lyceum (grammar type) schools while those who fail go to Area Secondary schools. As from June 2011, children will have a normal end of year examination at the end of primary education and all children will proceed to secondary school. 2011 brings about the education reform which abolishes streaming at primary level, the 11+ examination, and tracking in secondary level education.

Education at compulsory level in Malta is provided by the State (60%), the Church (30%), or Independent (private – 10%) entities.

Secondary education is five years long, and currently there are no vocational subjects taught to students at this age. However, there are plans to introduce elements of vocational education at this level as from 2011. Students finishing compulsory education have a number of different options. Those who choose to continue with their studies can either decide to take general education which leads to a tertiary qualification at University of Malta, or else to choose a vocational path and attend one of the courses offered by the Institutes within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies, or at the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage. MCAST offers vocational courses in a wide range of sectors. MCAST offers courses in agribusiness (Levels 1-5 on MQF); Art and Design (Levels 1-6 on MQF); building and construction engineering (Levels 1-5 on MQF); community services (aesthetics, childcare, applied sciences, health and social care) at Levels 1-5 on MQF; electrical and electronic engineering at levels 1-5 on MQF; information and communication technology (Levels 1-6 on MQF); maritime sector (Levels 3-5); and mechanical engineering (Levels 1-5 on MQF). Further details about the specific vocational courses at IVET can be obtained from the MCAST website www.mcast.edu.mt. Overall, courses start from Level 1/2 on the MQF, and are open to those students who do not manage to have any qualifications but only a school leaving certificate at the end of compulsory education. MCAST allows progression from one level qualification on the MQF to another, in many cases, up to a level 6 qualification.

Students wishing to pursue training in the tourism sector can choose to attend the Institute of Tourism Studies whilst those taking conservation work attend the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH). At University students can obtain qualifications at levels 5,6,7, and 8, while at MCAST vocational qualifications range from Levels 2 to 6 with the recently introduced vocational degrees.

Most of the vocational training courses offered at MCAST are BTEC courses which are qualifications by EDEXCEL and recognised on the U.K. qualifications framework. MCAST also offers a number of home grown qualifications which are pegged to the Malta Qualifications Framework. In the case of Tourism Studies, courses lead to local qualifications or City and Guilds from U.K and are pegged to the Malta Qualifications Framework. Students in Tourism studies can proceed from one level of qualification to another and can also move on to follow tertiary studies at the University of Malta without any problems. The Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage offers vocational courses in collaboration with MCAST as well as tertiary level courses through the University of Malta. The three institutions offer the possibility of apprenticeship for some of its training courses. There are a number of private vocational and education training providers. These institutions mainly provide part-time courses for persons already in the labour market and usually prepare students to foreign accredited qualifications such as City & Guild.

Entry into University usually takes place following successful completion of two years of study in general education, mainly at Junior College, which forms part of the University of Malta, but also at Private, Church and one other State post-secondary level school. Students wanting to go to University sit for their Matriculation Certificate at the end of the two years. The Matriculation Certificate includes the study of two subject areas at Advanced Level and four others at Intermediate⁵⁶ Level.

The curriculum delivered by the different educational institutions is determined in different ways, depending on the level and type of training provided. In the case of compulsory education, all schools in Malta have to fulfil the requirements of the National Minimum Curriculum⁵⁷. This document, determined by the Minister of Education, stipulates what each and every child is entitled to. At the end of compulsory education, students sit for national school leaving examinations run by the Matriculation Board (MATSEC) of the University of Malta. The curricula for these national examinations are drawn up by experts in the subject areas and who also have the experience of secondary level education. The curriculum for the Matriculation Certificate at post-secondary level, is also determined by the University of Malta and syllabi are also drawn up by experts in the subject areas and with teaching experience nominated to the syllabus panels. Curricula at MCAST vary in the way they are determined. In the case of BTEC courses, these are mainly determined by the foreign awarding board EDEXCEL although there is room for adaptation to the local industry needs. In the case of home grown qualifications, these are developed by the trainers at MCAST. The participation of social partners at MCAST is through their representation of the Board of Governors. In the case of the Foundation Courses at level 2 of the Malta Qualifications Framework, the curricula have been designed based on the recommendations of the Malta Qualifications Council which stipulate that a good percentage needs to focus on the development of the key competences.

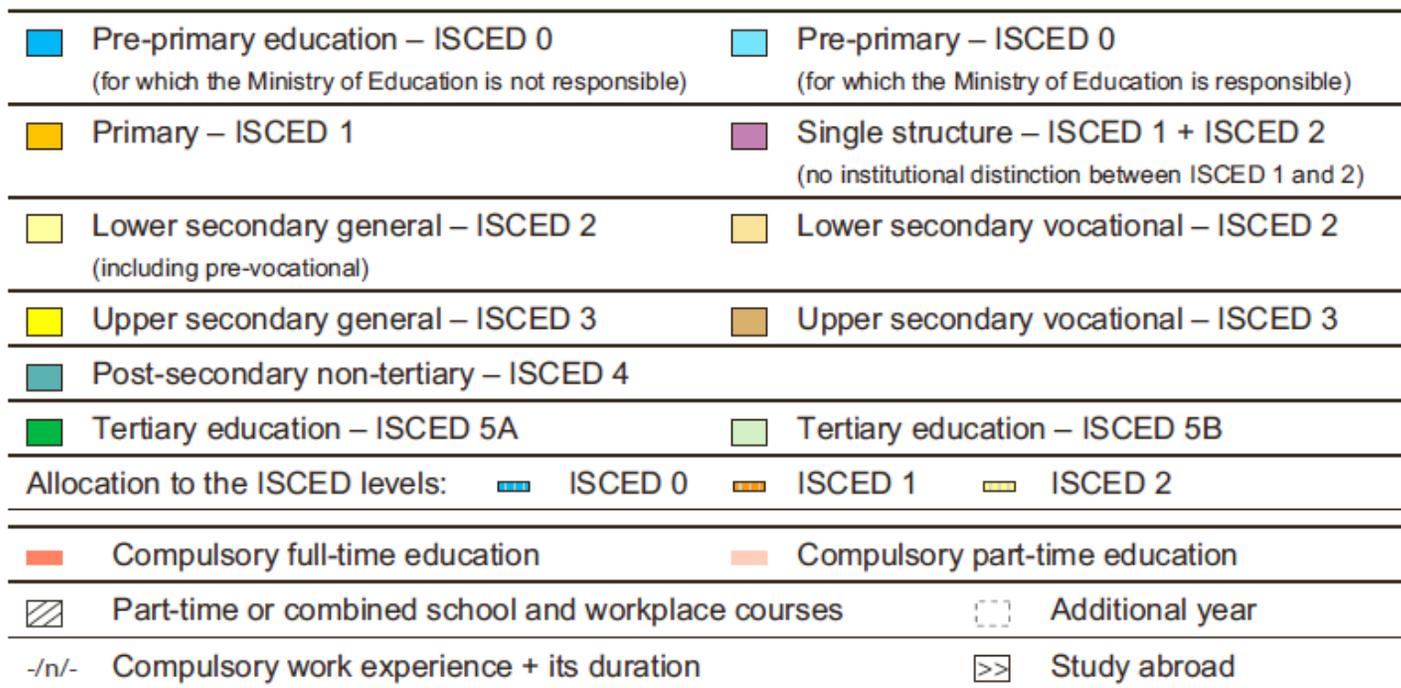
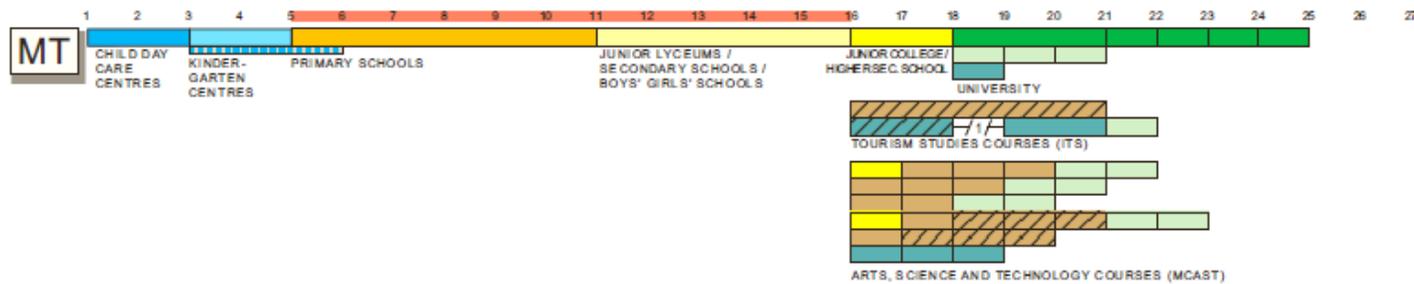
⁵⁶ Intermediate subject level is considered to be one third of an Advanced Level

⁵⁷ Government of Malta, 1999, Creating the Future Together: National Minimum Curriculum , Malta: Ministry of Education

At the Institute of Tourism Studies, curricula are developed by the tutors at the Institute, of whom a good number are still working in the industry. The Board also includes representatives of the sector which ensure that the curricula reflect needs in the sector. In the case of ICMCH, many of the tutors are themselves conservators and so working directly in the industry.

Quality is ensured in different ways in the various institutions. There is a Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education to ensure quality in the case of compulsory education. Quality assurance at MCAST is determined by EDEXCEL in the case of the BTEC courses with external verifiers attending the college regularly every year. Internal Quality Assurance is determined by the procedures required by EDEXCEL. In the case of home grown qualifications there are internal procedures. The Institute of Tourism Studies has its own manual for quality assurance which determines the procedures to be followed.

A summary of the education provision in Malta is given in the diagram overleaf and which has been taken from the Eurydice website.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 3: Organisation of Education System in Malta (Source Eurydice)

5.2 IVET at lower secondary level

There is currently no form of vocational and educational training at lower secondary level, although there are plans for its implementation in the future. This being said, there do exist qualifications which are at Level 2 of the Malta Qualifications Framework, a level which is lower than that which successful students leaving school achieve (Level 3).

In this report description of provision of vocational and education training is given by the stage of educational institution and not by the Level of Qualification.

5.3 IVET at Upper Secondary level (school based and alternance)

On finishing compulsory education at the age of 16, students can opt to take the path of vocational and education training. The main institutions to which they enrol is MCAST, which offers courses at levels 2, 3, 4, 5 and now also up to Level 6 to students depending on the qualifications which they obtain on completion of compulsory education and how they perform from one level of qualification to another.

The Institute of Tourism Studies offers vocational courses at levels 2 to 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework. Vocational Courses offered by the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH) in collaboration with MCAST and thus fall within the prospectus of MCAST.

Admission Requirements

Admission requirements for IVET courses vary according to the level of course offered. Those students who finish compulsory education without any qualification can proceed to any of the Foundation Courses at MCAST based on obtaining their school leaving Certificate. Entry into higher level courses will depend on the qualifications obtained by students as part of their Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) which are national examinations. Each course requires its own passes in specific subject areas and these are indicated in the course prospectus. The local IVET system, however, also allows students to move from one level of qualification to a higher level within the same sector. Vocational institutions also have a maturity clause which allows students of age 21 and above to apply to follow courses at Levels 3 and 4, and 23 for Level 5 courses. Students admitted under the maturity clause do not necessarily need to have all the specified entry requirements into a course, but are interviewed and the selection Board will guide applicants to the best course to follow.

Registration and Tuition Fees

Attendance to IVET vocational courses at MCAST and ITS are free of charge although some courses require that students pay the registration fee to sit for the examinations in the case of the BTEC and City and Guilds qualifications. The government also gives students attending vocational courses a stipend to support their expenses during their studies.

Table 15: Information on existing types of education IVET programmes at Upper-secondary level (on completion of compulsory education at age 16)

Type of Educational Programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED Level/ orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance Between School-based and work-based Training	Average duration of Studies	Transfer to other pathways
Courses offered by MCAST⁵⁸						
MCAST Foundation Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture & Animal Care; • Art & Design; • Construction & Engineering Skills; • Construction in Stone & Trowel Trades; • Hairdressing; • Care; • Electrical & Electronic Engineering; • Mechanical Engineering; • Business; • Computing. 	ISCED Level 2 (MQF Level 2)	85% dedicated to key competences; 15% dedicated to sector skills.	Mainly school-based with some practical experience depending on the sector.	1 or 2 years of full study depending on the level of education of students on entry into the course	Students completing course successfully can proceed to an MCAST-BTEC First Diploma
MCAST Introductory Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masonry Heritage Skills (Riffied); 	ISCED Level 2 (MQF Level 2)	Some key competences but mainly sector skills	School based with practical sessions	3 months	Successful students can continue the proper course in stone resotration

⁵⁸ Further information about MCAST courses can be obtained from the college website: <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

MCAST Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trowel Trades (Painting & Decorating, Plastering, Tile Laying); • Construction in Stone; • Construction & Engineering Skills; • Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning; • Masonry Heritage skills (Riffied); • Banking & Financial Services; • Marketing Studies; 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)	Some key skills but mainly vocational skills	Full-time courses are school-based with practical sessions. Apprenticeships have an alternance model	1 year full-time study or 2 years part-time on apprenticeship	Some courses lead to entry into higher level courses
Other courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aircraft Structure and Repair Course; • Part-66 Aircraft Maintenance Category 'A' License Course; • MCAST Aircraft Maintenance Technician Course (Leading to Part-66 Cat B.1.1 Examinations) • MCAST Aircraft Maintenance Technician Course (Leading to Part-66 Cat B2 Examinations) 	Isced Level 3	Mainly vocational skills and content related knowledge	2 years full-time or else school-based followed by 12 months of work experience	2 years full-time or stipulated hrs of study followed by 12 months of work	Lead to license to work in aviation industry
OIC (Officer in Charge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigational Watch; • Engineering Watch; 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with 12 months ocean going experience	3 years full-time	Can lead to entry into course of Chief mate or into industry
Chief Mate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Mate 	ISCED Level 4	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based	1 year full-time	Leads into Industry
Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probationary Officer Cadet 	ISCED Level 3	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based	1 year full-time	Leads to entry into other courses

MCAST Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning; • Dental Surgery Assistants; • Pharmacy Technicians; • Computer Engineering; • Industrial Electronics; • 	Isced Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	Mainly school-based with practical sessions, some are offered as apprenticeship	Varies between 1-2 years full-time according to sector	Lead mainly to higher level courses but can allow entry into labour market
City & Guilds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hairdressing (women); • Electrotechnical Technology; • Electrical Installation/Maintenance; • Diploma in Automotive Maintenance & Repair; • Technician Advanced Diploma in Motor Vehicle Engineering; • Diploma Mechanical Engineering (craft level); • Certificate in Automotive Maintenance and Repair; • Certificate in Automotive Body and Paint. 	ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Elements of key competences and Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions, or alternance in the case of apprenticeship	Varies, 2 years full-time or 3 years part-time on apprenticeship	Entry into the labour market
ITEC Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty Specialists; • Holistic Massage; • Facial Electric Treatments; • Diet & Nutrition for Complementary Therapists; 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)	Elements of key competences and Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions, or alternance in the case of apprenticeship	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time apprenticeship	Entry into other high level courses or the labour market
MCAST-BTEC First Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture; • Animal Care; • Printing; • Art & Design; • Health & Social Care; 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)	The greater percentage of training is vocational and less on key competences.	Mainly School-based with some practical experience depending on the sector	1 year full-time	Students completing course successfully can proceed to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport (Exercise & Fitness); • Business; • Engineering (electronics); • Mechanical Engineering; • Mechanical Engineering (Aircraft Maintenance Engineering); • I.T. Practitioners; • Construction. 					an MCAST-BTEC National Diploma
MCAST-BTEC National Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture; • Design Crafts; • Media Production; • Civil Engineering; • Building Services Engineering; • Children’s Care, Learning and Development; • Health & Social Care (Health Studies); • Health & Social Care (Social Care); • Sport (Development, Coaching & Fitness); • Applied Science (Laboratory and Industrial Sector); • Electrical/electronic Engineering; • Communication Technology; • Manufacturing Engineering; • Operations and Maintenance Engineering; • Computing; 	ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Elements of key competences and Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions, or alternance in the case of apprenticeship	Varies – 1 or 2 years full-time. Some are also offered as part-time apprenticeship	Entry into the labour market or higher National Diploma
MCAST Access Course to Foundation Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art & Design 	Isced Level 3 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	1 year full-time	Provides access to BTEC Foundation Diploma

MCAST-BTEC Foundation Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art & Design; 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	1 year full-time	Provides access to BTEC Higher National Diploma
MCAST-BTEC National Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture; 	Isced Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	Alternance with work and study as apprenticeship	2 years part-time apprenticeship	Entry into the sector labour market
MCAST Advanced Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning; 	ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	Alternance with work and study as apprenticeship	2 years part-time apprenticeship	Entry into the sector labour market
MCAST Technician Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masonry Heritage Skills (Mastru) 	ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	2 years full-time	Entry into the labour market
Courses Offered by the Institute of Tourism Studies⁵⁹						
Foundation Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Preparation and Service; • Restaurant Operations 	ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with 14 weeks of work experience plus potential 12 month international internship	1 year full-time	Entry into Certificate Course

⁵⁹ Further information on course types offered by the Institute of Tourism Studies can be obtained from : <http://www.its.edu.mt/>

Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Beverage Service and Supervisory Studies; • Food Preparation and Production and Supervisory Studies; • Hotel Operations; • Accommodation Operations; • Tour Guiding; • Travel Agency Operations; 	<p>ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)</p>	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with 14 weeks of work experience plus potential 12 month international internship	2 year full-time	Entry into Diploma Course or sector industry
Craft Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Beverage Service; • Restaurant Operations • Food preparation and Production 	<p>ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)</p>	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with 14 weeks of work experience	1 year full-time	Entry into sector industry
ESTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Preparation and Service; • Restaurant/bar preparations; • General Assistance 	<p>ISCED Level 3 (MQF Level 3)</p>	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	Alternance between work and study	2 years part-time on apprenticeship	Entry into sector industry
Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Beverage Service; • Culinary Arts; • Hotep Operations • Accommodation Operations; • Travel Agency; • Tour Guiding 	<p>ISCED Level 4 (MQF Level 4)</p>	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical experience	1 year full-time	Entry into Higher Diploma or sector industry

Assessment

Most of the assessment in vocational education is formative and there are few written examinations. Project work and other hands-on activities form a substantial part of the assessment.

Progression

As has already been indicated, students can progress from one level qualification to another. In addition, all qualifications offered by MCAST and ITS have already been pegged to the Malta Qualifications Framework. This facilitates the recognition of the level of any qualification obtained by any local vocational institution.

Access to the Labour market

Not all courses lead to direct access to the labour market but are only interim qualifications as one moves from one level qualification to another. However, it also allows those who decide not to proceed with their studies to have some form of qualifications which may be used within the labour market. With experience, since MCAST has been set up in 2001, employers are becoming more familiar with the qualifications system and types of skills which graduating students have and vocational qualifications are gaining a greater respect within the labour market.

Since the setting up of MCAST in 2001, the number of students continuing with upper-secondary education beyond compulsory age has increased. The number of students in IVET has also increased, and although there was also an increase in the number of students in general education, a balance in numbers between the two strands has been reached.

5.4 Apprenticeship Training

Apprenticeship Schemes⁶⁰ for vocational education and training in Malta are based on the dual system where the apprentice follows a training programme at vocational educational institution while concurrently also carrying out on-the-job training at a place of work. Through apprenticeship students acquire competence while they obtain a realistic view of the world of work. This experience, together with the theoretical training leads to a number of nationally recognised qualifications certifying competence in a particular occupational area. Over 85% of those completing an apprenticeship successfully are engaged in full-time employment subsequent to their apprenticeship whilst some of the others have even set up their own business.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is responsible for the administration of the apprenticeship scheme. The Corporation is responsible for providing a training placement, monitoring the student's progress and also carrying out a number of monitoring visits during the apprenticeship year to make sure that the training provided by employers meets requirements set.

ETC's responsibility includes: marketing of Schemes with prospective participants and parents; issuing call for applications; promoting the apprenticeship scheme with prospective apprentices and

⁶⁰ Further information can be obtained from the ETC website:

<http://www.etc.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=2188>

employers; assisting persons who wish to embark on an apprenticeship to find a suitable training placements; providing assistance to organizations wishing to sponsor apprentices; monitoring the on-the-job training of apprentices; and co-ordinating the trade testing process of apprentices on completion of their apprenticeship.

There are two apprenticeship schemes:

1. **Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS):** This apprenticeship leads to an occupational competence at technician level (level 4 on the MQF). At the end of the apprenticeship, the learner will have the competence to supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work.
2. **Extended Skill Training Scheme (ESTS):** This apprenticeship offers a wide range of opportunities to young persons willing to learn a trade or skill at craftsman level (level 3 on the MQF). At the apprenticeship learners will be able to take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study and adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems.

The apprentice, the employer (also known as the sponsor) and the ETC enter into a contractual agreement stating the rights and obligations of all parties during the apprenticeship. Apprentices are obliged to attend at a vocational educational institution to acquire the underpinning knowledge (off-the-job training) related to their sector. Public and private sector firms provide the on-the-job training, the latter employing the largest number of apprentices in both schemes.

Apprenticeship Contracts

Besides the maintenance grants, apprentices also earn a stipend that is paid by the employer to support learning. Conditions of apprenticeship include the following:

- **Hours of Work:** cannot exceed the ordinary hours applicable to the employer's establishment. Time allotted to theoretical instruction is considered as part of the normal working hours;
- **Vacation Leave:** Apprentices are entitled to 2 working days for every 20 days attendance at the place of work;
- **Statutory Bonuses:** Apprentices are entitled to half of the statutory bonuses (June and December).
- **National Insurance (NI) Contributions:** Weekly rate of NI contributions payable by the employer and the apprentice: Under 18 years, 10% of weekly wage up to a maximum of €4.38; Over 18 years, 10% of weekly wage up to a maximum of €7.94;
- **Sick Leave:** Apprentices are entitled to 30 days sick leave, of which 15 days will be on full pay and the other 15 days on half pay. This benefit may be availed of only after the successful completion of the probationary period;
- **Overtime:** Apprentices are eligible to work overtime provided the necessary consent is provided by ETC. This will ascertain that the extra hours will not influence badly on the time the apprentice needs to either rest or study. Overtime rates are those applicable to full-time employees performing the same job. No overtime rate is to be worked out on a wage below the National

Statutory minimum wage. Overtime of apprentices below 18 years of age is regulated by LN 440 of 2003.

Table 16: Rates payable to apprentices under the Extended Skill Training Scheme are:

Year	Wage (payable by the sponsor)	Maintenance Grant (payable by the Government)
1	€ 47.75 per week	€ 93.17 per month
2	€ 49.99 per week	€ 93.17 per month
3	€ 73.61 per week	Nil

Table 17: Rates payable to apprentices under the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme are:

Year	Wage (payable by the sponsor)	Maintenance Grant (payable by the Government)
1	€ 49.97 per week	€ 93.17 per month
2	€ 52.20 per week	€ 93.17 per month
3	€ 75.87 per week	Nil

A one-time grant of €326.11 or part thereof is paid to cover expenses related to the purchase of educational equipment.

Certification

A Journeyman’s Certificate is awarded to those who successfully complete the apprenticeship: at Technician level to TAS apprentices; at Craftsman level to ESTS apprentices.

Entry into such programmes is usually limited to the number of sponsors, or the number of employers offering apprenticeship placements. There are instances when the number of students applying for apprenticeships was greater than the number of sponsors identified.

Table 18: Information on existing types of education IVET programmes as apprenticeship

Type of Educational Programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED Level/ orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance Between School-based and work-based Training	Average duration of Studies	Transfer to other pathways
Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Technician • Aircraft Maintenance Technician • Building Services Engineering Technician • Computer Engineering Technician • Computer Network & ICT Support Technician • Construction Technician (Construction Design / Civil Engineering / Land Surveying / Quantity Surveying) • Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technician • Industrial Electronics Technician • Jeweler/Silversmith • Laboratory Technologist • Mechanical Engineering Technician (Plant / Design & Manufacturing / Mechatronics / Operations & Maintenance) • Motor Vehicle Engineering Technician • Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician • Software Developer • Stone Heritage Technician (Mastru) • Telecommunications Technician 	ISCED Level 3	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	A number of days during the week are at work and the rest of the days followin vocational education and training	3 years	Entry into the labour market or self-employed

Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty Therapist • Commis Chef • Commis Waiter • Electrical Installer • Hairdresser • Mechanical Fitter • Motor Vehicle Mechanic • Painter and Decorator • Plasterer • Plumber • Printer • Restaurant/Bar Operations • Stone Heritage Craftsperson (Sewwej) • Stone Mason • Tile Layer • Vehicle Body repairer / Spray Painter • Welder and Fabricator • Woodworker 	ISCED Level 3	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	A number of days during the week are at work and the rest of the days followin vocational education and training	3 years	Entry into the labour market or self-employed
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5.5 Other youth programmes and alternative pathways

There do not exist other youth programmes or alternative pathways than those identified so far. The only other form of IVET which persons can follow are the training programmes offered by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) but these are considered as mainly CVET.

5.6 Vocational Education and Training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level

The main vocational Education and Training at post-secondary level are those courses offered at Level 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and where students are over the age of 18. This is because entry into this course is following the successful completion of lower level qualifications courses within the sector at ISCED 3 and 4 following compulsory education.

Admission Requirements

Admission into these Level 5 Qualifications at the Higher National Diploma is only available for those who complete the MCAST-BTEC National Diploma successfully. This means that this level of post-secondary education builds on previous vocational and education training. A similar pattern of progression can be identified in the case of the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)

Registration and Tuition Fees

The course of studies is offered for free by government, but students need to pay for registration to the BTEC examinations. In addition, students are also given a regular stipend to support expenses during their studies. There are no registration fees in the case of ITS.

Progression

Students who complete the MCAST-BTEC Higher National Diploma successfully allows students to move on to IVET at tertiary level, leading to a Bachelor's level of qualification. Successful students at ITS can proceed to the University of Malta to complete a Bachelor level of studies in Tourism Studies.

Table 19: Information on existing types of education IVET programmes at Post-secondary level (on completion of courses at ISCED 3 and 4)

Type of Educational Programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED Level/ orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance Between School-based and work-based Training	Average duration of Studies	Transfer to other pathways
Courses offered by MCAST⁶¹						
MCAST-BTEC Higher National Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Management; • Interactive Media; • Graphic Design; • Fine Arts; • 3D Design; • Media (moving media); • Construction; • Building Services Engineering; • Business; • Health & Social Care; • Electrical/Electronic Engineering; • Electric/electronic Engineering (electronic); • Mechanical Engineering; • Computing (software development) • Computing (ICT Systems Support); 	ISCED Level 5 (MQF Level 5)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	2 years full-time	Entry into the labour market And in some cases entry into Bachelors degree course
Courses Offered by the Institute of Tourism Studies⁶²						
Higher Diploma	• Hospitality and Tourism Management	ISCED Level 5 (MQF Level 5)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with work experience plus 12 month international internship	4 year full-time	Entry into Tertiary education or sector industry

⁶¹ Further information about MCAST courses can be obtained from the college website: <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

⁶² Further information on course types offered by the Institute of Tourism Studies can be obtained from : <http://www.its.edu.mt/>

5.7 Vocational Education and Training at Tertiary level

In 2009, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has offered applications for vocational degrees for the first time. This project is being undertaken in collaboration with Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, a world renowned German research institution known by many as the developer of the MP3. Through Fraunhofer, MCAST has acquired access to practically all universities in Germany. MCAST, in September 2009, has issued a call for applications for the first group of its vocational degree programmes in the institutes of art and design, business and commerce, electronics and electrical engineering, and information and communication technology.

Table 20: Information on existing types of education IVET programmes at Tertiary Level

Type of Educational Programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED Level/ orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance Between School-based and work-based Training	Average duration of Studies	Transfer to other pathways
Courses offered by MCAST⁶³						
Bachelor of Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Design & Interactive Media; • 3D Design & Interiors; • Business Enterprise 	ISCED Level 5 (MQF Level 6)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	1 year full-time	Entry into the sector industry
Bachelor of Science (Hons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronics Engineering; • Electronics and Control Engineering; • Software Development; • Computer Networks 	ISCED Level 5 (MQF Level 6)	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	School-based with practical sessions	1 year full-time	Entry into the sector industry

⁶³ Further information about MCAST courses can be obtained from the college website: <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

Theme 6: Continuing vocational education and training for adults

6.1 Formal Education

6.1.1 General Background (administrative structure and financing)

The update document of the National Reform Programme⁶⁴ identifies government's key objectives in education to involve raising the general qualification level, reducing early school leavers and attracting more students and adults into further and higher education within a lifelong learning context. It is thus government's aim to have more adults engaged in further training as both adult education (in general education and leisure) and CVET. There is recognition that improvements are needed in relation to lifelong learning among lower skilled and further reduction of early school leaving.

The work of the main providers of adult education and CVET (the Directorate of Lifelong Learning and MCAST, ITS) are regulated by the Education Act of 2010⁶⁵ (see chapter 4). On the other hand the provision of training by ETC is regulated by the Employment and Training Services Act⁶⁶.

The National Reform Programme update⁶⁷ reports the initiatives taken by government in fulfillment to its commitment to adult education and CVET. These were listed to include:

- Developing alternative modes of delivery for those school leavers who choose to work on a full-time basis, to pursue part-time/evening programmes at MCAST and ITS;
- Providing open, distance and e-learning programmes by MCAST and ITS;
- Developing policy on the validation of informal and non-formal learning and setting up of Sector Skills Units;
- ITS to conduct validation of prior learning and work experience;

⁶⁴ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

⁶⁵ Government of Malta, 2010, **CHAPTER 327, EDUCATION ACT, ACT XXIV of 1988, as amended by Legal Notices: 98 of 1988, 63, 64, 135 and 136 of 1989, 153 and 156 of 1990 and 10 of 1991; Act X of 1991; Legal Notices: 66 and 153 of 1991, 67, 89, 90 and 105 of 1992, 21 and 117 of 1993, 5, 12, 110 and 149 of 1994; Act II of 1995; Legal Notices: 79 of 1995 and 165 of 1996; Act XVIII of 1997; and Legal Notices: 177, 181, 183, 184, 189 and 202 of 1997, 9, 30 and 172 of 1998, and 41, 101 and 102 of 1999; Acts VI of 2001, XVIII of 2002 and III of 2004; Legal Notices 144 and 363 of 2004; Acts II of 2005 and XIII of 2006; Legal Notices 293 of 2006, and 327, 391 and 424 of 2007; Act XXXII of 2007; Legal Notices 212 of 2008, and 21 and 85 of 2009; Act XXIII of 2009; and Legal Notice 102 of 2010.**

⁶⁶ Government of Malta, **CHAPTER 343, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES ACT, ACT XXVIII of 1990, as amended by Acts XV of 1995, XVI of 1997, II of 2005, VII of 2006 and XXXII of 2007; and Legal Notice 424 of 2007.**

⁶⁷ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

- Developing professional standards for vocations and trades using Competence Matrices and Occupational Standards in nine identified sectors (hospitality, heritage; construction; community care; agribusiness; art & design; electrical and mechanical engineering; business & commerce and information technology) by MQC; and
- Giving more visibility and status to Vocational Education and Training using a career guidance tool called “Vocational Qualification Package” (VQPACK).

With regard to Life Long Learning, the following actions are stated to being undertaken:

- Establishing the Directorate for Life Long Learning and developing a strategy for Lifelong Learning;
- Opening of a new Lifelong Learning Centre and providing a wider choice of programmes;
- Entering into partnerships with Local Councils and voluntary organisations for the provision of adult training programmes;
- Integrating qualifications awarded by various creative art schools into the MQF; and
- Providing scholarship schemes for supporting adults in access to specialist higher education and training.

There is recognition by the social partners about the need and value of CVET and other forms of Adult education, with trade unions setting up their own foundations for training provision to their worker members as well as for other groups such as unemployed and inactive people.

The projects by the Malta Qualifications Council in setting up the sector skills councils as well as defining the occupational standards are setting the path for regulating further the provision of CVET in the country. MQC through the whole process has involved the input by the different key stakeholders, including trade unions, employers’ associations as well as associations of different sector groups. There is wide consensus on the need for reforms which the Malta Qualifications Council is implementing in providing CVET with greater value and recognition as part of the country’s vision for lifelong learning.

6.1.2 Major Characteristics of formal CVET

There are various forms of CVET and adult education provision in Malta. These include provision by the :

- **Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL):** Within the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) there is the Directorate for Lifelong Learning which is responsible for Adult Education. It offers courses for adults in academic subjects, Art, crafts, IT subjects, Leisure, and music. These courses are offered as evening courses. There is also the Lifelong Learning Centre which offers academic subjects during the day;
- **Employment and Training Corporation (ETC):** The Employment and Training Corporation offers courses to unemployed people as well as those looking for ways to improve their opportunities for employment advancement. Courses are offered in the areas of: basic Skills; care workers; dangerous goods drivers; hospitality, ICT related; job skills, office related; other; private guards; and trades. These courses can be offered as either day or evening courses. ETC also provides CVET through

traineeship which is a dual system of occupational training. Traineeship programmes are developed by ETC together with the employers, their associations or other professional bodies. The programme is made up of off-the-job training component and on-the-job training. The minimum duration of the traineeships is 13 consecutive weeks and the maximum is 52 weeks, based on a 40-hour week. The duration varies according to the programme.

- **Part-time Courses at MCAST:** The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology is also committed to provide opportunities for CVET. It achieves this through its part-time evening courses which are offered in a range of areas by the different institutes;
- **The Institute of Tourism Studies⁶⁸** offers a number of part-time courses (for students over 16 years of age) designed to meet specific needs within the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. Courses offered range from short courses of few hours to longer-term part-time courses.

All these institutions have in 2009 introduced the maturity clause which allows persons older than 21 to apply for entry for courses leading to qualifications up to level 3 and those who are over 23 years of age to apply for entry into higher level qualifications without necessarily having the required entry qualifications. Government has also used European Social funds through which MCAST is to organise meetings between employers and VET providers in order to provide links between industry and VET to identify skills gaps in a number of vocational sectors and to develop training courses tailored to fit these gaps.

Besides these main state-funded providers of Adult Education and CVET, one also finds a number of privately run vocational education and training providers who offer courses as evening classes in a range of different vocational sectors. There is currently no official register of recognised vocational courses offered as CVET within the private sector.

Modes of formal CVET provision

Most of the opportunities for CVET in Malta are in the form of evening courses where workers attend classes after work within formal training institutions. It is only in some cases that classes are held during the day. Although government is committed to start delivering CVET through the use of e-learning, this is still at the earlier stages and far from implementation.

Types of formal CVET provision

Provision in CVET in Malta can be found in various areas. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning⁶⁹ is more oriented towards academic studies with some courses targeting basic skills. It also has a few vocational courses, mainly in the areas IT and some trades and crafts. MCAST offers a range of both short courses and full BTEC qualifications as evening courses. The sectors of training include agribusiness; electronics and electronic engineering; trades, construction; IT; Art; Media; construction; mechanical engineering; aeronautical engineering; maritime sector. ETC offers CVET in basic skills; care workers, dangerous goods driving; hospitality; IT related; job skills; office related; private guards and trade. The Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICHMCH) also conducts a number of short CPD courses. It aims to develop this area further, giving opportunities to local and foreign professionals, technicians and craftsmen to upgrade their skills in their particular field of conservation-restoration and

⁶⁸ Part-time courses offered by ITS can be obtained from <http://www.its.edu.mt/files/9/Prospectus%20PT-2010-2011.pdf>

⁶⁹ Evening courses can be viewed at: <http://www.eveningcourses.gov.mt/>

management of cultural heritage. The Institute of Tourism Studies also offers a wide range of short part-time courses related to the Hospitality and tourism industry.

Level of qualifications within CVET

There have been developments by some of the vocational education and training providers as they have started to map the courses which they offer for adults as evening courses. The Malta Qualifications Council has started level rating short courses but this is a process recently started and will take some time to cover the whole provision of CVET. MCAST has already started both rating the level of the short courses on the Malta Qualifications Framework as well as provide credit value in terms of ECVET. There has been limited level rating of the short courses offered by other training providers as well as the number of credits that are to be assigned to each of the short-courses;

Admission into CVET courses

Admission into CVET courses varies according to the course level. However, there is a maturity clause which allows people working in the sector to follow courses even if they do not have the traditional entry requirements, and the institutions believe that the applicant has enough academic background to be able to follow profitably the short-course;

Quality Assurance within CVET

The quality assurance structures for CVET fall within the quality assurance system of the particular institution. This means that there is need for further development in the quality assurance of for CVET. The Malta Qualifications Council has issued a policy document which provides direction, but still has to lay down the official standards in line with those indicated for EQARF.

Evidence of direct employer support for VET is difficult to quantify⁷⁰. In a study conducted in 2001, a total of 1,683 enterprises participated in this exercise⁷¹, of which 991 or 59% provided continuing training (CVET) to their employees⁷². These results are limited to enterprises employing ten or more staff. 14.1% of the enterprises have in-house training centres. For the vast majority, training is provided externally.

Government, through the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), offers support to employers for CVET through the Training Aid Framework (TAF). This framework supports local companies which invest in their human resources. ETC can give financial assistance to those companies investing in the training of their workforce. This scheme is available for companies in the private sector and the subsidy varies according to the type of training and the size of the enterprise. Training can be in-house or out-sourced and can be given in Malta or abroad through distance learning. The Training can be a course at the University of Malta or at a foreign university. The training can even lead to a PhD. Self-employed persons will also be eligible. Each company can be eligible to a maximum of €250,000 each year.

⁷⁰ Ammerman P., 2004, Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems Country Report: Malta, Greece: Navigator Consulting Group.

⁷¹ National Statistics Office, Malta. *Continuing Vocational Training Survey*. 2001.

⁷² Sultana, R., Spiteri A., Ashton D., & Schoner U., 2002, Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Malta: Monographs Candidate Countries, Milan: European Training Foundation, available on [http://www.medaete.net/pubmgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/1EBDB56DD32E7FDEC125716C0044B055/\\$File/ENL_MON_MT_03_EN.pdf](http://www.medaete.net/pubmgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/1EBDB56DD32E7FDEC125716C0044B055/$File/ENL_MON_MT_03_EN.pdf)

6.2 Non formal Education

6.2.1 General Background (administrative structure and financing)

Due to the inexistence of any regulation of non-formal education in Malta, as well as a lack of system for documenting the different forms of non-formal education, it is difficult to describe the provision of non-formal CVET with accuracy.

The government of Malta is aware that there is a significant amount of non-formal learning taking place, of which part involves CVET. In its plight to give value to all that individuals know and are able to do, it is committed to the development of a system for the validation of informal and non-formal learning. This is recognised in the country's update of the National Reform Programme⁷³ where in the case of lifelong learning, government commits to developing a system for measuring and tracking formal, informal and non-formal learning activities in Malta and to developing policy on the validation of informal and non-formal learning and setting up of Sector Skills Units to conduct validation of prior learning and work experience.

The Malta Qualifications Council has since published a policy document⁷⁴ which identifies the various types of 'invisible' learning which is present in the country and provides an argument in favour of its value and the need to recognise and validate it. A framework within which this validation process is to take place is put forward. The Malta Qualifications Council is currently involved in a number of projects whereby: a system for the validation of informal and non-formal learning is being piloted; and sector skills are being organized in order to draw up occupational standards against which the validation process is to take place. MQC is working towards having a system where organisations can apply to formalize their non-formal learning into formal training courses with assessment and leading to a partial or full qualification related to the Malta Qualifications Framework.

Most of non-formal learning CVET takes place either at the workplace or else is provided by NGOs, trade unions or other voluntary associations.

6.2.2 Major Characteristics of non-formal CVET

There are no official institutions responsible for the provision of non-formal CVET in Malta. What one finds are Foundations, mainly set up by trade unions, to provide forms of training to workers. There are also a number of private CVET training providers who offer short courses without any certification except that of attendance. The result is that many times employers or individuals invest their time and money in such CVET training, following which they do not gain any form of certification which recognises the learning which they would have achieved.

⁷³ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

⁷⁴ Malta Qualifications Council, 2008, Valuing all Learning Volume 4: Frameworks for the validation of informal and non-formal learning in Malta. <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/documents-publications?l=1>

6.3 Measures to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market

The main vulnerable groups identified by the Government of Malta and who are at risk of exclusion from the labour market include: youths; over 40s; women returnees; persons with disabilities; immigrants; as well as those with low skills and qualifications. These are the main groups for which the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) invests in traineeships and other schemes which allow these people to have on-the-job CVET as well as providing work experience which would increase their employability.

Youth Employment Schemes –YEP

This schemes is financed through the European Social Fund and provides young persons with information related to job search, guidance, training programmes, career resources and tools, tips and advice, virtual interviews, quizzes and on-line one-to-one consultations with career guidance practitioners. It also has a Youth Employment Outreach TV programme giving useful information and advice as well as tackle topics according to labour market needs. ETC Youth Days with short workshops, challenges area, film fora and entertainment as well as exhibition areas are organized. YEP assists young persons in participating in different types of training.

Work Trial Scheme

The objectives of the Work Trial Scheme (WTS) are two-fold, serving both the requirements of the employer who offers to train the work exposure participant and the needs of the unemployed jobseeker. The Employment and Training Corporation grants 50% of the national minimum wage per week for the duration of the scheme towards the participant. Placements can participate for a maximum of 12 consecutive weeks. The work experience will be based on a 20 hour week (4hours a day) in all cases. Eligible jobseekers include: Jobseeker aged 16-24 who never worked (i.e. new labour market entrants with no job experience in their field of job preference; Youth aged 16-24 with previous work experience not in line with their respective job preference; Graduates and other persons who completed their studies and never worked in their field of study; inactive persons (i.e. at least a one (1) year break from last employment; registered jobseekers aged 25 years and over who have been unemployed for at least six (6) months; recently made redundant persons, who would like to change their job preference – recently made redundant i.e. within six (6) months from date of last employment. A person can only benefit from this scheme once within a particular calendar year. The scheme offers employers the opportunity to evaluate a potential employee prior to employment, as a result facilitating prospective recruitment; 20 hours of work exposure per week, for a maximum of 12 weeks in exchange of work exposure; the advantage to train and mould a potential employee's attitude and behaviour in conformance with the organizational culture. This is especially important when there is a shortfall of specialized workers in a particular sector; no financial costs are incurred by the employer during the training period, giving them the opportunity to overcome the skills gap by getting jobseekers' skills in line with needs of the company prior committing to employ.

Bridging the Gap Scheme

Bridging the Gap is designed to support a trainee in the transition period from unemployment to employment. It allows the employer to evaluate the performance of the trainee in the workplace, prior to proper engagement. The scheme offers the trainee a period of work exposure with an employer to enable him/her to demonstrate the skills needed for a particular job. The employer and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) enter into an agreement regarding the work exposure period, whereby a trainee is placed on the scheme with the prospect of employment. The programme supports and targets disadvantaged groups to enhance their capabilities to integrate into labour market. Those who can benefit from this scheme include: Registered Disabled Persons who are registering as unemployed; Former substance abusers; former offenders; correctional Facility inmates on leave; and other vulnerable groups. The participant will gain workplace skills required by employers; have access to employment opportunities; and receive a weekly allowance of 80% of the current national minimum wage from ETC while renouncing the rights to any Social Security benefits throughout the work exposure phase.

Traineeships

Traineeship is a dual system of occupational training targeted at new labour market entrants, unemployed or employees involved in restructuring exercises. ETC offers this flexible training to supplement skills shortages. The programmes are developed by ETC together with the employers, their associations or other professional bodies. The programme is made up of off-the-job training component and on-the-job training. The content and occupational standards of this training programme are drawn up after consultation with employer. On finishing the programme trainees sit for a competency test and receive certification. The minimum duration of the traineeships is 13 consecutive weeks and the maximum is 52 weeks, based on a 40-hour week. The duration varies according to the programme. The entry requirements vary according to the traineeship, however, such requirements are kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary hurdles. A traineeship cannot be embarked upon unless an employer is available prior to the start of the traineeship. Employed traineeship applicants, whether they are referred by their employer or apply on their own have to accept off-the-job training delivered by ETC or approved training providers. Their respective employers provide on-the-job training. Persons following a traineeship are at least entitled to the respective national statutory minimum wage. Conditions of work are safeguarded by the respective laws of Malta. Throughout the whole traineeship, ETC pays a training subsidy of 40% of the weekly national statutory minimum wage for the duration of the training period. The training subsidy is increased to 50% of the weekly minimum wage in case of disadvantaged groups. Only employers of trainees, who are registered unemployed upon embarking on a traineeship, are eligible for this subsidy. On Completion of the traineeship, trainees are assessed by a Trade Testing Board to test the standards of occupational competence reached. Those who show proficiency in a range of skills making up an occupation are awarded a Certificate of Achievement.

Table 21: Types of Traineeships offered by ETC

	Unemployed	Duration	Off Job Trg.	Entry Qualifications
Woodwork Skills	Yes	16 wks x 40 hrs	8 hrs x week	Completed. Compulsory Educ.; Sch. Leaving Cert.; Able in Numeracy, Eng & Maltese Skills; Placement Interview
Sales Persons	Yes	13 wks x 40 hrs	8 hrs x week	Completed. Compulsory Educ; Sch. Leaving Cert.; Able in Numeracy, Eng. & Maltese Skills; Placement Interview.
Freight/Shipping	Yes	15 wks x 40 hrs	8 hrs x week	5 Passes at O-Level; Certs/evidence in use of pc applications; Placement Interview.
Office Skills	Yes	20 wks x 40 hrs	8 hrs x week	5 Passes at O-Level; ECDL 2,3,4 & 7; Placement Interview.
Care for the Elderly	Yes	27 wks x 40 hrs	8 hrs x week	School Leaving Certificate; Test in Eng & Maltese Languages; Placement Interview.

Theme 7: Training VET teachers and Trainers

7.1 Types of teachers and trainers occupations in VET

This section provides insight into teacher training in Malta and specific provision in the case of VET.

7.1.1 Teaching and Training occupations in VET

The main teacher-training provision in Malta is that run by the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. The Faculty of Education offers various paths into the teaching profession. The courses which it runs include: Bachelor of Education (Hons) (B.Ed.(Hons)) primary track which prepares teachers for primary level of education of compulsory education; Bachelor of Education (Hons) (B.Ed(Hons)) secondary track which prepares students to teach one or two subjects at secondary level of compulsory level; or else a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which is also oriented for teachers teaching at secondary level.

The Bachelor of Education (Hons) courses are both four year full-time courses. The PGCE is a nine month course which is offered to students who have already obtained a Bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.Sc.) in their subject area(s) for which they are then trained to teach.

The Faculty of Education does not currently run any teacher-training courses which are directed to preparing teachers for the vocation sector.

Teachers teaching in the VET sector will possibly be graduates from the Faculty of Education. Primary B.Ed. (Hons) students have been recruited to teach basic skills alongside secondary level teachers graduating in the subjects taught at subjects taught in some of the institutes. This means that the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has a mix of teachers ranging from those who are teachers are knowledgeable in the trade/technique being taught and thus come from the Industrial side to graduates from the Faculty of Education as Primary/secondary teachers. Those teachers with knowledge of trade would not necessarily have a tertiary qualification or pre-service teacher-training either. One also finds teachers with a tertiary qualification such as engineers but without pre-service teacher training, or else teachers with pre-service teacher training from the Faculty of Education. None of the teachers start teaching VET with a pre-service qualification in teacher-training at VET level because this type of pre-service teacher-training is currently not available in Malta.

VET teacher- trainers can be identified within the VTTU – Vocational Teacher Training Unit within MCAST. These are persons who have been educated within the Faculty of Education and have mainly a Masters in Education level qualifications and coming from the VET sector.

A good number of teachers are attracted to teach at MCAST with a good supply. However, like any other educational Institution, MCAST also has a good number of attrition as staff move, mainly to either Junior College or the University of Malta which are more attractive institutions for teachers.

7.1.2 Responsible bodies and organigram

The Council for the Teaching Profession is legally responsible for regulating the teaching profession in Malta and consequently responsible for the issuing of warrants to persons to practise as teachers. This council is given legal status by the Education Act of 2010⁷⁵. The Act specifies that the Council shall regulate the practice of the teaching profession in Malta with reference to -

- (a) keeping under review and assessing education and training standards and on the fitness to teach of each person who chooses to practise the teaching profession;
- (b) advising the Minister in relation to these standards, the initial and continuing training of teachers, proficiency, experience and qualifications required for holding and retaining a warrant to teach;
- (c) considering and advising the Minister with regard to applications for comparability and recognition of teaching qualifications;
- (d) promoting and encouraging initiatives which ensure a continuing professional training and development programme for warrant holders;
- (e) examining applications for a warrant to practise the teaching profession and make recommendations to the Minister on the award or refusal thereof;
- (f) keeping an official register of all registered teachers and another register of those holding a temporary warrant given under article 25, and record therein any suspension, cancellation and reinstatement of a warrant;
- (g) keeping an official register of all teachers' partnerships;
- (h) keeping such information as may be required in relation to associations representing teachers in Malta and which are registered under the provisions of this Act;
- (i) making recommendations to the Minister, following consultation with the associations registered under the provisions of this Act, on the code of professional standards and ethics that may be prescribed for the professional behaviour of teachers which among other things shall include references to the respect towards and the promotion of fundamental values in life that are enshrined in the Constitution and in the laws of the land;
- (j) inquiring into any allegation of professional misconduct, gross negligence or incompetence by a teacher;
- (k) advising the Minister on any matter on which the opinion of the Council is sought by the Minister, including any advice on persons who practise the teaching profession while holding a temporary warrant;

⁷⁵ Government of Malta, 2010, **CHAPTER 327, EDUCATION ACT**, ACT XXIV of 1988, as amended by Legal Notices: 98 of 1988, 63, 64, 135 and 136 of 1989, 153 and 156 of 1990 and 10 of 1991; Act X of 1991; Legal Notices: 66 and 153 of 1991, 67, 89, 90 and 105 of 1992, 21 and 117 of 1993, 5, 12, 110 and 149 of 1994; Act II of 1995; Legal Notices: 79 of 1995 and 165 of 1996; Act XVIII of 1997; and Legal Notices: 177, 181, 183, 184, 189 and 202 of 1997, 9, 30 and 172 of 1998, and 41, 101 and 102 of 1999; Acts VI of 2001, XVIII of 2002 and III of 2004; Legal Notices 144 and 363 of 2004; Acts II of 2005 and XIII of 2006; Legal Notices 293 of 2006, and 327, 391 and 424 of 2007; Act XXXII of 2007; Legal Notices 212 of 2008, and 21 and 85 of 2009; Act XXIII of 2009; and Legal Notice 102 of 2010.

(l) performing such other functions as may arise from the Act or any other law, or as may be assigned to it by the Minister.

This Council so far is involved in regulating the teachers' warrant, but has not yet embarked in regulating the competences required in teacher-training, or who can provide teacher-training. It is thus the Faculty of Education which carries out pre-service teacher-training which determines its curricula and the quality and standards required. In the case of the VTTU at MCAST, there is also no formal regulation and the unit itself decides on the level and quality of the in-service training which it provides, except in the case of teacher-training courses within BTEC which require quality assurance as in the case of other BTEC qualifications.

7.1.3 Recent Reforms to VET teacher/trainer training

No main major reforms in teacher training can be registered with respect to the Faculty of Education, except the increase of Masters in Education courses being offered in different disciplines of education. There has been extension into inclusive education, but also in specific subject areas.

With respect to VET teacher training, the major initiatives were those taken by MCAST which through European and Social funding, currently have a project which involves a Post Graduate training course for Graduate staff in order to upgrade VET teacher-training among staff within MCAST. It also has, as part of the same ESF project, teacher-training courses for other VET staff within MCAST who do not have a graduate degree.

7.2 Types of teachers and trainers in IVET

7.2.1 Types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET

Teachers at both ITS and MCAST can be at the positions of Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer. The position of trainer does not exist in apprenticeship. Although recommended, it is not required for teachers within IVET to hold a teacher warrant. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) does not have its own Teacher-trainer. When organising in-service training of staff, ITS usually uses the expertise from within the Faculty of Education.

MCAST, as indicated in the table overleaf, is the institution with the majority of IVET teachers in Malta. In order to provide in-service training to its staff, MCAST has set up the VTTU – Vocational Teacher Training Unit. The mission statement of this unit within the Professional Development Centre is to provide quality and state-of-the-art pedagogical training to staff in reflection of a constantly changing

society thus enabling them to fully develop their own individual potential and talents within the context of the college and related industry. This aim is also highlighted in MCAST's strategic plan⁷⁶.

Table 22: Number of Teachers at MCAST in 2006 as indicated in official statistics⁷⁷

Name of Institute	Assistant Lecturer	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer
Agribusiness Institute	5	1	0
Institute of Art and Design	19	0	0
Inclusive Education Unit	2	0	0
VTTU	0	2	1
Basic Skills Unit	9	1	1
Institute of Building and Construction Engineering	37	1	0
Institute of Business and Commerce	56	11	0
Institute of Mechanical Engineering	27	0	0
Maritime Institute	1	2	0
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	25	2	0
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering	26	0	0
Institute of Community Services	25	1	0
Gozo Centre	20	0	0
Total	252	21	2

Table 23: Types of Teachers within IVET in Malta⁷⁸

Persons with extensive knowledge and trade skills as a result of many years of experience – no formal VET teacher-training;
Persons with extensive knowledge and trade skills as a result of many years of experience – formal BTEC VET teacher-training;
Persons with a Bachelor's Degree in a vocational area (e.g. engineering) but no formal teacher-training;
Persons with an Education degree but education training is not specifically to teach within the VET sector
Persons with an Education degree and with a Masters (thesis related to VET sector)

⁷⁶ Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology, 2006, Strategic Plan 2007-09: Vocational Education and Training that supports the changing Economy

⁷⁷ National Statistics Office (2010), Education Statistics 2006, Malta: National Statistics Office.

⁷⁸ A number of these staff have undergone in-service teacher training in VET as part of MCAST initiatives.

7.2.2 Pre-service and in-service training of IVET teachers and trainers

There is no official provision of pre-service training of IVET teachers.

In the case of in-service VET teacher-training, the VTTU is responsible for organising this for the teaching staff within MCAST. Since MCAST has been set up, it has chosen the Edexcel/BTEC Vocational Teacher Framework as the vehicle to achieve a Certificate in Further Education Teaching (FE) of international recognition. The qualification had the joint badge of Edexcel and MCAST. This professional qualification in FE teaching is designed to provide focused and specialist vocational programmes with a clear work-related emphasis. The qualification provides a vocational programme of study that meets the individual needs of candidates related to their current vocational area of specialism. There is a strong emphasis on the development of practical skills alongside the development of requisite knowledge and understanding in further education and training. The certification, which is a qualification at British National Vocational Qualification Level 5, was offered to MCAST assistant lecturers as part of their Continuous Professional Development.

More recently, MCAST has obtained funding from the European Social Fund which covers the development and delivery of a Post-graduate certificate in Education within the Vocational Sector for its Lecturing Staff who already hold a Bachelor's Degree, as well as a training course for those who are not graduates.

Teacher-trainers for delivering this course have been recruited on a service contract and were required to possess a minimum of Masters level qualification in Education. The collective agreement for teaching staff at MCAST makes in-service training a requirement of teaching staff's work obligations⁷⁹.

7.3 Types of teachers and trainers in CVET

7.3.1 Types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in CVET

Most of the teachers teaching within CVET at MCAST and ITS are usually full-time staff at these VET institutions and consequently fall within the same type of teachers as for IVET provision.

In the case of other CVET providers such as ETC and DLLL, teachers would be similar to those within MCAST and ITS. The difference is a percentage of teachers who would have post-graduate studies in the area of Adult Education, particularly at DLLL since there is greater provision of training in basic skills and academic studies than CVET. This is due to the Faculty of Education catering for the need to train-teachers working within the sector of Adult Education.

⁷⁹ MCAST & MUT, 2007, Collective Agreement between The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) And The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) On the Full-time and Contract Academic Staff of the College.

ETC training staff is normally knowledgeable in the areas they teach, but – as is common in most LLL sectors in Malta – they tend to have little training in adult education methods. The Faculty of Education’s Adult Education Programme has entered into a partnership with the ETC and offered diploma and Masters-level course in Adult Training and Development⁸⁰.

Table 24: Types of Teachers within CVET in Malta

Persons with extensive knowledge and trade skills as a result of many years of experience – no formal VET teacher-training;
Persons with extensive knowledge and trade skills as a result of many years of experience – formal BTEC VET teacher-training;
Persons with a Bachelor’s Degree in a vocational area (e.g. engineering) but no formal teacher-training;
Persons with an Education degree but education training is not specifically to teach within the VET sector
Persons with an Education degree and with a Masters/Post-graduate in Adult Education.

7.3.2 Pre-service and in-service training of CVET teachers and Trainers

There is no particular pre-service teacher-training for teaching a CVET level.

In the case of in-service training of CVET, this is mainly included with the other initiatives which MCAST is taking with its staff who are also responsible for teaching IVET. In this way VET trainers have teacher training within the VET strand as a result of the in-service courses which MCAST has organised for its staff.

In the area of adult education, the Faculty of Education has developed post-graduate diplomas as well as Master in Education courses within Adult Education. These courses have ensured the presence of specialised people in Adult Education among teaching staff in the sector. These courses have attracted both CVET teachers as well as those teachers who teach academic subjects within the Adult Education sector.

⁸⁰ Sultana, R., Spiteri A., Ashton D., & Schoner U., 2002, Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Malta: Monographs Candidate Countries, Milan: European Training Foundation, available on [http://www.medaete.net/pubmgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/1EBDB56DD32E7FDEC125716C0044B055/\\$File/ENL_MON_MT_03_EN.pdf](http://www.medaete.net/pubmgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/1EBDB56DD32E7FDEC125716C0044B055/$File/ENL_MON_MT_03_EN.pdf)

Theme 8: Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)

8.1 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skills needs

There is no specific institutional framework for anticipation of skills needs in Malta. The main characteristic of Malta's economy is its rapid changing nature and this many times makes it very difficult to predict future skills needs. This does not mean, however, that there is no link between education and training, and industry. There are instruments for having an idea of skills needs and labour forecasting at national level. These are mainly the labour market statistics produced by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in Malta. NSO produces data derived from scientific surveys based on international methodologies and criteria, such as the Labour Force Surveys. It also publishes employment-related administrative data collected by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), such as the regular updates on the gainfully occupied population and registered unemployed⁸¹. Although these instruments do not forecast future skills needs they give a snapshot of the current situation of economic activity.

The Central Bank of Malta also carries out quarterly surveys among employers within the various economic sectors, forecasting their short-term employment needs. Similarly, the Malta Federation of Industry (FOI) compiles a monthly 'Industry trends survey', based on a selected sample of local operators in the manufacturing industry. In this survey, respondents express their short-term expectations on topics including their labour force needs.

The forecasting of labour needs in particular sectors is often based on one-off, ad-hoc studies, sometimes forming part of new policy and strategy documents about a specific sector. Examples of studies carried out on skills need include the ICT⁸² and the environment⁸³ sectors⁸⁴.

However valid these studies may be, they cannot be used to extrapolate to long-term future needs. This is mainly due to Malta's economic scenario where developments and unpredictable changes tend to occur at a fast rate⁸⁵.

⁸¹ Debono M., (2008), Improving the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market and skills requirements: Malta, Contribution to the EEO Review: Autumn 2008.

⁸² Ministry for Investment, Industry, and Information Technology, 2007, Scoping Study on the demand and supply of ICT skills in Malta, Report compiled by KPMG in collaboration with the Ministry of Investment, Industry and IT.

⁸³ Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), 2007, Employment in the Environment Goods and Services Industry in Malta, Malta: Employment and Training Corporation.

⁸⁴ Debono M., (2008), Improving the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market and skills requirements: Malta, Contribution to the EEO Review: Autumn 2008

One particular initiative in identifying skills needs for the future was carried out by the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE)⁸⁶. This report outlines the outcomes of a conference, 'Skills for the Future' held on the 19th of September 2008. The conference was aimed at addressing skills mismatches which exist in the economy as well as those which could emerge following growth in targeted sectors. Over 200 participants representing industry, commerce, employers, educational institutions, government sectoral agencies, students, and other social partners, attended the conference. Seven sectors (tourism, financial, tourism, education, Communication and IT, Manufacturing and related materials, and Gozo as an ECO Island) were tackled in this conference and skills gaps identified.

These studies all involved gathering information through both quantitative and qualitative methods from both employers in industry and training providers with the aim of identifying needs in industry.

8.2 Practices to match VET provision (skills) with skills needs (jobs)

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), in its Strategic Plan, places a lot of emphasis on fostering links with industry, business and commerce. There is endorsement that engagement with industry, business, commerce and the community, underpins the foundations on which the College was established⁸⁷. In setting targets for building partnerships, the Strategic Plan includes that of working with a range of providers, including schools, international partners, universities, professional bodies, and industry having roles and functions similar to MCAST.

In November 2007, the Federation of Industry (FOI), now merged and called the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, signed a collaboration agreement with MCAST. This agreement seeks to pursue areas, which can be developed to the benefit of both institutions and their respective clients. Both organisations pledged to provide a structured framework that would provide MCAST students with the opportunity to better access the world of work through their organisation, as well as to deliver vocational education and training programmes/services for the diverse client groups. Amongst the other objectives of this agreement, the two bodies agreed to develop initiatives relating to the provision of industry-demanded programmes and courses⁸⁸.

The main way to ensure that curricula and courses reflect needs in industry, the MCAST Board of Governors includes representatives of associations of industry such as the Federation of Industry and the Malta Employers Association, as well as Trade Unions. This representation of industry within the Board ensured that major decisions at MCAST will be always relevant and supportive of changes and needs in industry. However, there is less direct participation in the case of development of curricula. It

⁸⁵ Centre for Labour Studies, 2009, Biennial Report 2007-8, University of Malta: Centre for Labour Studies.

⁸⁶ National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), 2009, Skills for the Future: Report on Skills for the future, Report by the National Commission for Higher Education on the outcomes of the conference held on 19th September 2008

⁸⁷ MCAST, 2006, Strategic Plan 2007-09: The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, a new era, a College with a clear focus, Malta: MCAST.

⁸⁸ <http://www.maltachamber.org.mt/content.aspx?id=189732>

has to be pointed out that MCAST has also obtained funding from the European Social Fund to run a project on *'Linking Industrial Needs and Vocational Education & Training (VET) to Optimise Human Capital (ESF 2.85)*. This project falls under Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013⁸⁹. This project addresses the current and anticipated educational needs of ten industrial sectors: Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals; Financial Services; ICT; Furniture; Printing; Infrastructure; Food; Beverages; Maritime; and Plastics. The project is planned to identify the potential skill gaps and shortages of the present workforce. These lacunae are to be addressed through the implementation of specific training responding to new occupational needs, key competencies and future skills requirements. This project is due to start in 2010.

Both through the ESF project described here as well as in other initiatives and collaboration with industry, the input from industry for training involves either direct discussions through participation in committees or group meetings, or else through responding to questionnaires. In the case of curriculum development, direct discussion and communication is often used. However, there is so far no formal structure or framework for such discussions.

Training of VET teachers, either as in-service training within MCAST and ITS or in the area of adult education through post-graduate studies, ensure that there is provision of professional training of teachers.

In the case of CVET, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) often links research results and/or requests from employers to the training which it provides. In cases where there is higher employment demand in certain sectors, or when there is going to be a big direct foreign investment, the Employment and Training Corporation is always quick in its response to these needs through the training courses. One example was that for the Pharmaceutical companies where training for operators in these specialised areas was designed and implemented in view of the commitment of a number of companies to set up their production in Malta. This response ensured a supply of trained workers by the time the companies started operating in Malta.

In 2009, during the worst times of recession, government has used industry-training links to intervene by supporting industries struggling with the recession-led decline in foreign orders through offering support towards investment and training of their workers. Such industry-training links have served to save the jobs of many workers while helping them become more competitive. In addition, government is working towards achieving its policy Vision 2015 which identifies seven sectors namely: Information and Communication Technology; the financial services sector; tourism; high value-added industry and services; Gozo, as an ecological island; international educational services; and health services is encouraging productivity and labour force participation through improving the skills of the workforce⁹⁰.

Another practice to match VET provision with Skills needs is through providing funding programmes to allow industry to invest further in the training of its workers. This is mainly achieved through the Training Aid Framework Programme which provides a training grant on the successful completion of an approved training programme aimed to provide knowledge, skills and competence that will increase the

⁸⁹ Government of Malta, 2007, Operational Programme II Cohesion Policy 2007-13: Empowering People for a Better quality of Life, Malta: European Social Fund

⁹⁰ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

adaptability of the trained employee. Such training can be either general or specific. The decision on the type of training and curriculum is decided and designed by the company itself. TAF is expected to provide €8.85 million in training grants between March 2009 and 31st December 2013, and 3,500 trainees are expected to benefit from TAF⁹¹.

The development of occupational standards in Malta is still in its early stages. However, the Malta Qualifications Council is working towards developing the structure for the development of such standards such that these will be driving forces leading the development of curricula in vocational education and training at both IVET and CVET level. This is to be achieved through two main different projects by the Malta Qualifications Council: INLearning which is a Leonardo project focusing on the development of a methodology for the validation of informal and nonformal learning and for which the starting point was the development of occupational standards; and through the project SkillsPlus which maps skills in 9 defined key sectoral areas to match occupational standards leading to formal certification and quality assurance, in order to enhance employment. The objective of SKILLSPLUS is to create the infrastructure for the design of occupational standards of skills within 9 key sectoral areas: Art and Design; Community Services; Agribusiness; Building & Construction Engineering; Business & Commerce; Electrical and Electronic Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Tourism Studies; and Heritage Studies. This project will enhance employability opportunities and ensure skills match between VET and industry needs.

⁹¹ Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, 2010, National Reform Programme 2008-10: Annual Progress Report 2009, Government of Malta: Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

Theme 9: Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment

9.1 Strategy and provision

The task of providing career information, guidance and counselling in Malta is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family. It is thus this Ministry which is also responsible for the development of policy on Career Guidance in Malta.

In 2003, Sultana⁹² identified five major challenges that guidance and counselling services in Malta had to strive to address at the time. These included:

1. The formulation of a national strategy that integrates services and creates new synergies, with a well-stocked national guidance resource centre;
2. The development of standards and quality charters;
3. A shift towards a view of guidance as a lifelong process and the creation of structures and strategies to support the implementation of a lifelong service;
4. Optimising the use of ICTs in addressing individual and community needs;
5. The establishment of closer and more open links between the social partners.

A publication by Sultana on Lifelong Guidance⁹³ highlighted also the need to consider career guidance beyond that provided at school level and that provision should be both before and during people's working life. The need to draw up policy for career guidance was recognised by government and a commission set up to draw up a policy document for the provision of career guidance at compulsory level.

A Career Guidance Policy for Schools⁹⁴ was published in 2007. This policy document re-launched career guidance within the Maltese compulsory education system. It served to: clarify the role of career guidance as against counseling; offer recommendations on the setting up of an adequate career guidance infrastructure; and to describe how these services could be carried out in a more professional way. This policy was developed in view that although many useful services were being offered within the Maltese educational system, there were several structural and procedural weaknesses. The policy proposals in this document referred to organizational structure, career education, and quality standards.

⁹² Sultana, R. G. (2003). *Review of Career Guidance Policies in 11 Acceding and Candidate Countries*. Italy: European Training Foundation

⁹³ Sultana, R.G., (2003), *Lifelong Guidance and the European Challenge: Issues for Malta*, Malta: Euroguidance Malta

⁹⁴ Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, 2007, *A Career Guidance Policy and Strategy for Compulsory Schooling in Malta*, Malta: Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.

Organisational Structure – It was proposed that career services be composed of two main complementary mechanisms: one operating within the educational system, and one complementary to it. Within *the educational system*, the proposed structure included a centralized head of the Career Guidance Services; College⁹⁵ Career Coordinators offering support services to schools; and Career Advisors at school level who coordinate guidance provision and organize career-oriented activities. It was also proposed that a National Career Guidance Centre (NCGC) responsible for sustaining career guidance services in Malta be set up complementary to the educational system. The NCGC should include a research unit, a career information unit, and a quality audit unit. The centre should become the centre of excellence for career guidance in Malta.

Career Education - A developmental career education programme beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life was also proposed. The proposal was that career education should be delivered in all primary and secondary schools, starting with the fourth year of primary education as part of the Personal and Social Development (PSD) curriculum, which should be transformed into Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD). The PSCD lessons in the Third, Fourth and Fifth years of secondary level should be increased from 1 to 2 lessons per week.

Quality Standards – It was recognized that high quality standards are needed to ensure that clients get the best possible service. In order to achieve this, there need to be adequately qualified and experienced staff possessing professional competencies. Career service providers should develop and maintain a Quality Assessment System (QAS). The NCGC should regularly monitor career-related services at national level.

The authors recognized that this policy document would only be effective if it was complemented and sustained by other related policies and strategies, particularly to a lifelong learning policy that directs all education and training.

The policy direction with respect to career guidance has led to the creation of new posts within Colleges. It has also led to a government initiative to support the professionalization of career guidance provision through the Career Guidance Capacity Building Scholarship scheme funded through the European Social Fund, which aims to provide more opportunities to promote further specialisation in Career Guidance at postgraduate level. This scheme supports the increase in the number of students following post-graduate courses in Career Guidance, increasing the availability and employment of high-level graduates in this priority sector, enriching the Career Guidance service in the country⁹⁶.

The provision of career guidance in Malta dates back to the 60s⁹⁷. The current provision falls under the responsibilities of different organisations within the Ministry of Education, Employment. The provision of career guidance at compulsory level of education falls under the responsibility of the Directorate of Educational Services. The University of Malta has its own Students Advisory Services. MCAST and ITS

⁹⁵ In Malta, schools of compulsory education (both primary and secondary) in regions are clustered to work together within a College.

⁹⁶ <http://www.education.gov.mt/cgcb.htm>

⁹⁷ DeGiovanni, J., 1997, A Brief History of the Development of Guidance and Counselling in Malta; 1968- 1987, in Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges, *Sultana R.G. & Sammut J. M.* (1997), Malta: Enterprises Group (PEG) Ltd. Malta.

have their own Guidance services which they offer also to secondary level students. Career guidance and support offered to job seekers and the unemployed is provided mainly by the Employment and Training Corporation through its career advisors. In addition, one also finds a number of private recruitment agencies which help job seekers find the appropriate job. This provision is represented in the table overleaf.

Table 25: Overview of the Guidance System in Malta⁹⁸

Type of guidance service	Activities/ Guidance provided by	Clients/Target groups	Responsibility and administrative control
Information and guidance about career choices	Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family	Primary and secondary school students	Directorate for Educational Services
Information and guidance about career choices	Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family	Prospective, university students and alumni	University of Malta Students Advisory Services
Information and guidance about career choices	Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family	Prospective students to MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
Information and guidance about career choices	Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family	Prospective students to ITS	Institute for Tourism Studies
Job placements and career planning	Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family	Job searchers	Employment and Training Corporation
Mostly job placements	Various small private employment agencies	Job searchers	

The career guidance policy has also led to projects such as the Vocational Qualification Package (VQPACK), also funded under European Social funds, aimed to give more visibility to Vocational Education and Training as a career guidance tool for secondary students. The Competence Matrices developed through this project indicate the learning outcomes of qualifications in the nine sectors offered by MCAST, ITS and ICMCH.

9.2 Target groups and modes of delivery

⁹⁸ Adapted from <http://www.euroguidance.net/GuidanceSystems/Malta/Overview.htm>

The main target groups of career guidance include: students within (primary and secondary) compulsory education; students at post-compulsory or post-secondary education; and the unemployed. In the case of compulsory education, career guidance takes place at different stages of secondary education. At secondary level, students are provided with guidance with respect to subject choice at the end of the second year due to the local education system allowing students a degree of specialisation mid-way their secondary education. Subject choice at this stage will determine to a degree the potential career paths at post-secondary or post-compulsory level. In the last two years of secondary education, career guidance focuses more on possible paths at post-secondary or post-compulsory level. This guidance helps students make choices between post-secondary or post-compulsory vocational education and general post-secondary or post-compulsory education.

MCAST, as the main VET provider at post-secondary level, offers a variety of career guidance services to both prospective as well as to its current students. Its Career Guidance section liaises with secondary schools and also with Colleges⁹⁹ by making presentations to teachers (targeting guidance teachers within a College) when invited. It has organised an open week for students to be able to visit the different institutes. MCAST also offers tours to trainee guidance teachers. MCAST also goes to the different types of secondary schools (State, Church and Independent) to inform students about the different courses offered by MCAST. It has also allowed visits by students from other post-secondary institutions (usually general education).

With respect to students and staff within MCAST, the career guidance personnel provide in-service training to its staff in order to help them understand their role in influencing students' choices. It also offers students a one-to-one drop-in service where students can ask for advice, support and any other type of information which they may require.

MCAST guidance also offers a service to students with special needs. The programme *Pathway to Independence* allows students with special needs to have a work placement, one day a week, on the MCAST campus with the support of a job coach, that is, within a protected environment. In the second year, these students are provided with placements in industry, also one day a week, where students go to work on their own and have regular visits by MCAST staff. This programme helps students with special needs become independent and to be able to join working schemes by the Employment and Training Corporation and hopefully eventually be able to join the labour market.

Likewise, the Institute of Tourism Studies also offers services to prospective students, mainly through visits where secondary students visit the institute to see what type of training it offers.

In the case of unemployed persons, career guidance is carried out by staff at the Employment and Training Corporation. Career Advisors carry out a job profiling exercise for people looking for work to identify potential job matches as well as further training that would be best tailored to them.

Career guidance for disabled persons looking for work is even more important due to the higher rate of drop-outs by disabled students during compulsory education¹⁰⁰. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) provides special career guidance to persons with disabilities and special conditions within the Supported Employment Services Unit. This section has a register of persons registered with disabilities who they call to help try and find employment. Applicants undergo a medical assessment to

⁹⁹ A College involves a cluster of primary and secondary schools within a region.

¹⁰⁰ Azzopardi, A., 2006, *Career Guidance for Persons with Disability*, Malta: Euroguidance

indicate what they can and cannot do, as well as an assessment by an occupational therapist who tries to identify what type of work they can perform. Following these two assessments the persons in charge within ETC interview the applicants to know more in detail about what the persons would like and not like to do as work. Sometimes even the social worker is consulted. Based on all this information, persons with disabilities are provided with guidance with respect to further training as well as try to match their competences to current job vacancies. ETC also has special schemes (Bridging the Gap, and the Employment Aid programme – already described in earlier sections) which provide financial support to those employers who are ready to provide these persons with a chance to work.

9.3 Guidance and Counselling personnel

The training of career guidance teachers has been supported by the Career Guidance Capacity Building Scholarship scheme which allows persons in career guidance to invest in post-secondary studies. This was reflected in the University of Malta developing the Post-Graduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development which is funded under this scheme. This course has made it possible for a good number of career guidance teachers in secondary school, but also others working other sectors such as the Employment and Training Corporation to professionalise themselves through further studies in the area.

Secondary school career guidance teachers have regular meetings and training session during the year with the aim of helping them keep abreast with the changes in demand and opportunities within the labour market as well as the potential training paths which students can take, among them also within the vocational education track.

Theme 10: Financing – Investment in human resources

10.1 Funding for initial vocational education and training

The Government of Malta is responsible for the financing of education in Malta. This is often presented as part of the budget votes for education. The expenditure for education for the years 2007-9 are presented in the table below.

Table 26: Government of Malta Budget allocation for Ministry of Education (2007-2009)¹⁰¹

	2007	2008	2009
Personal Emoluments	110,131,293	110,680,000	117,493,000
Operational and Maintenance Expenses	10,956,255	10,512,000	10,674,000
Programmes and Initiatives	2,053,515	2,539,000	2,300,000
Contributions to Government entities	713,385	804,000	804,000
TOTAL VOTE	123,854,448	124,535,000	131,271,000

In the case of compulsory education, government covers funding for running state education providing education for 60% of children in Malta and is free of charge. The state compulsory education system is managed from within the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family. In the case of the 30% of student population which go to Church schools, government provides support and covers the salaries of teachers. Students attending these schools usually give an annual donation to the school. In the case of the 10% students who attend Independent schools, government provides tax rebates to parents for expenses on payment for schooling.

The University of Malta is also funded directly by government and government vote covers both expenses for running the University of Malta as well as the stipends given to students during their period of study. Tertiary education at the University of Malta is provided free of charge to all those who have the required entry qualifications.

¹⁰¹ Source: <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=567>

Table 27: Funding to the different education institutions¹⁰²

	2007	2008	2009
Church Schools	32,028,884	29,816,000	33,000,000
University of Malta-UoM	27,486,606	30,049,000	33,000,000
Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology -MCAST	9,841,603	11,647,000	12,000,000
Institute of Tourism Studies - ITS	768,595	769,000	769,000
Employment and Training Corporation - ETC	2,493,594	3014,000	
	123,854,448	124,535,000	131,271,000

The Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology is also funded directly by government and the vote covers the running of the institution as well as the stipends provided to students. The only contribution by students involves the examination registration to be paid by students in the case of courses leading to a BTEC, ITEC or a City & Guilds certification.

10.2 Funding for CVET and adult learning

10.2.1 Funding for publicly provided CVET

As already indicated, provision of publicly provided CVET is done mainly the Directorate for Lifelong Learning within the Directorate of Education Services as well as by state IVET institutions such as MCAST ICHMCH and ITS as evening courses.

CVET for adult education run by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning is funded directly by government. Funds also serve to subsidise the cost of the evening classes which are offered by adults as part of lifelong learning. Such courses are thus offered at a reduced cost.

In the case of MCAST, CVET is not fully covered by government expenses and this means that those following evening courses need to pay fees in order to cover the expenses for such courses. MCAST has also used European Social Funds to be able to carry out and offer CVET training in particular areas.

¹⁰² Source: <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=567>

The provision of adult education courses by the Directorate for Lifelong learning is partially funded by government in that it subsidises the cost of provision of evening courses. The courses, however, are not free of charge and are provided at a cost. This cost is not usually high.

In the case of MCAST, ITS and ICHMCH, there is no specific funding which covers the provision of evening courses. These are thus offered at a price which those attending the courses can follow. None the less, these institutions have identified EU funding programmes which enable them to run CVET training which would be free of charge to learners. The main funding tool used is the European Social Fund. This opportunity was also taken up by particular government entities which managed to secure funding for CVET in their sector of industry.

A list of projects involving CVET are provided in the table below

Table 28: List of ESF projects with elements of CVET¹⁰³

Institution	PROJECT DETAILS	Year of Project	EUROS
MCAST	ESF/11 : Preservation of Traditional Maltese Crafts	2004-6	241,193.12
MCAST	ESF/12 : Retraining and re-skilling of Workers for Engineering Industry	2004-6	109,167.68
MCAST	ESF/13 : Retraining and re-skilling of Workers for the Electronics Industry	2004-6	135,715.92
MCAST	ESF/15 : Retraining and re-skilling of Workers for the Building and Construction Industry	2004-6	127,572.28
MCAST	ESF/16 : Foundation Training for adults with no formal qualifications	2004-6	142,720.59
ITS	ESF/80 : Training for disadvantaged persons and persons with learning difficulties	2004-6	73,509.49
MCAST	ESF/81 : Enhancing Practical Skills in Engineering	2004-6	21,924.28
MTA	ESF/7 : Tourism and Support Services training programme	2004-6	612,973.14
WasteServ Malta Ltd.	ESF/25 : Training job seekers to assist in the implementation of waste separation at source	2004-6	197,389.65
Razzett tal-Hbiberija	ESF/62 : Inclusive ICT training and Development Programme	2004-6	52,334.73
Department of Further Studies and Adult Education	ESF/3 : Information & Communications Technology training programme -Training & Certification of Teachers in ICT skills	2004-6	110,194.88
UoM	ESF 1.22: Research Analysis and Training for Enhancing the University Library	2008-11	435,450.00

¹⁰³ Extracted from www.ppcd.gov.mt/file.aspx?f=366

Ministry of Gozo	ESF 1.23: Higher Education Courses to address skills mismatches in Gozo	2008-13	222,744
ICHMCH	ESF 1.31: Wood CPR: Education and Training on Wood Conservation Restoration	2008-11	541,427
MCAST	ESF 1.33: ICT Student Capacity in Malta	2008-12	4,962,642
MCAST	ESF 1.34: Addressing skills mismatches in the aviation maintenance industry	2008-11	2,382,872
MTA	ESF 2.11: Developing leaders for change and Innovation in Tourism	2008-13	4,120,396
MITA	ESF 2.12: Second STEP (Provision of Training in ICT)	2008-11	869,520
Ministry of Gozo	ESF 2.7: Training courses to enhance Employability of the workforce	2008-10	105,807
MCAST	Linking Industrial needs and VET to optimise Human Capital	2009-10	360,802.45
FES	ESF 3.48: Lifelong Learning for enhanced employability for parents (LLEEP)	2009-11	98,445
Kirkop Local Council	ESF 3.54: Reach: Opportunities close to home	2008-11	193,894
FSWS	ESF 3.61: Embark for life- labour market integration of socially excluded youth	2008-11	954,362
FSWS	ESF 3.62: ME2 (Training for integration of disabled persons in the labour market)	2008-11	1,298,591
Paolo Freire Institute	Ic-Cavetta –Maltese Literacy Toolkit for employment and education inclusion	2009-11	109,546

All these projects are opportunities for further training within CVET which are funded by the European Social Fund and from which a significant number of Maltese citizens are to benefit.

10.2.2 Funding for CVET in Enterprise

The main funding scheme for CVET within enterprise is through the Training Aid Programme. This is an initiative funded under the European Social Fund and administered by the Employment and Training Corporation.

Training Aid Programme¹⁰⁴

The Training Aid Framework is an effort to encourage and empower employers to train their workforce as a means of reaping positive benefits of increased competitiveness and innovation for the company itself. The programme offers part-refund of training costs, the amount of which depends on the size of the undertaking and the nature of the training provided to employees. This programme is open to all entities within the private sector except for companies operating in the agriculture and fisheries sector.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.etc.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=2304>

Enrolment onto this project aims to reinforce the employability and productivity of all individuals receiving training, including also vulnerable workers. The project also aims to increase and improve the qualifications of persons in employment as a necessary means for retaining their employment and/or finding alternative job opportunities. It will also improve the adaptability of workers and undertakings and augment the flexibility of the labour market to respond to sudden changes in the demand for goods and services, and to technological changes.

Through the Training Aid Framework, ETC gives financial assistance to those companies that invest in the training of their workforce. This scheme is available for companies in the private sector and training can be in-house or out-sourced and can be given in Malta or abroad through distance learning. The training can be a course at the University of Malta or at a foreign university. The training can even lead to a PhD. Self-employed persons will also be eligible. Each company will be eligible for a maximum of €250,000 each year.

General training involves training which is not applicable only or principally to the employees' present and future position of the company, but which provides qualifications that are largely applicable to other companies or fields of work. Specific training involves tuition directly and principally applicable to the employees' present or future position in the company and providing qualifications which are not or only to a limited extent, transferable to other firms or fields of work.

Each trainee can be awarded to a maximum grant of €4,000 per annum. This ceiling increases to €10,000 where the training programme leads to an MQF Level 5 or higher. Each company may receive up to a total grant of €250,000 per year. The eligible costs that may be reimbursed under the Training Aid Framework include: trainers' fees (100%); travel expenses (excluding accommodation) (100%); cost of consultancy (Training Needs Analysis) (50%); and personnel costs relating to the employee during which the trainees actually participate in the training (after deduction of the day productive hours) (100%). VAT is not an eligible cost.

10.3 Funding for training for unemployed and other groups excluded from the labour market

Training for the unemployed is offered by the Employment and Training Corporation. Funding for training provided by ETC comes either directly from the budget vote allocated by government or else through the use of European Social funds. The management of European Social funds is coordinated by the Planning and Priorities Coordination Department (PPCD) within the Office of the Prime Minister. The list of projects funded these past years from the European Social Fund are listed in the table overleaf.

Table 29: ESF funded projects for the unemployed by ETC

Institution	PROJECT DETAILS	Year of Project	EUROS
ETC	ESF/17 : Training and Employment Exposure Scheme	2004-6	3,642,543.01
ETC	ESF/31 : Employment and Training Scheme	2004-6	529,822.65
ETC	ESF/73 : Addressing the demand and supply of e-skills through traineeships in ICT	2004-6	63,018.14
ETC	ESF/47 : Promoting the Women Entrepreneur Culture	2004-6	86,793.72
ETC	ESF/18 : Literacy programme for those seeking employment	2004-6	407,009.44
ETC	ESF/19 : Supported Employment Scheme for Persons with disability	2004-6	398,654.68
ETC	ESF/52 : Training programme for youths in institutional care	2004-6	51,389.59
ETC	ESF 2.4: Employability Programme	2008-11	5,253,211.00
ETC	ESF 3.60: Youth Employment Programme	2008-11	632,948.29

10.4 General funding arrangements and mechanisms

The different types of funding for both IVET and CVET have all been reviewed in the previous sections. In addition to these there are not particular sectoral training funds. There are also no particular tax incentives. In the case of learning accounts, it is to be pointed out that youths attending IVET at MCAST and other vocational education and training institutions in Malta receive a monthly stipend to support them with their expenses during their studies. This stipend is funded by government. There are no particular saving schemes or loans for both IVET and CVET in Malta.

Theme11: National VET statistics – allocation of programmes

11.1 Classification of national VET programmes

Malta has been among the first countries to publish the Malta Qualifications Framework as well as the Referencing Document. This has enabled the Malta Qualifications Council to dialogue with the various vocational and education training providers. The result of this is that all vocational courses offered by the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) are pegged to the Malta Qualifications Framework. The prospectus of each of these institutions thus indicate the level on the Malta Qualifications Framework for each and every qualification. Since the Malta Qualifications Framework has 8 levels as the European Qualifications Framework, the referencing exercise is a simple exercise.

11.1.1 Main criteria used to allocate VET programmes

The main criteria used to allocate VET programmes to a particular level of education is related to the level of content and skills indicated in the Malta Qualifications Framework, and now as described in the level descriptors within the Referencing document.

In the case of the Foundation courses offered by MCAST to those students who only possess a school-leaving certificate and no other qualification, the Malta Qualifications Council has provided guidance on the percentage time that is allocated to the development of key competences as well as to the amount dedicated to the vocational sector skills. The Referencing document proposes the inclusion of 60 credits for one year of vocational education, with 1 credit being equivalent to 25 hours of learning experience.

11.1.2 VET levels in the National education system

VET levels of qualifications range between level 1 and level 6 of the Malta Qualifications Framework. Currently those offered in a number of different vocational sectors range between MQF level 2 and MQF Level 6. These are given in the table overleaf.

Table 30: VET levels in Malta

Level	Equivalent in ISCED	Minimum Duration	Maximum duration	Average duration	Typical start age of pupils
Upper secondary	Levels 2/3	1 year	3 years	2 years	16
Post-secondary ¹⁰⁵	Level 4	1 year	2 years	2 years	18
Higher Education	Level 5	1 year	1 year	1 year	20

11.2 Fields of Education and Training

Table 31: Fields of Study in VET at different levels

Level	Fields of Education Study
Upper-secondary and Post-secondary level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agribusiness • Art and Design • Building and Construction Engineering • Electrical and Electronic Engineering • Business and Commerce; • Community Services; • Mechanical Engineering; • Information and Communication Technology; • Maritime.
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Design & Interactive Media; • 3D Design & Interiors; • Business Enterprise • Electronics Engineering; • Electronics and Control Engineering; • Software Development; • Computer Networks; • Tourism Studies; • Conservation Studies

¹⁰⁵ The duration of these courses is additional to having completed the lower level.

The table on the previous page provides an overview of the sectors in which vocational education and training which are mainly based on the qualifications provided by BTEC, in addition to a number of few home grown courses provided for in Malta.

11.3 Links between national Qualifications and international qualifications or classifications

Malta was among the first countries to draw up the Malta Qualifications Framework, with its first version being first presented in 2007. The Malta Qualifications Framework has since evolved and in November 2009, Malta has also published its Referencing Document, being second only to the Republic of Ireland.

The Malta Qualifications Framework is based on 8 levels which more or less match those identified within the European Qualifications Framework. The Malta Qualifications Framework is already gaining wide use in Malta with courses offered by MCAST, ITS and ICHMCH being described with its level on the MQF. The Referencing document describes how qualifications recognised on the Malta Qualifications Framework are to be mapped to the European Qualifications Framework. This document is all encompassing and includes compulsory, VET, tertiary as well as qualifications offered by foreign institutions with representation in Malta. There is no mapping between the Malta Qualifications Framework and the ISCED levels.

The main milestones with respect to the implementation of the Malta Qualifications Framework refers to the regulation of both the training institutions as well as the training programmes that these offered. Quality Assurance plays a very important role in ensuring quality education. The Malta Qualifications Council is sensitive to the importance of this issue and is working to support vocational and education training providers to implement quality assurance standards according to the standards as identified by EQARF- the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.

Another target that the Malta Qualifications Council is working for is that of helping vocational and education training institutions to convert their training courses into the ECVET system with the use of learning outcomes. These challenges are considered essential to the finalisation and full implementation of the Malta Qualifications Framework with respect to vocational education and training is mainly due to the importance of recognition which once granted at national level, would also apply at European Level.

**MALTA'S NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING ***

8	DOCTORAL DEGREE		8
7	MASTER'S DEGREE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE		7
6	BACHELOR'S DEGREE		6
5	UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMA UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE	VET HIGHER DIPLOMA	5
4	MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE ADVANCED LEVEL INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	VET DIPLOMA	4(e)
3	GENERAL EDUCATION LEVEL 3 SEC Grade 1-5	VET LEVEL 3	3(d)
2	GENERAL EDUCATION LEVEL 2 SEC Grade 6-7	VET LEVEL 2	2(c)
1	GENERAL EDUCATION LEVEL 1 SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE	VET LEVEL 1	1 (a/b)

VET stands for Vocational Education and Training

Figure 4: Malta Qualifications Framework

12.0 Authors, bibliography, acronyms and abbreviations

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Dr. Suzanne Gatt
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MCAST list of CVET courses - <https://secure2.gov.mt/mcastshortcourses/home.aspx>

12.3 List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

DLL	-	Directorate for Lifelong Learning
EQARF	-	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
EQF	-	European Qualifications Framework
ETC	-	Employment and Training Corporation
FES	-	Foundation for Educational Services
FSWS	-	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
ICMCH	-	Institute for Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage
ITS	-	Institute of Tourism Studies
MCA	-	Malta Communications Authority
MCAST	-	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technolog
MQF	-	Malta Qualifications Framework
UoM	-	University of Malta
VTTU	-	Vocational Teacher Training Unit