
Malta

VET in Europe – Country report

2012

Title: Malta VET in Europe – Country Report 2012

Prepared for the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), Malta
National Project Leader of ReferNet.



This country report is part of a series of reports on vocational education and training and produced for each EU Member State plus Norway and Iceland by members of ReferNet, a network established by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

The opinions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

Please note that ReferNet reports are based on a common structure and are available at <http://cedefop.europa.eu/EN/information-services/vet-ineurope-country-reports.aspx>

The preparation of this report has been co-financed by the European Union.

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1	4
1. External factors influencing VET.....	4
1.1 Demographics.....	4
1.2 Economy	4
1.3 Employment and education levels	4
1.4 Regulation of qualifications.....	5
CHAPTER 2.....	7
2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective.....	7
2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system	7
2.2 Government-regulated VET provision.....	9
2.3 Other forms of training.....	13
CHAPTER 3.....	15
3. Shaping VET qualifications.....	15
3.1 Anticipation of labour needs	15
3.2 Development of qualifications	16
3.3 Quality assurance of VET qualifications	17
3.4 Validation of informal and non-formal learning.....	18
CHAPTER 4.....	22
4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training.....	22
4.1 Funding of VET.....	22
4.2 Guidance and counselling.....	23
List of Figures	25
List of Tables.....	25
Abbreviations	26
References.....	27
Websites	29

CHAPTER 1

1. External factors influencing VET

Malta is geographically situated in the middle of the Mediterranean sea and consists of the islands of Malta, Gozo (*Għawdex*), Comino (*Kemmuna*), Cominotto, Selmunett, and Filfla, and a few tiny islets with a total area of 316 km². Only the first three islands are inhabited. Malta became an EU Member State in 2004 and has adopted the euro in 2008.

1.1 Demographics

Malta had a total population of 416,110¹ in 2011. Similar to trends across Europe, Malta is experiencing an aging society as life expectancy grows and birth rates fall. The last census² showed how the average age of the population has increased. The share of those between 5 and 29 years of age declined, while those over 60 went up. This demographic change is bringing new challenges where the country needs to invest in vocational education and training to ensure a supply of a skilled workforce as well as ensuring that workers stay longer in the labour market. The latter has been achieved through the gradual increase in retirement age from 60 to 65 years.

1.2 Economy

Malta is a small economy with no natural resources, but which has succeeded in attracting and maintaining a strong economy. Provisional estimates indicate that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2011 amounted to €6.4 billion, an increase of 4.4 per cent compared to 2010. In real terms, GDP went up by 2.1 per cent. The main contributors to the GDP were wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; transportation and storage; accommodation and food service activities (in total €1,222,578,000 of GDP) and public administration and defence; compulsory social security; education; human health and social work activities contributing to € 1,095,413,000³ of GDP.

1.3 Employment and education levels

In June 2012, the number of persons registered as employed in Malta increased by 1 per cent compared to June 2011, reaching a total of 151,559 employed people⁴. Over the same period, the number of registered unemployed, however, went up by 7.8 per cent, reaching a total of 6,697. The total labour supply stood in June 2012 thus at 158,256

¹ National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, Malta in Figures 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3453 accessed on 6/11/2012

² National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, Census of Population and Housing 2011: preliminary report, Government of Malta, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/pgp_ess/0_DOCS/mt/Preliminary%20Report%202011.pdf accessed on 6/11/2012.

³ National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, Gross Domestic Product for 2011, News Release, 9 March 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3267 accessed on 6/11/2012.

⁴ National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, Gainfully Occupied Population: June 2012, News Release, 12 November 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3463 accessed on 6/11/2012.

persons. The table below provides the distribution of employment across the different NACE sectors in 2010-2012. It shows how employment is highest in wholesale and retail, manufacturing, construction, education and human health and social work.

Table 1: No. of employed persons across the different NACE sectors in 2010-2012⁵

NACE sector	2010	2011	2012
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2 142	2 115	2 105
Mining and quarrying	358	316	280
Manufacturing	19 864	19 808	19 414
Electricity supply, steam and air conditioning supply	1 606	1 592	1 565
Water supply, sewerage, waste management	1 566	1 413	1 406
Construction	12 484	12 476	12 210
Wholesale and retail trade	22 875	23 212	23 400
Transportation and storage	8 832	8 670	9 006
Accommodation and food services	9 617	9 835	9 855
Financial and insurance activities	6 775	6 795	6 884
Real estate activities	988	1 018	1 029
Professional, scientific and technical activities	6 731	7 141	7 686
Public administration and defence	10 680	10 558	10 481
Education	13 427	13 458	13 668
Human health and social work	11 790	11 987	12 336
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3 627	3 593	4 026
Other service activities	3 278	3 180	3 245

1.4 Regulation of qualifications

The past year has experienced an increase in regulation of qualifications, mainly vocational qualifications. The third edition of the Referencing Document entitled 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) has been published. This document describes in detail various aspects of qualifications, from the different types of home grown qualifications which may exist within both general and vocational education, as well as the process of how qualifications which are accredited by institutions outside the country are accredited or not in Malta. This year has also seen the publication of three main legislations as part of the Education Act. The first legislation describes the Malta Qualifications Framework as well as the different qualifications which can be offered nationally. The level descriptors for the different levels on the Malta

⁵ National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, Gainfully Occupied Population: June 2012, News Release, 12 November 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3463 accessed on 6/11/2012.

Qualifications Framework are included. This legislation also consolidates the merger between the former Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) and the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) into the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)⁶. The second legislation targeted the validation of informal and non-formal learning⁷. This legislation describes the process to be followed in the validation process for informal and non-formal learning and the roles of Sector Skills Committees and units. Further details about the legislation and the process are provided in section 3.4. The third legislation targets quality assurance of higher and further education institutions. The legislation gives NCFHE the power to regulate by issuing licenses as well as setting standards and monitoring of quality assurance. Further details are provided in section 3.3.

These changes have increased the regulation of provision of vocational education and training as well as provided opportunities for the recognition of courses and qualifications at European Level through updating the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). They have also offered opportunities for individuals for lifelong learning as well as for the recognition of learning which has already occurred.

⁶ Education Act (CAP. 327), 2012, Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations, 2012, legal notice 294/2012 of the Education Act.

⁷ Education Act (CAP. 327), 2012, Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Regulations, 2012 legal notice 295/2012 of the Education Act.

CHAPTER 2

2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

This chapter provides an overview of the education system in Malta with an emphasis on vocational education and training, and the possibilities for learners to improve their qualifications within the vocational strand, as well as the possibilities for movement between the vocational and general education sectors.

2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system

The diagram overleaf provides a summary of the national education system in Malta, starting from pre-school and extended to initial vocational education and training as well as tertiary education. There is currently no provision of formal vocational education and training at lower secondary education although there are pilot projects which involve the inclusion of vocational subjects within the compulsory lower secondary education curriculum. The policy is for all students, as much as possible, to obtain a general education up to the age of 16 which forms part of compulsory education.

The main initial vocational education and training provided by the State includes the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). MCAST serves as an umbrella organisation which houses different vocational and education training institutes. Both of these institutions also offer part-time evening courses which allow opportunities for CVET for those who are already in work.

Another state vocational education and training provider which provides services for the unemployed is the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). In supporting people to find work, ETC offers short training courses for the unemployed with the aim of increasing their opportunities of employment.

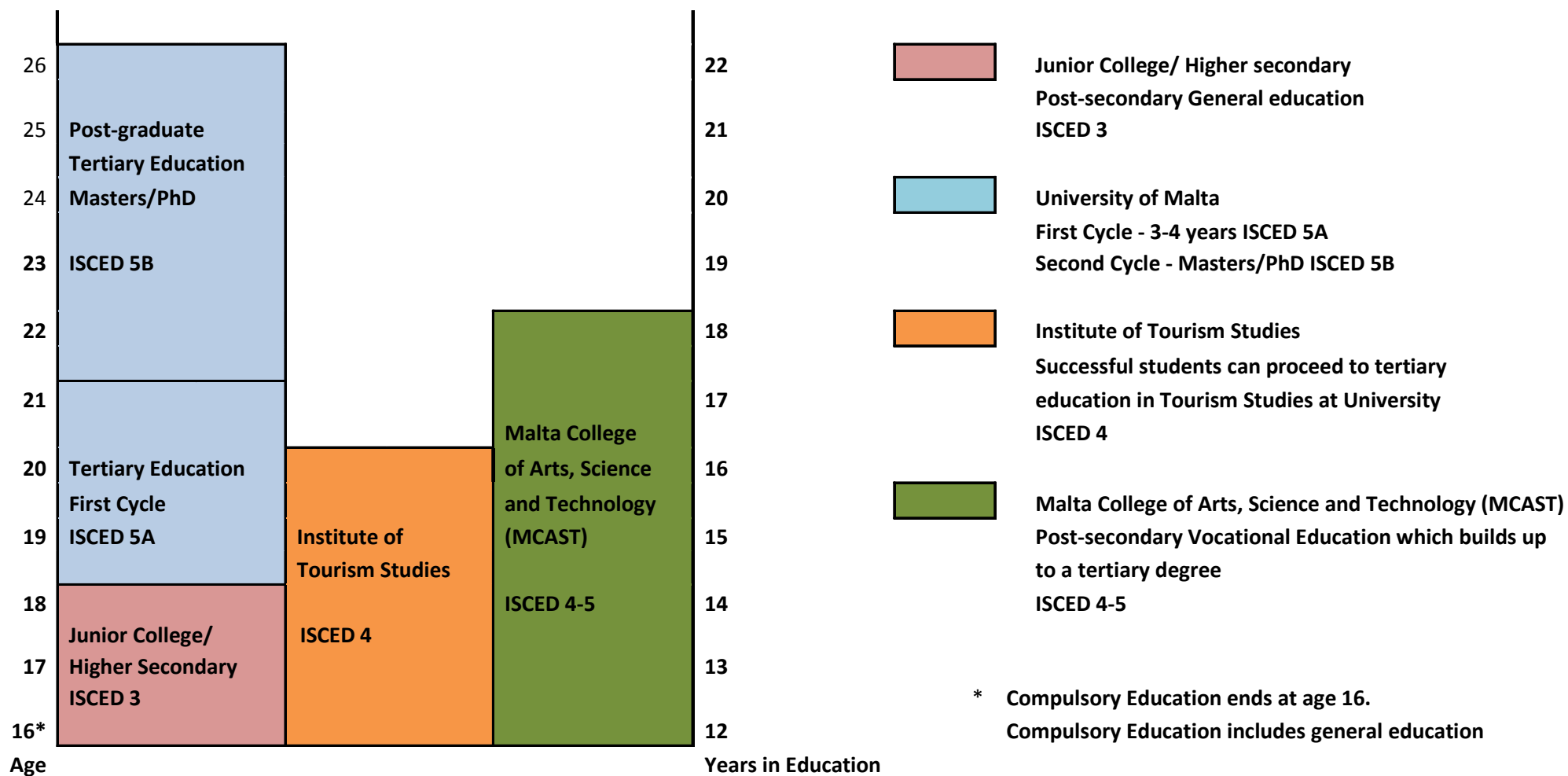


Figure 1: Summary of post-compulsory education system in Malta

2.2 Government-regulated VET provision

The State VET institutions Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies are regulated by the Education Act. The Employment and Training Corporation is regulated by the Employment and Training Services Act. They are the three main state VET providers for both IVET and CVET.

MCAST offers vocational education and training in various sectors through its different institutes, these including: construction, marine; mechanical engineering; electrical engineering, community services; agribusiness; business and commerce; information and communication technology; and applied science. There is another campus in Gozo. A number of vocational courses are offered to students in Gozo. Further information about the colleges and the courses which they offer can be obtained from the college's website: <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>

A range of possible vocational education and training courses at post-secondary level are offered at MCAST. Courses start from foundation level for students who may have not obtained any certification at the end of compulsory education. This provides students who finished compulsory education without any qualifications, an additional chance to start over and to obtain training in specific vocational sectors. Students who complete their course successfully gain entry for further training at a higher level. Student can then progress from one level of qualification to another on successful completion of each course. Those students who have obtained some certification by the end of compulsory schooling do not need to follow foundation courses but can gain entry into courses at higher levels depending on the level and range of their qualifications. A combination of BTEC (a vocational qualification issued by EDEXCEL in England) and home grown qualifications are offered at MCAST. All the courses offered by MCAST are level rated by the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and are thus recognised at European level. In the last few years MCAST has also introduced progression up to Level 6 qualifications leading to vocational degrees. Details of the variety of courses offered by MCAST can be viewed in <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/downloads/courses/mcastprospectus1112.pdf>, the college's prospectus.

While progression within the vocational stream is easy and many opportunities are available within the vocational sector, movement between vocational and general education remains a challenge with limited opportunities for those students wishing to shift from vocational educational training to general tertiary education and the other way round. However, the University of Malta and MCAST have a maturity clause which allows any adult of age 23 years or older to apply to follow courses at tertiary level without necessarily having the usually official entry requirements. In such cases, applicants are considered on an individual basis and their prior qualifications and experiences are considered by an interviewing board. In such cases applicants from the vocational sector may be accepted on the basis of their vocational qualification and work experience.

The other main state initial vocational education and training institution is the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). This Institute provides vocational training in the tourism sector. In this case, successful students can move up from one level of vocational qualification to another. Beyond level 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), successful students can continue their studies at tertiary level at the University of Malta. Although there is no movement from vocation to general education or vice versa within the same qualification level, students can easily progress from vocational education to tertiary education without any difficulty. This is the case since ITS and the University of Malta do not offer training at the same qualification level, but offer opportunities for further studies leading from vocational to tertiary studies. The transition from vocational to general education is thus smooth.

Apprenticeship

There exists a system of apprenticeship schemes in Malta. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is the organisation responsible for the running of the Apprenticeship Schemes. These schemes are usually organised in collaboration with the main vocational educational providers: MCAST and ITS who provide apprenticeships in the vocational sectors in which they provide training.

The ETC runs two different schemes namely:

- the Extended Skills Training Scheme – ESTS; and
- the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme - TAS

During the apprenticeship, apprentices need to attend off-the-job training at the College that they are registered with and on-the-job training at an employer's establishment. The Corporation assists apprentices in finding an employer with whom they can perform their on-the-job training for the duration of the apprenticeship and also monitors the training to ascertain that they are achieving adequate progress. The two schemes vary in the balance between the amount of time spent learning at the workplace and the time spent in the vocational training institution. Students on apprenticeships receive a stipend which reflects their work contribution.

The Journeyman's Certificate at Craftsman level is awarded on successful completion of the ESTS apprenticeship while the Journeyman's Certificate at Technician level is awarded on successful completion of the TAS apprenticeship.

Both MCAST and ITS offer apprenticeship schemes alongside other forms of training programmes. Training courses which are offered as apprenticeships also lead to qualifications which can serve as entry into other vocational courses at higher levels in the Malta Qualifications Framework.

CVET

Vocational education and training for adults is also offered by state organisations in Malta. MCAST can boast of also offering evening courses to all workers (https://shortcourses.mcast.edu.mt/EN/content/7/Courses_by_Institute) who wish to up-skill themselves. The Employment and Training Corporation also provides adult learning (<http://etc.gov.mt/Page/54/courses-jobseekers.aspx>). This training mainly caters for unemployed people. The Institute of Tourism Studies also offer evening courses (<http://www.its.edu.mt/files/9/Prospectus%20PT%202012.pdf>). Courses offered provide adults already in the labour market the opportunity to invest in lifelong learning and follow courses which lead them to obtain qualifications with the intention of improving their employment opportunities and career advancement. All the courses by all the three institutions are level rated on the Malta Qualifications Framework due to an existing Memorandum of Understanding between the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) and the vocational education and training institutions.

The tables below give the Eurostat statistics for a number of EU2020 indicators. With respect to students enrolled in upper vocational secondary stream, while one finds a greater percentage of males for the average of the EU 27 Member States, in Malta there is a greater percentage of females enrolled.

Table 2: Eurostat statistics on Students in upper secondary enrolled in vocational stream⁸ % of all students enrolled in upper secondary education

Indicator	2009		2010	
	F	M	F	M
EU 27	43.8	55.2	44.2	55.4
Malta Statistics	69.0	43.5	56.0	39.8

The current Eurostat statistics on students as early school leavers (ESL) give a large percentage of drop outs in the case of Malta which is nearly three times that of the EU27 average. The early school leavers (ESL) rate is an indicator which is currently in Malta worked out using Labour Force Survey (LSF) data. The definition used: “Persons between 18 and 24 years of age whose highest level of education or training is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and who are not in education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey as a percentage of the total population between 18 to 24”.

⁸ Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

Table 3: Eurostat statistics on Early School Leavers⁹ % of total population 18-24

Indicator	2010			2011		
	F	M	TOT	F	M	TOT
EU 27	12.1	16.0	14.1	13.5	15.3	13.5
Malta Statistics	32.2	40.9	36.9	27.6	38.9	33.5

The setting up of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC), along with the accreditation of courses and the assignment of Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) levels to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) set the ground for a reassessment of the mapping system of qualifications in Malta. The National Statistics Office (NSO) initiated discussions with MQC regarding Ordinary level qualifications ('O' levels or their equivalents) since at a national level these were considered as a secondary level qualification (ISCED 2) while countries (United Kingdom) which had the same qualification available at a national level were mapping it as ISCED 3. Thus while at a national level these persons were classified as early school leavers, in other countries they were not. In view of this, NSO proposed to EUROSTAT that as in other countries, persons with 5 'O' levels or more are to be classified as ISCED 3. The National Statistics Office in Malta has reviewed the methodology that it was using to identify the percentage early school leavers in Malta.

NSO is not envisaging any adverse position from EUROSTAT. Statistically, today the Early School Leavers rate stands at less than 30%, 1% less than Malta's target for 2020. Using the new agreed measure of working out the percentage school leavers as approved by EUROSTAT, would give an estimation of around 24% to 25% rate of ESLs, a drop of 30% over the period 2000 to 2012.

Table 4: Eurostat statistics on Youth Educational Attainment¹⁰ (% of youth aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education)

Indicator	2010			2011		
	F	M	TOT	F	M	TOT
EU 27	71.7	73.7	72.7	72.7	74.2	73.4
Malta Statistics	26.1	31.8	29.0	28.6	34.4	31.5

The table above provides data for Youth Educational attainment which shows that Malta lags behind the EU27 average. This is mainly because compulsory education in Malta is up to 16 years of age, and a good percentage find work immediately after finishing compulsory schooling. In order to improve, Malta has these past 10 years Malta invested heavily in post-secondary vocational education, and this investment has helped to improve the percentage of youths obtaining upper secondary education, even if more needs to be

⁹ Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

¹⁰ Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

done. On the other hand, participation in adult learning in Malta shown in the table below only slightly lags behind that of the EU27 average.

Table 5: Eurostat statistics on participation in adult learning¹¹ (% of population)

Indicator	2010			2011		
	F	M	TOT	F	M	TOT
EU 27	10.0	8.3	9.1	9.6	8.2	8.9
Malta Statistics	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.9	6.3	6.6

2.3 Other forms of training

Another provider of adult education in VET in Malta is the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) which offers many adult evening courses, among them also a number of courses in VET. VET courses offered by DLLL range from Arts and Crafts courses to various ICT courses (<http://www.eveningcourses.gov.mt/>).

These courses are supported by government and fees are very low. Some of these vocational courses lead students to sit for examinations for foreign certification such as City and Guilds. Other courses are provided with only a certificate of attendance. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning is also working towards obtaining accreditation of its vocational courses in Arts and Crafts by the National Commission for Higher and Further Education so that learners will acquire a recognized VET qualification, or part of in terms of credits.

The last official survey¹² on the amount of CVT offered by enterprises at work is now outdated as it dates back to the year 2001. This study indicated that 14.2% of the enterprises actually had a written CVT plan for their workers. This data is now obsolete.

Although there have been no further studies to capture how much CVT is offered by employers, there has been in Malta an increasing number of private institutions which offer CVT being set up. These private institutions offer vocational training in various vocational sectors, but with ICT being one of the common training areas being offered. Many of these institutions offer courses which lead to qualifications issued by foreign accreditation bodies. The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), has set up the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) where individuals can check if any foreign or local qualifications that they intend to study for or have obtained is recognised in Malta and at what level on the Malta Qualifications Framework it is rated. Any individual can apply for the recognition and/or comparability of qualifications to MQRIC. Applicants fill in a standard application form which can be obtained either from the MQRIC office or downloaded from the MQC website. MQRIC then issues an official document of the level

¹¹ Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

¹² National Statistics Office (NSO), 2001, Continuous Vocational Training Survey, Valletta:Government of Malta, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2073 accessed on 6/11/12.

rating of the qualification in question. This process is being requested more and more by employers during recruitment.

One recent initiative which is regulated by the National Commission for Higher and Further Education is the possibility of obtaining accreditation even for short courses which are delivered, whether these are offered by a VET institution or organised by the employer himself. The Referencing Document describes how short courses can also be level rated as well as a number of credits assigned to them, depending on the number of learning hours involved. These short courses can thus provide learners with what are known as customised awards. *Customised Awards* are already widely used by many employers and training organisations to upgrade the knowledge, skills and competences of their workforce. Unlike traditional continuing training, customised awards are focused on occupational areas and are tailor-made training and qualification packages for individual organisations. Most customised awards are work-based vocational qualifications. These customised awards are considered to be a minimum of 4 credits, with one credit being equivalent to 25 hours of learning. Employers and other VET training institutions can apply to the National Commission for Higher and Further Education for the award of credits for training provided. The vision is that learners would be able to collect credits and then eventually use the accumulated credits to obtain a full qualification. The process involves the application with course details written in the form of learning outcomes being evaluated by external experts. Based on the expert feedback, NCFHE decides on whether to award accreditation for learning or not. This has opened up many opportunities for workers who can now obtain official recognition for the various courses which they follow as part of their continuous professional development.

It is also possible to obtain *Legacy awards* which are of two categories: those within vocational education and training and which fall within the first five levels of the MQF and those that fall within each level of the Malta Qualifications Framework in mainstream education including higher education. Legacy awards are qualifications awarded prior to 2007, as indicated in the latest legislation on the Malta Qualifications Framework, which competent authorities establish as enough to represent a knowledge-base and competences required in today's labour market. Chapter 294/2012 of the Education Act defines a legacy award as a qualification awarded to an individual prior to 1st July 2007 but which the competent authorities establish as still relevant in today's labour market requirements.

CHAPTER 3

3. Shaping VET qualifications

This chapter focuses on VET qualifications, qualifications frameworks, as well as the implementation of quality assurance systems and the validation of informal and non-formal learning.

3.1 Anticipation of labour 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 acquiring some data about the 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 ETC, such as the regular updates on the gainfully occupied population and registered unemployed¹³. 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 Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry 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 ICT¹⁴ and the environment¹⁵ sectors¹⁶.

However valid these studies may be, they cannot be used to extrapolate long-term future needs. This is mainly due to Malta's economic scenario where developments and unpredictable changes tend to occur at a fast rate¹⁷.

¹³ Debono M., (2008), Improving the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market and skills requirements: Malta, Contribution to the EEO Review: Autumn 2008.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), 2007, Employment in the Environment Goods and Services Industry in Malta, Malta: Employment and Training Corporation.

¹⁶ Debono M., (2008), Improving the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market and skills requirements: Malta, Contribution to the EEO Review: Autumn 2008.

¹⁷ Centre for Labour Studies, 2009, Biennial Report 2007-8, University of Malta: Centre for Labour Studies.

MCAST places a lot of emphasis on fostering links with industry, business and commerce. There is common understanding that engagement with industry, business, commerce and the community, underpins the foundations on which the College was established¹⁸. MCAST works with a range of providers, including schools, international partners, universities, professional bodies, and industry having roles and functions similar to MCAST. Existing informal contacts with industry allows MCAST to be sensitive to labour market needs.

In order to ensure that curricula and courses reflect needs in industry, the MCAST Board of Governors includes representatives of associations in industry such as the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (MCCEI) and the Malta Employers Association (MEA), as well as trade unions. This representation of industry within the Board ensures that major decisions at MCAST will always be relevant and supportive of changes and needs in industry. However, there is less direct participation in the case of development of curricula.

3.2 Development of qualifications

Recent achievements in the development of qualifications have included the publishing of the third edition of the Referencing Document for Malta and the updating of local legislation with respect to the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). The Referencing Report provides a description of the process of comparing qualifications in the MQF to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA). It also provides detailed information on the new local system of awards in education and training.

The Referencing Report provides a transparent and structured overview of the knowledge, skills and competences expected to provide the content of qualifications aligned to the MQF and referenced to the EQF and the QF/EHEA. It provides a focus on a credit system that will enable training providers to match their qualifications to the level descriptors and the learners to gauge their capacity in progressing from one level of qualification to another. An outline of the level descriptors of the MQF compared to those of the EQF and the QF/EHEA with practical examples taken from already existing home-grown programmes based on learning outcomes in vocational and higher education institutions in Malta are provided. It provides a description of the different types of qualifications which can be awarded for both in the VET as well as the general education strand.

The Referencing Report¹⁹ was further consolidated through legislation. The Legal Notice 294 of 2012²⁰ sets the Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, (2011), 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 : Government of Malta.

²⁰ Government of Malta, (2012), Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations, L.N. 294 of 2012 Education Act (CAP. 327) 2012.

includes the updated level descriptors for the different qualification levels on the Malta Qualifications Framework. The same legal notice also set the regulations, role and responsibilities of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) which is the outcome of the merger between the Malta Qualifications Council and the National Commission for Higher Education.

This legislation allows the accreditation of short courses as well as home grown qualifications. The legislation also caters for the accreditation of qualifications obtained as a result of the process of validation of informal and non-formal education.

There were also other initiatives in the local provision of vocational education and 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, now the National Commission for Further and Higher Education, has obtained funding under the Leonardo call within the Lifelong Learning Programme for a pilot project. This project focuses on the conversion of both IVET and CVET, full qualifications and short courses, as well as in a number of different sectors, into the ECVET system. The project includes the main players in IVET (MCAST and ITS) as well as CVET (ETC) 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. The project will end in March 2013.

3.3 Quality assurance of VET qualifications

The former Malta Qualifications Council has been working on quality assurance and has published a policy document²¹ where it describes the principles and direction that it wants to take with respect to quality assurance.

The Council has also been financed under the Leonardo call within the Lifelong Learning Programme for a national project to work on piloting the application of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) within some local VET providers and based on this experience, to develop a manual for other vocational education and training providers to assist them with reforming and aligning their quality assurance systems to those identified by EQARF. The project started end of 2010 and is to be finalised in 2013. The main outcome of the project is a manual for users on the implementation of EQARF.

There are, in addition, also developments taking place in the regulation of quality assurance systems in VET institutions. The year 2012 has seen the promulgation of the Legal Notice 295/2012²² which tackles quality assurance and sets the duties of the National Commission for Higher and Further Education. It is to note that NCFHE is the result of the

²¹ 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?l=1>

²² Government of Malta, (2012), Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, 2012, L.N. 295 of 2012 EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327)2012

merger between the Malta Qualifications Council and the National Commission for Higher Education. One of the major roles assigned to NCFHE involves the regulation and licensing of training institutions. For the purposes of its accreditation and external quality assurance functions, the legal notice states that the Commission should be sufficiently independent from government, from providers as well as from business, industry and professional associations in all their operations and decisions. Part of NCFHE's remit involves licensing, accreditation and quality assurance functions.

All providers providing further or higher education in or from Malta will require a licence issued by the Commission to operate in Malta. A licence to provide further or higher education under these regulations shall only be issued, renewed, changed or extended if the provider complies with the provisions of a number of specific regulations.

The Legal Notice states that the provider is required to apply for a licence to operate in one or more of the following categories and include:

- (a) a University;
- (b) a Higher education institution;
- (c) a Further education institution;
- (d) a Further education centre; or
- (e) an English as a foreign language teaching centre.

The Quality Assurance Committee has the power to set quality assurance standards and to regulate the licences. The processes and procedures which are to be adopted are described in detail in the Legal Notice 295/2012.

3.4 Validation of informal and non-formal learning

The National Reform Programme (NRP) update²³ reports the initiatives taken by government in fulfilment of its commitment to adult education and CVET. These include, among other aspects the development of a policy on the validation of informal and non-formal learning and the setting up of Sector Skills Units; and the establishment of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) to conduct validation of prior learning and work experience.

The Council has for the past 5 years been working towards this target. The template for occupational standards developed and will be used in the validation process. A number of occupational standards have been developed. These pave the way for the process of validation of informal and non-formal learning.

²³ 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.

This year a Legal Notice 296/2012²⁴ has been promulgated. This legal notice sets the regulations for the validation of informal and non-formal learning. The object of these regulations is to provide a regulatory scope, framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and for the granting of validation awards classified within the Malta Qualifications Framework in accordance with the types of awards established within the Framework. It describes the Commission's right to establish a Sector Skills Committee, the members of which are to be appointed by the Commission with the approval of the Minister. The legal notice provides details on the process of validation and how the Sector Skills Committee can regulate the validation process.

²⁴ Government of Malta, (2012), Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Regulations,, 2012, L.N. 295 of 2012 EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327) 2012.

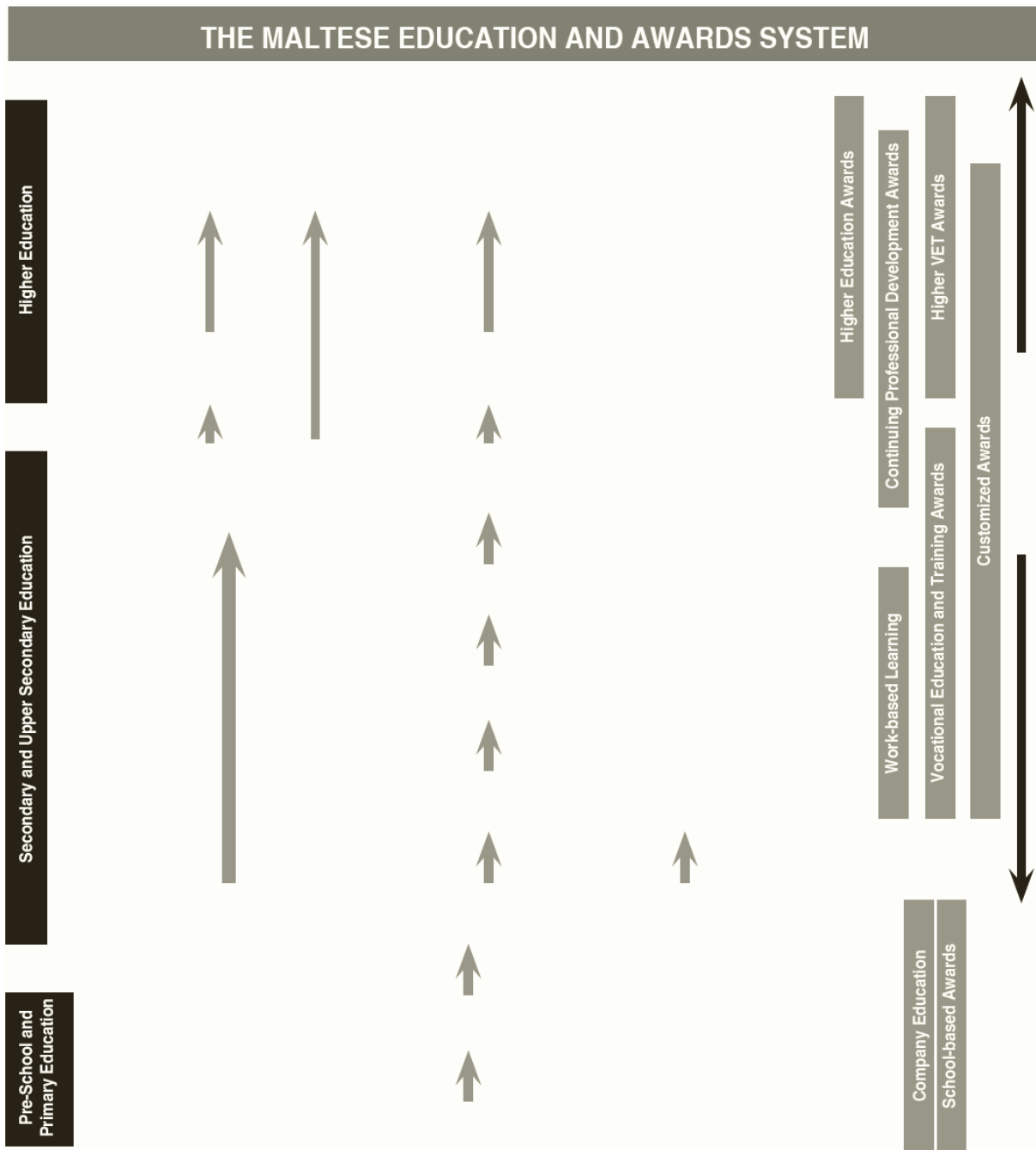


Figure 2: Awards system in Malta and Qualifications System (Source: Referencing of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA), 2012)

Award	MQF Level	Workload
Academic Higher Education Award including VET Awards	Level 8	Doctoral degree
	Level 7	60-120 ECTS/ECVET
	Level 6	180-240 ECTS/ECVET
	Level 5	30-90 ECTS/ECVET
VET Awards	Level 4	60-120 ECVET
	Level 3	60-120 ECVET
	Level 2	60-120 ECVET
	Level 1	Minimum 40 ECVET
Continuing Professional Development Award	Level 6	Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET
	Level 5	Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET
	Level 4	Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET
Customised Awards	Level 6	Min of 4 ECTS/ECVET
	Level 5	Min of 4 ECVET
	Level 4	Min of 4 ECVET
	Level 3	Min of 4 ECVET
	Level 2	Min of 4 ECVET
	Level 1	Min of 4 ECVET
Work-based Learning Awards	Level 6	Awards based on supervised on-the-job training with a minimum of 5 ECVET OR the validation of prior learning and a minimum of 5 years of professional experience in a recognised sector.
	Level 5	
	Level 4	
	Level 3	
	Level 2	
	Level 1	
Legacy Awards (General Education MQF L1 to L8 or VET-related MQF L1 to L5)	Level 8	Awards conferred to individuals prior to 2012 and which have relevance to the labour market and employment. VET awards are classified up to MQF Level 5.
	Level 7	
	Level 6	
	Level 5	
	Level 4	
	Level 3	
	Level 2	
	Level 1	
School Awards	Level 4	Matriculation Certificate 6 SEC Grades 1-5 4 SEC Grades 6-7 Secondary School Certificate and Profile
	Level 3	
	Level 2	
	Level 1	
	Level 1	

Figure 3: Different types of qualifications and awards which can be obtained in Malta across the different levels (Source: 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), 2012)

CHAPTER 4

4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training

This chapter tackles aspects of funding in VET as well as the degree of support which is provided to students in IVET and CVET.

4.1 Funding of VET

VET in Malta is funded directly by the Government which allocates a budget to cover the running of VET provision within MCAST and ITS. The Government has repeatedly stated its commitment to the vocational education sector and has continued to allocate part of its budget to it. In the case of MCAST, ERDF (European Regional Development Funds) funds have also been tapped in order to invest further in vocational education.

Funding in CVET depends on the entity involved. In the case of the ETC, the main source of funding is through the use of European and Social Funds. In the case of the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, funding is provided directly from government, even if learners attending adult courses are usually charged a minimal fee, which is low and only covers part of the expenses involved. The CVET courses offered in the evening by MCAST are not free either and in many cases designed to be self-financing. It is only in the case of courses making up part of ESF projects which are offered for free.

It must be noted that despite the financial crisis, The Government has maintained its commitment to VET and has continued to allocate substantial funds to VET. VET provision in Malta is growing as it reflects the financial commitment that the country has made towards having a highly skilled workforce.

Table 6: Funding allocated to the different education institutions²⁵

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Church Schools	29,816,000	33,000,000	38,500,00	46,200,000	45,200,000
University of Malta-UoM	30,049,000	39,574,948	41,000,000	51,802,000	49,650,000
Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology - MCAST	11,647,000	12,961,998	14,600,000	14,900,000	15,400,000
Institute of Tourism Studies - ITS	1,274,00	1,288,090	1,728,000	1,725,698	1,730,000
Employment and Training Corporation – ETC programmes	3,014,000	3,014,000	3,251,000	2,450,000	2,500,000
	74,526,000	89,839,036	99,079,000	117,077,698	114,480,000

4.2 Guidance and counselling

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 schools, but also others working in other sectors such as the ETC, to professionalise themselves through further studies in the area. In addition, The Government has issued sponsorships to professionals wanting to carry out studies at Masters level in the area of career guidance. A number of students do their Masters at a foreign university.

In the state education system, secondary school career guidance teachers have regular meetings and training sessions 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.

²⁵ Source: <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=567>, <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=735> and <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=881>

There is no specific guidance provided at CVET level. ETC has a system of employment advisers for unemployed persons, but the service is not open to those adults who wish to follow guidance either to change their current employment or else to improve their possibilities for career advancements.

List of Figures

Fig. 1	Summary of post-compulsory Maltese education system	8
Fig. 2	Awards system in Malta and Qualifications System	20
Fig. 3	Different types of qualifications and awards which can be obtained in Malta across the different levels.	21

List of Tables

Table. 1	No. of employed persons across the different NACE sectors in 2010-2012	5
Table. 2	Eurostat statistics on Students in upper secondary enrolled in vocational stream	11
Table. 3	Eurostat statistics on Students in Early School Leavers	12
Table. 4	Eurostat statistics on Youth Educational Attainment	12
Table. 5	Eurostat statistics on participation in Adult Learning	13
Table. 6	Funding allocated to the different education institutions	23

Abbreviations

CVET	–	Continuous Vocational and Educational Training
DLLL	–	Directorate for Lifelong Learning
ECVET	–	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	–	European Qualifications Framework
ERDF	–	European Regional Development Fund
ESL	–	Early School Leavers
ESTS	–	Extended Skills and Training Scheme
ETC	–	Employment and Training Corporation
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
ICMCH	–	Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage
ITS	–	Institute of Tourism Studies
IVET	–	Initial Vocational and Educational Training
LFS	–	Labour Force Survey
MCAST	–	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MCCEI	–	Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry
MEA	–	Malta Employers' Association
MQC	–	Malta Qualifications Council
MQF	–	Malta Qualifications Framework
MQRIC	–	Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre
NACE	–	Nomenclature Générale des Activités Économiques dans les Communautés
NCFH	–	National Commission for Further and Higher Education
NCHE	–	National Commission for Higher Education
NRP	–	National Reform Programme
NSO	–	National Statistics Office
QF/EHEA	–	Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area
SEC	–	Secondary Education Certificate
TAS	–	Technical Apprenticeship Scheme
VET	–	Vocational Education and Training

References

- Centre for Labour Studies, (2009), Biennial Report 2007-8, University of Malta: Centre for Labour Studies.
- Debono M., (2008), Improving the capacity to anticipate EU-wide labour market and skills requirements: Malta, Contribution to the EEO Review: Autumn 2008.
- Education Act (CAP. 327), 2012, Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations, 2012, legal notice 294/2012 of the Education Act.
- Education Act (CAP. 327), 2012, Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Regulations, 2012 legal notice 295/2012 of the Education Act.
- Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), (2007), Employment in the Environment Goods and Services Industry in Malta, Malta: Employment and Training Corporation.
- Government of Malta, (2012), Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, 2012, L.N. 295 of 2012 EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327), 2012.
- Government of Malta, (2012), Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Regulations,, 2012, L.N. 295 of 2012 EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327), 2012.
- Government of Malta, (2012), Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations, L.N. 294 of 2012 EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327), 2012.
- 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?l=1>
- 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?l=1>
- 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.
- 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.
- Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, (2011), 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: Government of Malta.
- 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.

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.

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2001), Continuous Vocational Training Survey, Valletta: Government of Malta, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2073

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Census of Population and Housing 2011: preliminary report, Government of Malta, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/pgp_ess/0_DOCS/mt/Preliminary%20Report%202011.pdf

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Gainfully Occupied Population: June 2012, News Release, 12 November 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3463

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Gainfully Occupied Population: June 2012, News Release, 12 November 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3463

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Gross Domestic Product for 2011, News Release, 9 March 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3267

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Malta in Figures 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3453

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), <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/referencingreport?l=1>

National Statistics Office - Malta in Figures 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3453

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2001), Continuous Vocational Training Survey, Valletta: Government of Malta http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2073

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Census of Population and Housing 2011: preliminary report http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/pgp_ess/0_DOCS/mt/Preliminary%20Report%202011.pdf

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Gainfully Occupied Population: June 2012, News Release, 12 November 2012, http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3463

National Statistics Office (NSO), (2012), Gross Domestic Product for 2011 http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3267

Websites

ETC course lists <http://etc.gov.mt/Page/54/courses-jobseekers.aspx>.

Eurostat statistics

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

Eurypedia – European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Malta:Overview>

Government of Malta Financial

Estimates <http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=567> and
<http://finance.gov.mt/image.aspx?site=MFIN&type=estimate&ref=735>

Institute of Tourism Studies evening courses

<http://www.its.edu.mt/files/9/Prospectus%20PT%202012.pdf>

Malta Qualifications' Council Policy document on Quality

Assurance <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/documents-publications?l=1>

MCAST prospectus: https://shortcourses.mcast.edu.mt/EN/content/7/Courses_by_Institute)

MCAST's website <http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>