



Cedefop country factsheet

Adult population in potential need of upskilling:

Malta

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This country factsheet is produced by Cedefop as background material to the [Second Policy learning forum on upskilling pathways: a vision for the future](#). This country factsheet is based on preliminary results from Cedefop's project "the potential of WBL in developing upskilling pathways for adults" and will be finalised following outcomes of the Policy Learning Forum. This factsheet has neither been edited nor proof read by Cedefop's editing service.

Further information:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/adult-learning>

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Introduction

Analysis of low-skilled status in the labour market to date has been primarily conducted using the level of educational attainment of the population. As widely acknowledged¹, this definition does not take into account other factors which may lead to low-skilled status, such as:

- long-term unemployment and/or disengagement from the labour market;
- skill obsolescence due to ageing, technological change, changes in production processes and/or work organisation;
- gaps between individual job skills and changing skills demand of the labour market;
- socio-economic factors such as migrant background and gender.

Seemingly, a narrow conceptualisation of being low-skilled also fails to capture the role of skills and competences gained outside formal education environments, such as those acquired through training, informal learning and work experience. Within the limitations of systematic data available across EU countries, the following Cedefop analysis provides a multidimensional view of the phenomenon in a cross-national comparative perspective.

Box 1: Definitions and measure of low skilling used for this analysis

EU28+: EU Member States plus Iceland and Norway.

Adult population / adults: population aged 25-64.

Low education: completed ISCED (2011) levels 0-2 or ISCED 3 programmes lasting less than 2 years (LFS 2016).

Low use of Internet: last use of Internet was more than 3 months prior to survey interview or no internet use (CSIS 2015, 2014 for IS).

Below basic digital skills: among those with the last use of Internet less than 3 months prior to survey interview, individuals who have carried out activities in at most one of the four digital competence dimensions surveyed: information, communication, content-creation and problem-solving (CSIS 2015).

Low digital skills: either low use of Internet or below basic digital skills (CSIS 2015).

Low literacy/ Low numeracy/ Low problem solving in technology-rich environments (PS): proficiency levels ≤ 1 for literacy and numeracy; proficiency levels < 1 for PS (OECD-PIAAC).

Risk of low skilling: the probability of being low skilled for different socio-demographic groups. It is calculated as **absolute risk** (share of individuals with low skills among those of the same socio-demographic group); or as **relative risk** (share of low skilled in the socio-demographic group -absolute risk- over the share of low skilled among whole adult population).

Low skilling gap: difference between the incidence of the socio-demographic group in the total low skilled population and the incidence of the socio-demographic group in the total adult population.

Performance index of low skilling: relative risk of low skilling within the country over the relative risk of low skilling observed on average in EU28+ for the same socio-demographic group.

Sources and country coverage

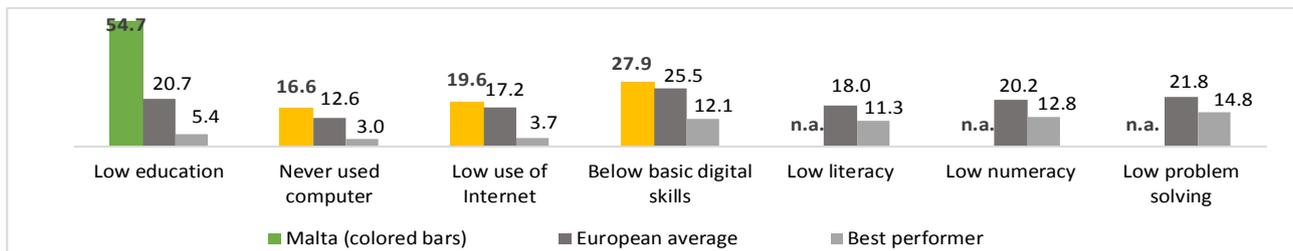
EU-LFS (Labour force survey) 2016 for education: EU28+; CSIS (Community Statistics on information Society) survey 2015 (2014 for IS) for computer, digital skills: E28 and NO; OECD-PIAAC (Survey of adult skills) 2012;2015 for literacy, numeracy (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK), and problem solving in technology-rich environments (AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, IE, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK). In PIAAC survey BE data refer to Flanders and UK data refer to England and Northern Ireland.

¹ Cedefop (2017). Investing in skills pays off: the economic and social cost of low-skilled adults in the EU. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/23250>.

Magnitude of low skilling phenomenon

Adopting a more comprehensive analysis of low skills, according to a broader set of skills for which data are available, **in Malta the incidence of low skilling among adults is higher than those observed on average in the EU28+ countries both in the level of education and in the computer and digital skills** (Fig. 1). In particular, the share of adults with low educational attainment levels is particularly high reaching almost 55% of the adult population in 2016. Data on cognitive skills (literacy and numeracy) and on problem solving in technology-rich environments are not available for Malta.

Figure 1 – Incidence of low skilling among adults aged 25-64 by type of skills (%)

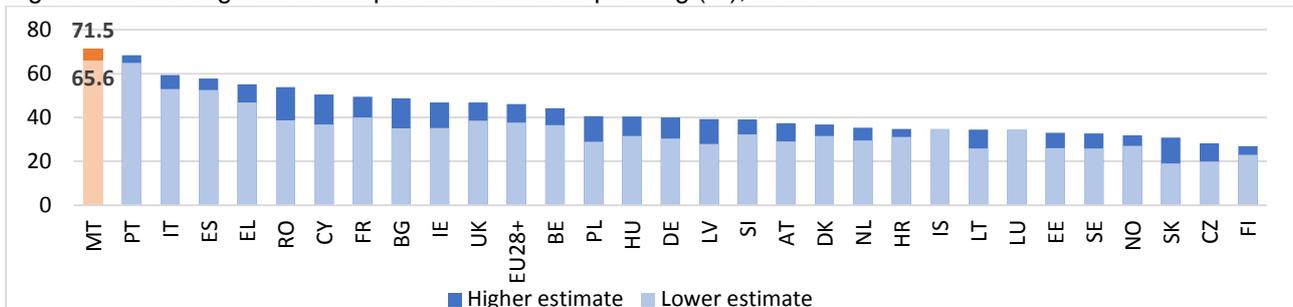


Note: European average: unweighted average of EU28+ countries for which data are available. n.a. data not available. Best performer countries (those with reliable data) with the lowest share of low-skilled adult population aged 25-64. Best performer: Low education (LT), Never used computer (NL), Low use of Internet (FI), Below basic digital skills (LU), Low literacy (FI), Low numeracy (CZ), Low problem solving in technology-rich environments (NO)

Estimation of the adult population in potential need of upskilling

On the basis of the above data, **in Malta the share of adult population in potential need of upskilling is estimated to range between 65.6% and 71.5% of its total adult population, that is to say from 154 to 168 thousand adults, depending on the measure of digital competences considered.** The estimation of the populations in potential need of upskilling includes adults with very low skill levels in at least one of the following domains: education (attainment), literacy, numeracy and digital competences (considering only those who never used computer for the lower estimate; considering those with low use of internet and those with below basic digital skills for the higher estimate). Moreover, among those in potential need of upskilling are also medium-high educated individuals having a potential risk of skill loss because they work in low skilled occupations (they account for 0.2 percentage points in the total estimate).

Figure 2- Adults aged 25-64 in potential need of upskilling (%), EU28+



Note: Population in potential need of upskilling (estimate): adults with either: low education; low digital skills (higher estimate) or never used computer (lower estimate); low literacy and/or low numeracy; as well as medium-high educated (ISCED2011 level 3 2-year+ to level 8) at risk of skill loss, working in elementary occupations- ISCO08 level 9). For countries not surveyed by PIAAC (BG, HR, HU, IS, LU, LV, MT, PT, RO), low cognitive skills (low literacy and/or low numeracy skills) is assumed to be equal to the average level observed in surveyed countries. EU28+: population weighted average.

Looking across the population, in Malta low skilling is particularly high among people out of the labour force. Among the total number of people in need of upskilling for which reliable data is available, the population groups most in need of upskilling are: people out of the labour force (inactive) aged 55-64 and 35-54. They all present on average the highest share of low skilling in all domains considered: education and digital skills (i.e. low use of Internet or below basic digital skills) (all these groups have a composite index above 100, Fig. 3).

Figure 3 – Low skilling composite index*, Malta



Note: *Low skilling composite index: calculated as the arithmetic mean of the relative risk of being low skilled in four domains: Low Education; Low Digital skills; Low literacy, Low numeracy. For each skill domain, the relative risk is calculated as the share of low skilled in the socio-demographic group over the share of low skilled among adults aged 25-64 in the country. Values of the index below 100 indicate a lower than average risk; values above 100 indicate higher than average risk. Data unavailable/unreliable for subgroups: unemployed 25-34; unemployed 35-54; unemployed 55-64; inactive 25-34.

Box 2 – Risk of low skilling among adult women

In Malta, women account for approximately 48% and 53% of the adult population with low education and low digital skills, respectively. Among adult women, the absolute risk of low skilling is higher for education (54%) as compared to the other skill dimension considered. However, when compared to the average risk (relative risk of low skilling) women show a higher risk of having low digital skills (8% higher).

The breakdown by employment status shows that the relative risk of low skilling is higher among women out of the labour force (inactive) and among unemployed women in all the skill dimensions considered. Low skilled inactive adult women represent 31% of the adult population with low educational attainment levels and with low digital skills.

Females aged 25-64	Low education	Low digital skills
Absolute risk of low skilling among fem 25-64 (%)	53.9	51.3
Relative risk of low skilling: total fem 25-64	98 (48.2)	108 (52.9)
Relative risk: unemployed fem 25-64	134 (1.5)	153 (3.2)
Relative risk: inactive fem 25-64	146 (30.8)	153 (30.9)
Relative risk: employed fem 25-64	59 (15.9)	70 (18.7)

(incidence of low skilled females 25-64 on total low skilled population in %).

Risk of low skilling and labour market status

The following tables and figures below illustrate the absolute risk and the relative performance index of low skilling across four domains (education, digital skills², literacy and numeracy) by labour market status. The absolute risk for each socio-demographic group shows the probability of being low skilled for the individuals in that socio-demographic group (Tables 1, 2, and 3). The relative performance index of low skilling shows how the socio-demographic group performs (in terms of low skilling) with respect to the European average³. The calculated values of this index are represented in Figures 4, 5 and 6 (values above 100 indicate a worse performance of the group with respect the European average; values below 100 indicate a better performance).

Risk of low skilling among unemployed people

Among the unemployed, all the age groups show a very high risk of having low educational attainment levels, compared to the risks registered on average in the country and at the European level (Tab. 1). At this level of detail information on digital skills is reliable for Malta.

The following table (1) presents the **absolute risk** of being low skilled by age for the unemployed and the absolute risk registered by the whole adult population (25-64) in the country and in Europe.

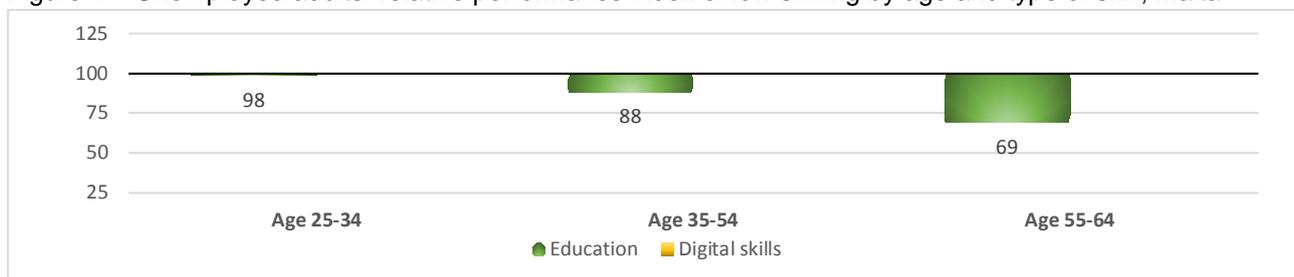
Table 1 - Unemployed adults: absolute risk of being low skilled by age and type of skill, Malta

Age	Education	Digital skills	Literacy	Numeracy
35-54	82,4	u	n.a.	n.a.
55-64	70,5	u	n.a.	n.a.
25-34	67,7	u	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: Country average	54,7	47,6	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: European average	23,2	43,0	20,8	24,3

Note: European weighted average: Education (EU28+); Digital skills (EU28, NO); Literacy and Numeracy (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK). u: unreliable data. n.a.: data not available.

Unlike the absolute risk, the **relative performance index** of low skilling (Fig. 4) evidences country critical areas (those above 100) for socio-demographic groups as compared to the performance they register on average across Europe. Unfortunately, for Malta this analysis is limited because of data unreliability or unavailability.

Figure 4 – Unemployed adults: relative performance index of low skilling by age and type of skill, Malta



Note: **Relative risk of low skilling within the country over the relative risk of low skilling observed on average in EU28+ for the same socio-demographic group.** Values of the index below/above 100 indicate that the relative risk of low skilling for the specific socio-demographic group in the country is lower/higher as compared to the relative risk for the specific socio-demographic group in the EU average.

² Low use of Internet or below basic digital skills (see box 1).

³ The countries considered in the European average change according to the database and skill considered: EU28+ for education (EU-LFS 2016); EU28 plus NO for digital skills (CSIS 2015); AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK for literacy and numeracy (OECD- PIAAC 2012;2015).

Risk of low skilling among inactive people

Among inactive adults, the group most at risk of low skilling in the two skill dimensions considered are individuals aged 55-64 and 35-54. Both groups show a very high risk of having low educational attainment levels and insufficient digital skills, as compared to the risk registered on average in the country and at the European level (Tab. 2). Moreover, also young inactive adults aged 25-34 show a high risk of being low educated: more than twice the risk recorded on average among the European adult population (25-64).

The following table (2) presents the **absolute risk** of being low skilled by age for inactive individuals and the absolute risk registered by the whole adult population (25-64) in the country and in Europe.

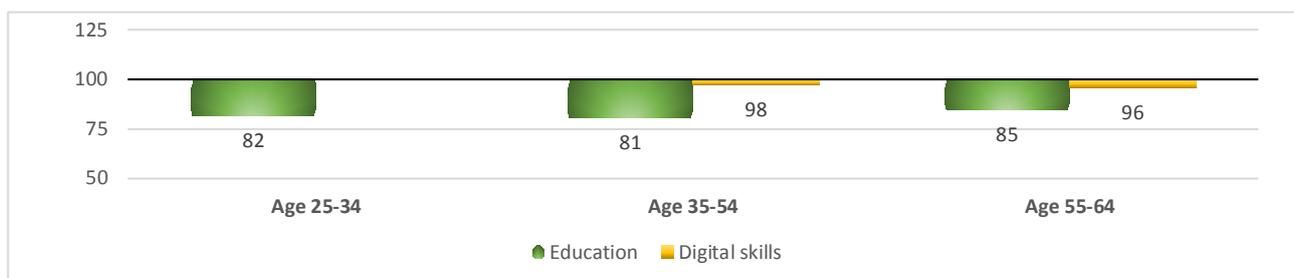
Table 2 - Inactive adults: absolute risk of being low skilled by age and type of skill, Malta

Age	Education	Digital skills	Literacy	Numeracy
55-64	82,8	80,3	n.a.	n.a.
35-54	82,3	66,3	n.a.	n.a.
25-34	58,4	u	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: Country average	54,7	47,6	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: European average	23,2	43,0	20,8	24,3

Note: European weighted average: Education (EU28+); Digital skills (EU28, NO); Literacy and Numeracy (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK). u: unreliable data. n.a.: data not available.

Unlike the absolute risk, the **relative performance index** of low skilling (Fig. 5) evidences country critical areas (those above 100) for socio-demographic groups as compared to the performance they register on average across Europe. Unfortunately, for Malta this analysis is limited because of data unreliability or unavailability.

FIGURE 5 – Inactive adults: relative performance index of low skilling by age and type of skill, Malta



Note: **Relative risk of low skilling within the country over the relative risk of low skilling observed on average in EU28+ for the same socio-demographic group.** Values of the index below/above 100 indicate that the relative risk of low skilling for the specific socio- demographic group in the country is lower/higher as compared to the relative risk for the specific socio- demographic group in the EU average.

Risk of low skilling among employed people

Employed adults of all groups considered show a lower risk of being low skilled than the average in the country, apart from those aged 55-64 (Tab. 3) which present a higher than average risk of having low education and low digital skills. Moreover, **employed adults aged 25-34 and 35-44** show a higher risk of low education than the one registered on average at European level (Tab. 3).



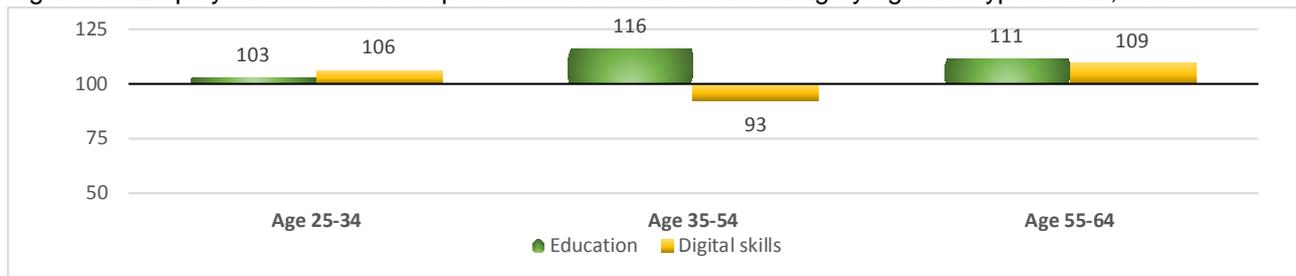
Table 3 - Employed adults: absolute risk of being low skilled by age and type of skill, Malta

Age	Education	Digital skills	Literacy	Numeracy
55-64	60,4	59,1	n.a.	n.a.
35-54	48,2	37,1	n.a.	n.a.
25-34	30,3	26,5	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: Country average	54,7	47,6	n.a.	n.a.
Total pop 25-64: European average	23,2	43,0	20,8	24,3

Note: European weighted average: Education (EU28+); Digital skills (EU28, NO); Literacy and Numeracy (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK). u: unreliable data. n.a.: data not available.

Moreover, the **relative performance index** of low skilling (Fig. 6) evidences country critical areas (those above 100) for socio-demographic groups as compared to the performance they register on average across Europe. In Malta, for instance, employed adults aged 35-54 and 55-64 have a higher relative risk of having low educational attainment as compared to the relative risk observed on average by the same group in Europe.

Figure 6 – Employed adults: relative performance index of low skilling by age and type of skill, Malta



Note: **Relative risk of low skilling within the country over the relative risk of low skilling observed on average in EU28+ for the same socio-demographic group.** Values of the index below/above 100 indicate that the relative risk of low skilling for the specific socio- demographic group in the country is lower/higher as compared to the relative risk for the specific socio- demographic group in the EU average.