



Structures of Education,  
Vocational Training  
and Adult Education  
Systems in Europe

**MALTA**  
2002/03

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org/>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.gr/>)

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# INTRODUCTION

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Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered <sup>(1)</sup> and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

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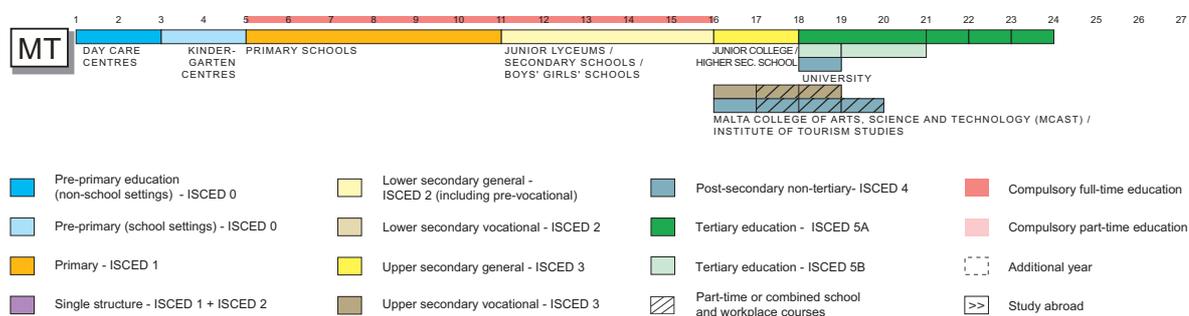
Peter de Roij  
Director of the ETF

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<sup>(1)</sup> The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

## Organisation of the education system in Malta, 2003/04



Source: Eurydice.

# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

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## 1.1 Background

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The Maltese Archipelago is nested in the centre of the Mediterranean basin covering an area of 316 square kilometres. It consists of Malta (246sq km), Gozo (67sq. km), Comino (2.7sq.km) and two other small-uninhabited islands. The islands have a total population of 386,938 (2002) and the main source of economic activity and foreign exchange earner is undoubtedly tourism. The Maltese Islands' most valuable asset is its history that offers a spectrum of archaeological sites and architectural heritage ranging from the Stone Age with the magnificent megalithic temples to the more recent architecture built during the British period.

Throughout the years, Malta experienced various influences from those who colonised the Islands. These colonisers left their imprint on the island, giving rise to a unique blend of cultures. In fact the Maltese language (which is the national language) consists of influences mainly from the Arabic, English and Italian languages.

Christianity has been the main religious faith for the Maltese since the shipwreck of St. Paul in 60 AD. This fact is further emphasised by the numerous patron feasts which are celebrated in the so called 'festa season' which runs between April and September.

Malta gained its independence from Britain in 1964 and adopted a republican constitution in 1974. In 1990 Malta formally submitted its application to join the European Community. Following a three-year period of negotiations, the Maltese Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs signed the EU Accession Treaty on behalf of Malta in Athens in April 2003. Malta thus becomes a member of the European Union together with nine other accession countries in May 2004. There are two major political parties, which are the Nationalist Party, and the Labour Party. The House of Representatives has sixty-five members returned by a system of proportional representation. The party returning fifty percent plus one of the valid votes cast in a general election is given the mandate to govern. In turn, the House elects a President, who has limited executive power. Executive power resides with the Prime Minister

and his Cabinet colleagues (nominated from among elected representatives). There is also an official Opposition.

## 1.2 Basis of the Education System: Principles – Legislation

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The Constitution of the Republic of Malta and the Education Act provide the constitutional and legal framework and the main aims and objectives of the Maltese educational system. Legislation is enacted by Parliament.

The Education Act enacted in 1988 replaced previous legislation and introduced innovative concepts. One of the major innovations was the recognition of teaching as a profession. This requires that teachers be in possession of a professional warrant to be able to teach in schools. The granting of teaching warrants is the prerogative of the Minister of Education acting on the recommendations of a Teachers' Warrant Board. The Board is composed of teaching professionals employed within the Education Division. The Act also introduced the concept of decentralisation, gave stronger rights to parents in the education of their children and guaranteed the existence of private schools.

Education provision is based on the principle that all children between the ages of five and sixteen are entitled to free education in all state schools regardless of age, sex, belief and economic means. The Education Act (1988) also gave the state the right to establish the national minimum curriculum for all schools and to establish the national minimum regulations for them.

The 1988 Act also obliges the State to provide free university education to all those students who are in possession of the necessary entry qualifications. The University of Malta is largely autonomous and the law allows it to administer its own funds, formulate its own rules and regulations and appoint its staff. However, the Minister of Education has the right to query certain aspects of the university's running. The minister may order an audit of the University.

The education agenda of the current Nationalist Government includes raising educational

standards and providing a free system of education that is open to all in order to enhance personal development with the ultimate aim of having flexible workers who are able to adapt and change career if necessary.

### 1.3 Distribution of Responsibilities for the Organisation and Administration of the Education and Training System

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The Education Division is the government department responsible for the provision of an effective and efficient system of education. The Education Division together with the Department of Libraries and National Archives and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) falls within the responsibilities of the Minister of Education. The Minister's portfolio includes also the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools and the Foundation for Educational Services that were set up in May 2001. The Foundation For Tomorrow's Schools has been established with the objective of developing alternative avenues to finance school construction and refurbishment and to project manage the school infrastructural work itself. The Foundation for Educational Services was conceived as a mechanism that enables the Education Division to provide a range of primary and secondary prevention and intervention measures aimed at reducing failure, literacy and absenteeism.

The Minister is the political executive of the Ministry and is an elected Member of Parliament. The topmost public service post in the Ministry of Education is the Permanent Secretary. The top posts in the public service including that of Permanent Secretary, Director General, Directors and Assistant Directors are on performance contract basis and they are open to career public officials.

The Education Division (formerly Department of Education) is responsible for the running of state education. It also monitors and provides certain services to the non-state sector. Traditionally the administration of education has been centralised. In line with the provisions of the Education Act and the reform of the public service, a process of decentralisation was initiated in the early 90s. The Director General (Education) is the executive head of the Division. The Division is subdivided into seven Directorates each responsible for a particular aspect of the education service. These include the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education, the Department of Curriculum Management, the Department of Planning, and Development, the Department of Operations, the Department of Student Services and

International Relations the Department of Technology in Education and the Department of Finance and Administration. The Director heading the Department of Finance and Administration is appointed from the general service grades within the public service while the other Departments are head by Directors appointed from within the teaching profession.

Education Division's head office is responsible for recruitment, deployment, discipline and promotion of staff. It is also responsible for a large portion of the financial management function. As part of the decentralisation process, heads of school have responsibility for managing certain funds. They are also involved in the selection of clerical and minor staff. Each school draws up a three-year school development plan. This provides a framework that focuses the initiatives of the school's community and supplies performance indicators for self-evaluation. Students are allocated to schools at secondary level according to what is known as catchment areas that are drawn up by head office.

The Minister of Education has the right to establish the Curriculum. In the last curriculum review process initiated in 1996 and concluded towards the end of 1999, the responsibility of drawing up the curriculum was entrusted to the Director Curriculum Management. The Minister's wish was that this document would be the outcome of a broad process of consultation involving the social partners and the general public. The hallmark of the new National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) is the extensive series of consultations with all stakeholders.

A National Curriculum Council has been established to indicate, catalyse and support national educational priorities and to safeguard students' entitlement. It is also empowered to promote and monitor national educational standards. The National Curriculum Council is appointed by the Minister of Education. It is accountable and answerable to the Director General of Education. Implementation of the curriculum in schools is the responsibility of a central authority: the Division of Education, and of the schools themselves. Other partners such as the Faculty of Education, parents' associations and other social partners are coming to play a more participatory part. The implementation of the NMC commenced in October 2000. It envisages school-based curriculum development.

Political decentralisation has been introduced in Malta in 1993, with the setting up of Local Councils. The Local Councils Act envisages that Local Councils provide protection of children in the vicinity of schools. It also envisages collaboration between the Local Councils and the education authorities in the setting up and

the maintenance of educational facilities. Local Councils also propose persons to the Minister of Education to be appointed Presidents of School Councils

The Education Act envisages the setting up of School Councils. Each school has its own School Council that is composed of equal representatives of teachers and parents. School Councils elections are held at the beginning of each scholastic year. The Minister of Education appoints the President of the School Council, who is proposed by the Local Council. The head of school is *ex-officio*, secretary, and treasurer of the School Council. School Councils have no formal authority over curriculum matters and they mainly concentrate on increasing parental involvement in schools.

Initial teacher training is the responsibility of the Faculty of Education, which is the national training institution. In-service training is the responsibility of the Education Division. This training influences teaching methods but teachers in classrooms have great freedom in choosing their own methods of teaching.

The Faculty of Education assesses teacher trainees but selection for employment lies within the responsibility of the Education Division for state schools. Heads of School and other school administrators are also employed with the Education Division. The Public Service Commission regulates employment within the public service. In the non-state sector the individual schools employ their teachers and other staff.

In state schools, the Education Division chooses most of the teaching materials and there is a prescribed textbook by subject. Schools in the private church/independent sector choose their own teaching materials, but are often guided by materials used in state schools.

Within the State educational system, pupils and students are assessed by their own teachers as well as through a centrally organised examination system, which is run by the Educational Assessment Unit (EAU). In the non-state sector the school in which they attend assesses pupils and students.

Schools award a School Leaving Certificate after five years of a secondary level course, but these certificates have very limited currency. The recognised certification at the end of secondary education is provided by external agencies namely: the MATSEC Board of the University of Malta and foreign examinations boards.

## 1.4 Quality Assurance

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The head of school plays an important role as professional leader in the schools. In primary schools, heads and assistant heads carry out a support and advisory role by reviewing teachers' work and visiting classes. At secondary level subject co-ordinators who are subject specialists assist the head of school to ensure the maintenance of quality and standards in the teaching of the various subjects.

Quality assurance is further sustained by means of a process of school development planning. Each school develops educational objectives within the framework of its development plan. The plan and the achievements are reviewed annually by means of internal evaluation. This process of reflection on the school's provision and practices provides the basis for remedial action and for further developments. The internal evaluation is complemented by external monitoring carried out by Education Officers.

Performance Management Programme (PMP) is being phased in for all teaching staff. This takes into consideration the role and the contribution a member of the staff has in achieving the objectives set by the school in its development plan, which in turn reflects national educational objectives and strategies. The process includes establishing how each member of staff would be contributing to the objectives, how to measure the performance and what, if any professional development, is required to be able to contribute to the achievement of objectives. PMP provides a tool for professional reflection. It is drawn up and reviewed collegially between the teacher and the head of school.

Trainees and teachers are formally inspected at specific points in their training or career when they are due for certification, confirmation of appointment or progression to a higher pay scale.

The inspectorate that assesses trainees is part of the Faculty of Education and is composed of members of the Faculty of Education as well as external examiners. The inspectorate that assesses teachers already in service for qualifications and for standards of performance is part of the Education Division and is made up of Education Officers who are allocated responsibilities according to areas of specialisation.

On other occasions Education Officers, who are based at head office, take on a different role. They advise and support teachers on the different aspects of the teaching/learning experience. They also support heads of schools

in their administrative and management functions.

## 1.5 Financing

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Funds for education are appropriated during the parliamentary debates on the financial estimates towards the end of the year. The appropriations cover both recurrent and capital expenditure. Prior to the presentation of the estimates in Parliament, both capital and recurrent estimates would have been proposed and discussed by the senior management of the Education Division and approved by the Minister of Education for inclusion as part of the Cabinet's estimates for the following year. As part of the process of decentralisation of the public service, each department within the Education Division represents a cost-centre.

Since 1994 in line with government's policy towards decentralisation, schools have been given responsibility to manage funds, which cover school materials and supplies, capital expenditure, and repairs and maintenance. The Head of School manages these funds. The allocation of funds to schools is based on a funding formula which is set centrally and which incorporates among other criteria; school population, number of students with special needs, and type of school. School Councils may also generate school funds by organising social and cultural activities for parents and by hiring out the use of school facilities after school hours.

Education in state kindergarten, primary and secondary schools is free of charge. This includes tuition, books and all other services provided in schools. Tuition in post-secondary and tertiary education is also free with government covering all capital and recurrent expenditure. Students in these institutions receive allowances and maintenance grants from government.

The non-state sector can be sub-divided into two, i.e. the church schools sector and the independent sector. Parents whose children attend church schools do not pay any fees, although they may be invited to make voluntary contributions to cover capital expenditure. The state contributes an annual sum of money to church schools according to a State-Church agreement. These funds cover the personal emoluments of school employees. The Catholic Church provides school buildings and funds to cover other expenses that are not provided for by the Government grant. Parents pay for textbooks and school transport. Parents who

send their children to independent schools pay school fees and any other expenses connected with their education. In 2001, the government introduced tax rebates on school fees for these parents.

## 1.6 Advisory and Consultative Bodies

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Successive governments have resorted to consultation in drawing up policies. This trend is very evident in the field of education where it has become customary to consult as wide a range of partners as possible on many matters related to education and to involve them in decision making. These social partners include teachers, school management teams, parents, teacher trainers, teacher unions, parent associations, associations of employers, specific issue groups, local councils, people from industry, the public service and the world of culture.

Matters for consultation vary in scale from the review of the national minimum curriculum for ages 3 to 16 to specific issues such as the inclusion of children with special needs in the mainstream and tackling the problem of absenteeism or bullying in schools.

These consultation exercises are often co-ordinated by a steering committee working at central level appointed by the Minister of Education, with a number of working groups operating at local or regional level.

The help of experts in the area under discussion often backs the consultation process. These experts act as an advisory body and may be also commissioned to carry out research. On matters that require it, expert advice may also be sought from other countries that are in the best position to give such advice.

Both consultative and advisory bodies are very powerful in shaping policies and decisions but the final responsibility for decision-making rests with the Minister and his official representatives.

The main consultative bodies, which are consulted by the Ministry of Education in drawing up its policies, are mainly the Malta Union of Teachers, and the Association of School Councils. The former is the largest trade union, representing all the teaching grades from kindergarten to university in both the state sector and the private sector. It also plays the role of professional association, taking initiatives to uphold the professionalism of teachers. The Association Of School Councils represents the parents whose children attend state schools. Other bodies are consulted depending on the

policies under discussion. These include the National Assembly for Persons with Disabilities, the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Industry, and the University Students Council.

The Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Education together with the senior management of the Education Division is the main advisor to the Minister on educational policy. The Minister may also appoint from time to time ad hoc advisory committees to draw up policy papers on educational subjects. The Minister of Education may also seek advice from members of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

## 1.7 Private Schools

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The Education Act (1988) gives a person or institution, wishing to establish a private school, the right to apply for a licence to the Minister of Education. Although the Act envisages that such licences are granted to the Catholic Church and any other voluntary and non-profit organisations, the Minister may grant a licence to any other applicant if he deems this to be in the public interest.

Private schools in Malta fall into two categories: Church Schools and Independent Schools.

Both provide education from pre-primary to upper secondary levels.

### Church Schools

On the 25th November 1991, the Republic of Malta and the Holy See signed a definitive agreement on Church Schools, by which the State recognised the right of the Church to establish and direct its own schools according to their specific nature and with autonomy of organisation and operation.

Church Schools have to observe the general regulations envisaged by the State's educational policy regarding the National Minimum Curriculum and the National Minimum Conditions put into effect in State Schools.

The Church could freely establish the criteria for admission to its schools so long as it safeguarded, without discrimination, the public character of the service offered by the same schools. This does not exclude the reservation of some places for less privileged categories, or for particular cases of socio-familial needs.

In Church schools the head is very often a member of the religious order that runs the school.

Tuition in Church Schools is free of charge at all levels of education. The Church makes available its own schools buildings. It is also responsible for the maintenance of its schools; and for funding future extensions. The Church pays the remuneration to Spiritual Counsellors and extra curricular services.

The Church can finance the above by fundraising, free donations from parents and other collections.

The State is obliged to pay the salaries of the teaching staff and other ancillary staff such as school secretaries, handyman etc. The State is bound to forward its contribution, free of all taxes, to the Church in six instalments, at two monthly intervals, and in advance.

In order to determine the financial contribution by the State, the Church's Commission for Education has to submit to the Minister of Education the list of all teaching and non-teaching staff of Church Schools with an indication of the respective remuneration of each. Staff in Church Schools is to include the same categories of staff envisaged in State Schools and the number of staff is established in relation to operational requirements used in State Schools.

The State guarantees that teachers in Church Schools are offered the same facilities envisaged for teachers in State schools as to in-service training courses, scholarships etc.

Students in Church Schools are also assured of the same allowances granted to students in State Schools, and the same facilities.

The State recognises parity between qualifications obtained at Church Schools and those awarded by its own Schools for all intents and purposes.

### Independent Schools

Independent Schools in Malta are private initiatives, a number of these schools have been set up and run by non-profit Parents' Foundations.

The individual schools are free to recruit their own head of school, as long as the person satisfies the minimum requisites laid down by the Education Division. All heads of school and other teaching staff have to be approved by the Education Division.

Private schools are subject to inspections by the Education Division which has an Assistant Director especially appointed to supervise all non-state schools. The Assistant Director or his representatives can visit private schools to see that they conform to the minimum requirements both as regards: the pedagogical aspects as well as the physical infrastructure.

Independent Schools charge fees that vary among schools and for different levels within the same school. Annual fees at pre-grade level vary between Lm 180 and Lm550. Fees at post-secondary level range between Lm972 to Lm4,700 annually. In 2001, tax rebates were introduced for parents whose children attend independent schools.

Church and Independent schools have their own examination and assessment systems. Some schools base their assessment on a combination of a half-yearly and an annual examination. Other schools have examinations at the end of each term. Formative types of assessment, such as profiling, may supplement examinations in some schools.

At the end of primary education most pupils proceed to private secondary schools. However, private primary school pupils can transfer to a state secondary school. Pupils may also sit for the Junior Lyceum examination and if successful move to the state sector. Pupils in private schools that cater only for the primary level have to sit for an examination to obtain a placing in another private secondary school. This examination is also open for pupils in state primary schools that wish to move to a private secondary school.

At the end of the secondary education certification is common for both State and Private Schools. Students sit for the SEC (Secondary Education Certificate) examination run by the University of Malta.

## 1.8 Statistics

### No. of Schools and Teaching Staff

	No. of Schools	No. of Teaching Staff
Church Schools	59	1,370
Independent Schools	32	640

### No. of Pupils/Students

Sector	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
Church	1,515	7,615	7,574	633
Independent	2,083	4,202	2,213	119

School year 2002/03 – (Source: Non-state schools Unit, Education Division)

Schools may cater for more than one level of education.

Number of teaching staff includes school administrators and facilitators with students with special needs in mainstream.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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At pre-primary level no formal teaching takes place, but educational activity is aimed to develop the children's social attitudes, language and communication skills in preparation for primary education. Educational activities should include communication by word or gesture, singing, play, painting, and figure forming, exercises and rhythmic movements.

The Kindergarten curriculum aims at enhancing the holistic development of children. More specifically, kindergarten education provides experiences that stimulate the intellectual, socio-emotional, physical, and moral development of the children, as well as a development of a sense of aesthetics and creativity.

Pre-primary education or kindergarten education in Malta is provided free in state schools. Pre-primary education is co-educational and caters for children aged between three and five years and is full-time. The State started to provide pre-primary education for 4-year old children in December 1975. Prior to this date pre-primary education was provided in small schools run by nuns belonging to Catholic religious orders and independent bodies. In October 1988, the service was expanded to include also three-year-olds. Although attendance at pre-primary level is voluntary about ninety-five (95%) of the age cohort attend.

Admission of three-year-olds takes place three times during the scholastic year, in October, January and April. Children who attain their third birthday between April and September are admitted in October, those who attain their birthday between October and December are admitted in January, while those who attain their birthday between January and March are admitted in April.

Pre-primary education is provided in kindergarten centres that are attached to primary schools. There is at least one kindergarten centre in every town and village in Malta.

### 2.1 Organisation

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Being part of primary schools the pre-primary centres fall under the responsibility of the head of the primary school who very often delegates the work to an assistant head of school. The centres are used by one group of children. They follow more or less the same school calendar and the same school day as primary schools. Schools starts at 8.30 a.m. and finishes at 2.30 p.m. with a half-hour lunch break.

Classes or groups are organised by age. Three-year-olds are grouped in groups of fifteen and four year olds in groups of twenty.

The maximum number of pupils per adult is 15 three-year olds and 20 four-year olds. There are no regulations on the minimum number. Whenever an inclusive programme is followed and the child is not in need of continuous individual support, the number of children in class does not exceed 14 in Kinder 1 (3 year olds) and 18 in Kinder 2 (4 years old).

### 2.2 Programme of Activities

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Early education programmes are intended to minimise differences among children that result from different socio-economic backgrounds. The curriculum aims at the holistic development of children through various activities where play is the key pedagogical approach. More specifically it aims at the intellectual development of children by the development of:

- a positive attitude towards learning
- skills in the learning process
- logical thinking skills
- concepts and information leading to a greater awareness of the immediate world around them
- verbal communication and writing skills

The development of self-confidence and a positive attitude towards life are two areas of the children's socio-emotional development addressed by the curriculum.

## 2.3 Assessment

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Early assessment of children provides a clear picture of the level they have attained in their different levels of development. Currently, progress is not officially assessed. In a small number of schools one might find some kind of individual informal records of assessment. However, the National Minimum Curriculum envisages the implementation, over the coming years of formative assessment procedures. Assessment is used to provide feedback to teachers and parents. Pupils move automatically up to the next year. No official transition arrangements exist. These are left to the individual schools. Transition from kindergarten to primary is facilitated by the fact that kindergarten centres are attached to the primary school.

## 2. Teachers

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Teachers who teach at kindergarten level are called Kindergarten Assistants. Although there are no gender limitations, the post of Kindergarten Assistants attracts mainly females. Prior to employment kindergarten assistants have to be qualified in pre-primary education. This is a two-year full-time course leading to the Certificate in Early Childhood Education that is provided in a post-compulsory educational institution. Kindergarten assistants are civil servants and are mainly employed on a full-time basis, but there are also part-time and supply kindergarten assistants. Kindergarten Assistants are in possession of a temporary teaching warrant. They have to attend a statutory in service course every two years to update their professional base. Kindergarten Assistants are allocated by age group. Usually they alternate between the three- and four-year olds' groups every scholastic year. There are also Kindergarten Assistants who take care of children with special needs at kindergarten, primary and secondary level.

## 2. Statistics

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### School year 2002/03

Pupils	4,859
Staff <sup>(2)</sup> :	425
Kindergarten Centres:	66
Pupil/Teacher:	11.5

Source: Education Division Annual Report December 2002

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<sup>(2)</sup> The number of staff represents the number of kindergarten assistants actually in charge of groups. It does not include those who are in charge of individual children with special needs.

### 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND TRAINING (BASIC SCHOOL)

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The legal framework that governs education is embodied in the Education Act XXIV enacted in 1988. Since then it has been further amended to reflect the changes that have taken place in the field of Maltese education. Historically the first Compulsory Attendance Act was enacted in 1924. It made attendance compulsory up to twelve years for those children registered in government and private schools. The age was subsequently raised to 14 in 1928. This legislation served as the basis for full compulsory education enacted in 1946, making primary education compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen.

Ages Following the introduction of secondary education for all in 1970, the 1974 Education Act (Act XXXIX of 1974) raised school leaving age from fourteen to sixteen. The 1988 Education Act (Act XXIV of 1988) lowered the age of entry into primary education by one year, with compulsory education starting at age 5. The Act also gave the Minister of Education authority to establish a National Minimum Curriculum for all schools.

Education is compulsory for all children between the ages of five and sixteen. Compulsory education is sub-divided into a six-year primary cycle (5 to 10+ years) and five years of secondary education (11 to 16 years). Throughout the whole educational cycle the government is committed to a policy of inclusive education, where children with special needs are integrated into the mainstream. A statementing board evaluates each child with special needs and assigns him/her the necessary resources.

#### 3A Primary Education

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Although compulsory education is subdivided into two levels; primary and secondary, the curriculum bridges subsequent levels of education ensuring continuity and a smooth transition from one level to the other. Primary education builds on early childhood education and facilitates the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes in preparation for the secondary level.

The Primary education programme seeks to attain the following aims:

- Impart a repertoire of skills to enable pupils to explore and experiment with knowledge and to be able to communicate this knowledge by means of information technology.
- Strengthen the pupils' personal and social education
- Develop enhanced skills, knowledge and attitudes linked to the basic subjects learnt during primary education.;
- Develop bilingualism whereby equal importance is to be given to the learning of both Maltese and English.

Primary schools are co-educational. Education is free of charge and includes school transport and textbooks. The size of schools varies from those with a population (including kindergarten pupils) of less than two hundred and fifty (thirty-two per cent of schools) to larger schools with a population between 750 and 850 (1.3 % of schools). Most schools (33.8 %) have a population of between 250 and 350 pupils. All children of primary school age attend a primary school that is found in their locality.

The primary cycle where classes are called Years is broadly sub-divided for administrative purposes into two three-year cycles. However, from a curricular and hence pedagogical perspective the first cycle covers the first two years and the second cycle covers the remaining four years. During the first two years, education emphasises social skills, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, gradually progressing to more formal academic skills. All classes are of mixed ability.

Without shunning the natural development academic content is emphasised during the second cycle that covers Year Three, Four, Five, and Six. Progressively as children move towards the end of primary education the amount of academic content increases in preparation for the Junior Lyceum Examination (an eleven-plus type national examination).

Primary schools are classified into three types: Primary Schools A, B and C. Primary Schools A provide education for kindergarten and the first three years of primary education. Primary Schools B cater for children in the final three

years of primary education. Primary Schools C cover the whole primary cycle and kindergarten education. Primary schools A and B are usually situated in the larger towns. Primary schools C are found in the smaller localities.

The number of pupils in primary classes cannot exceed thirty. The number goes down to 26 whenever there is a child with special needs in the class.

The class teacher records attendance daily. Absences of less than three consecutive days have to be justified by means of a note from parents. Absences of three or more days have to be covered by a medical certificate. Court action may be initiated against defaulters. An educational welfare unit looks into cases of long absences from school. There are no formal links between schools and local communities. School councils can hire school premises for use after school hours or during weekends to sports clubs and community groups in the locality. The revenue generated goes into the School Council Fund which is used to finance school activities and the purchase of movable capital items. School refurbishment works are carried out by the Foundation For Tomorrow Schools.

### 3A.1 Organisation of the School

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Primary schools are used by one set of pupils. The school year starts on the last Monday of September and ends in the first week of July, with a fortnight vacation at Christmas and during Eastertide. There are also two three-day mid-term breaks, one in the first week of November and another coincides with carnival. The school week runs from Monday to Friday. School starts at 08.30hrs and ends at 14.30hrs with a half-hour break for lunch. In June schools work on a half-day timetable, starting at 08.00hrs and ending at 12.30hrs with a twenty-minute break.

In the first four years of primary education, children are grouped in classes strictly by age. In the last two years they are grouped according to results obtained in the national annual examinations.

Pupils in primary schools make use of textbooks that are given free. Textbooks are prescribed by head office after consultation with the teachers. Teachers may supplement the prescribed textbooks either by producing their own teaching materials or by asking pupils to purchase a particular text.

Each classroom in primary schools is equipped with four multimedia computers that are used as

a teaching tool by the teacher. Educational software has been developed for the particular needs of the Maltese system or purchased off the shelf. Each teacher is given a laptop by the Education Division to facilitate the learning process through IT. All primary schools have Internet access; teachers use this resource to develop research skills and to enhance the learning of foreign languages.

Each primary school has its own school library. This supplements the collection of books held in each classroom. Teachers produce and adapt their own teaching materials to meet the learning needs of their pupils.

### 3A.2 Curriculum

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The main objectives of the primary level curriculum are the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable children to further their formal education. Primary education can be subdivided into two phases. The first phase, consisting of the first two years can be regarded as a continuation of early childhood education and teachers are expected to adopt a pedagogy utilising concrete experiences. The second cycle spanning the last four years of primary education involves a process in which children are encouraged to develop a range of skills to be able to explore knowledge, experiment with it and communicate this knowledge using information technology. Besides, strengthening personal and social education, this phase of primary education develops skills, knowledge and attitudes in relation to the basic subjects. The basic subjects at primary level are: Maltese, English, Mathematics, Science, Technology Social Studies, Media Education, Religious Education, Physical Education and Sports, and the Creative Expression. A number of peripatetic teachers are responsible for a number of educational programmes within the primary curriculum. Peripatetic teachers are attached to a nucleus of schools and rotate among them to teach subjects like Art and Music as part of the creative expression programme. They also disseminate the content and the teaching/learning strategies required by the curriculum. At this level there are few, if any optional subjects and these are usually offered in non-state schools.

At primary level, the class teacher decides on the level at which to teach, within certain guidelines as to national standards and norms.

### 3A.3 Assessment/Certification

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Formative assessment is carried out during the first three years of primary education. During the remaining three years a combination of summative and formative assessment is used. A reform of assessment procedures envisages the introduction of portfolio assessment, whereby each pupil's formative and summative assessments together with examples of the child's work will be kept in a portfolio. The portfolio will accompany the pupil throughout the entire scholastic period.

The reform also proposes that during the fourth and fifth years, schools will be responsible for the summative assessments. The Education Division will set the final examination at the end of the third year of primary education as well as the end of Primary education. This would provide schools the possibility of comparing the achievement of their pupils with national and international norms.

All pupils normally take school examinations. The few exceptions of pupils exempted from taking examinations are usually children with special needs in the mainstream. At the same time, special arrangements are made in examinations for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

Schools are responsible for the assessment of their pupils but in state primary schools, the end-of-year examinations after the fourth, fifth and sixth year are currently set by the central authorities.

Admission from primary schools into the state Junior Lyceums (schools offering an extended course) and into some of the church secondary schools is controlled by a qualifying entrance examination.

At times marks are given out of a hundred. In others, Grades A to E are used and the examiners establish grade bounds.

Assessment results are used as follows:

- To give feedback to pupils and parents
- To feed forward information to the teacher
- At times to decide promotion to the next class or as an entry requirement into a special course
- At other times to rank pupils for streamed classes.

No certification attesting the completion of primary education is awarded to pupils at the end of their primary education.

### 3A.4 Progression/Guidance/Transition Arrangements

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During the first three years of primary education no examinations are held and pupils move up to the next class automatically. Subsequently from the fourth year onwards pupils sit for an annual examination.

Schools have different forms of remediation but in the higher years in primary school, unsuccessful pupils may be made to repeat a year. There is also an intervention programme called complementary education. The programme focuses on those children who have fallen behind in the class literacy and numeracy programmes. The service currently covers the first four years of primary education. In some schools the service has been extended across the whole primary cycle. Pupils are helped to acquire the skills to be able to follow the class programmes.

In primary schools the head of school is a focal reference point for parents and pupils. Heads of School are available to discuss with parents and pupils any educational aspect requiring guidance. However, this is supplemented by the services of guidance teachers and counsellors. In primary schools, guidance and counselling services are provided by means of peripatetic guidance teachers and counsellors. Each is assigned to a group of school that are visited on a rotational basis. The service is offered to both pupils and parents. A central unit also provides these services. Guidance teachers assist pupils in their final year of primary education in choosing the optional subjects that they would eventually learn once they start their secondary education. Parents can also discuss their child's options with the guidance teachers. Secondary schools organise school visits, open days and talks for prospective pupils and their parents. During the first few weeks in their new secondary school, pupils are assisted by guidance teachers and form teachers to familiarize themselves with the school's rules, facilities, and organisation.

### 3A.5 Teachers

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There are two types of teaching grades teaching within schools, teachers, and instructors. Teachers/Instructors in primary schools are allocated by class. Initial teacher training up to 1978 was carried out in Teacher Training Colleges; subsequently teacher education was upgraded to a University course. The Faculty of

Education confers a degree in education at bachelor's level, B.Educ. (Hons.). The faculty also organises a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for those students from other faculties who want to take up teaching. The Bachelor's course is of four years duration whilst the post-graduate certificate course lasts one year. Both courses include teaching practice attachments in schools. The faculty provides postgraduate degrees at both masters and doctorate levels. Teachers may either specialise in teaching at primary education by having followed an early and middle years specialisation (EMY) or they may specialise in a particular subject.

Instructors were first employed to teach trade subjects in trade schools. Instructors were technical people from industry who followed a one-year in-service course in pedagogy, organised by the Education Division. Subsequently, due to a teacher shortage, individuals with an advanced level of education were recruited in the Instructor grade to teach also academic subjects. Similarly these instructors attended a one-year in-service course in pedagogy to attain permanent employment. The supply of teachers graduating from University is now meeting demand, the Education Division has stopped the recruitment of Instructors, and it will only resort to the employment of Instructors in exceptional cases. Personnel in charge of children with special needs in the mainstream are called facilitators. These follow a two-year university course leading to a diploma.

All teachers are permanent public service employees and thus fall under the public service regulations. Supply teachers may be employed on a temporary basis to fill in for permanent employees who are on extended absences. As part of the collective agreement between the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) and the government reached in 1994, all teachers had a statutory obligation to attend an in-service course of at least three days duration every two years. In 2001 in agreement with the teachers' union, teachers have to attend an in-service course annually. In-service courses are held during the first week of July and in the third week of September prior to the commencement of the scholastic year.

### 3B Compulsory Secondary Education

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Secondary education for all was introduced in 1970, prior to this only about twenty-five per

cent of the age cohort proceeded with secondary education after passing an eleven-plus examination. Secondary education was provided in either grammar type secondary schools or secondary technical schools that to all intents and purposes had become grammar schools with a technical bias. With the introduction of secondary education for all, those pupils who were not successful in passing the eleven-plus examination proceeded to the new General Secondary Schools.

A further development occurred in 1971 when comprehensive education was introduced, and pupils from feeder primary schools in a surrounding area moved to an area secondary school, in proximity to the localities. In 1981, secondary education reverted to a selective system, with the setting up of Junior Lyceums which were originally meant to cater for children of high academic ability. Entry into these schools is by means of the Junior Lyceum Examination, similar to the eleven-plus examination. Pupils are examined in Maltese, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Religious Knowledge. Children may be exempted from sitting for Religious Knowledge if parents object on grounds of conscience. Those who fail the examination are admitted to Area Secondary Schools.

Alongside these two types of schools a third type was opened in 1984 to cater for low performing pupils. These were originally called Opportunity Centres and took students whose levels of performance after six years of primary education were considered still very low. The name was subsequently changed to Boys' Schools and Girls' Schools.

October 2001 marked the closure of trade schools. These schools had provided secondary vocational education since 1974. Their closure was part of the reform of technical and vocational education. The reform also included the opening of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the introduction of technology education in the curriculum of the lower secondary general education.

Admission into the state Junior Lyceums (schools offering an extended course) and into some of the church schools is controlled by a qualifying entrance examination. In the other schools, pupils move automatically to the following level. The age group of children attending secondary level schools is between eleven and sixteen years.

All schools at secondary level are single-sex.

Education at this level is free

Schools vary in size. The majority of schools (64 %) have a population of less than

550 students. The largest schools are Junior Lyceums for girls, with populations of around 1,100.

### 3B.1 Organisation of the School

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Schools buildings are used by one set of pupils per day. The school calendar follows that of the primary schools. There is no fixed time when school starts. This depends on the individual schools, but generally school day starts between 08.00hrs and 08.30hrs in winter and ends between 14.30hrs and 15.00hrs. In summer the school day starts earlier than winter and ends between 12.15hrs and 12.45hrs. The timetable in area secondary schools is spread over thirty-five periods (lessons), i.e. seven periods daily of three-quarters of an hour duration. In Junior Lyceums, the weekly timetable consists of thirty-seven lessons of equal duration as those in area secondary schools. Subject specialists teach students at secondary level. In Boys' and Girls' Schools (schools for low performing pupils), one teacher, teaches the core subjects on the same pattern of primary education. Subject specialists teach other subjects.

Year groups during the secondary cycle are called Forms, so the first year of secondary education would be Form I, the second year Form II and so on. During the first two years of secondary education in Junior Lyceums, students are grouped into classes on the basis of the language option chosen and on the grades acquired in the Junior Lyceum entrance examination. Beyond Form II, students are classified and grouped on the basis of the subject options chosen. In area secondary schools the students are grouped mainly on the basis of the language option and on the examination marks obtained at the end of the primary cycle.

The number of students per class is regulated by agreements between the government and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT), the largest union representing teaching grades. During the first two years of secondary education the number of students per class cannot exceed thirty. In the last three years of secondary education, the class size cannot exceed twenty-five students. During practical lessons the number cannot exceed sixteen students. In Boys'/Girls' schools the stipulated maximum number of pupils per class is 15.

All textbooks used by students in the secondary level are free of charge. They are given to students at the beginning of the year and returned to the school at the end of the

scholastic year. Teaching materials prepared by schools supplement the textbooks. Textbooks used are purchased centrally to exploit economies of scale; choice of textbooks is made in consultation with all teachers involved. Free school transport is provided to students living beyond 1.6Km of the school. Free school transport is also provided to pupils attending primary education.

### 3B.2 Curriculum

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The core subjects at general secondary level are: Maltese, English, Mathematics, Co-ordinated Science, Environmental Studies (Geography, History, and Social Studies), a second modern Language (one of Arabic, French, German, Italian, Spanish) Religious Education, Physical Education and Sport, the Expressive Arts Technology and Design, ICT and Personal and Social Development (PSD). At this level a range of optional subjects is offered at both state and private schools and this range includes, among other subjects: a number of modern foreign languages, Chemistry, Biology, Commercial Subjects, Technology, Computer Studies, Physical Education and European Studies.

At secondary level, the state school system has a tripartite system that includes courses at three levels: one for the most able, i.e. students enrolled in the Junior Lyceums, one for those of average ability, these are students who attend in area secondary schools and one for the under performers, students attending Boys'/Girls' Schools.

At transition periods schools offer guidance to their pupils through their established guidance programme.

Effort is being made to increase differentiated teaching; learning-by-doing and autonomous learning at all levels

### 3B.3 Assessment/Certification

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Teacher assessment is carried out throughout the year in secondary schools. Students are also assessed through a formal examination twice a year.

The results of assessment carried out during the year are taken into account in end-of-year assessments.

All pupils normally take school examinations. The few exceptions of pupils exempted from taking examinations are usually children with special needs in the mainstream. At the same time, special arrangements are made in examinations for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

Schools are responsible for the assessment of their pupils but in state schools, the central authorities set the end-of-year examinations throughout the five years of secondary education.

At times marks are given out of a hundred. In others, Grades A to E are used and the examiners establish grade bounds.

Assessment results are used as follows:

- To give feedback to pupils and parents
- To feed forward information to the teacher
- At times to decide promotion to the next class or as an entry requirement into a special course
- At other times to rank pupils for streamed classes.

The final examination that students take at their school at the end of the secondary school course, entitles them to a leaving certificate but this has limited currency. The certification required by secondary school-leavers, to entitle them to higher education is obtained through an external examination set by an external examination board.

### 3B.4 Progression/Guidance/Transition Arrangements

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In secondary schools students sit for their annual exam, unsuccessful pupils may be made to repeat a year. Schools have different forms of remediation.

There are no formal arrangements for transition periods between the different levels of education. The different schools take initiatives individually. During the first few weeks in their new secondary school pupils are helped by guidance teachers and form teachers to familiarize themselves with the school's facilities, rules and organisation. Similarly, when pupils are in their final year of lower secondary education, each school provides services to facilitate the transition to upper secondary education. These include educational and career guidance, visits to upper secondary institutions, and seminars. The central Guidance and Counselling Unit holds an annual Careers

Convention, where pupils and parents can get information about career and job opportunities as well as opportunities for further study. During their second year in secondary education, pupils attending the Junior Lyceums make a choice of two subjects to continue studying during the final three years of lower secondary education. Those attending Area Secondary Schools make this choice during the third year and choose one subject instead of two. Guidance teachers facilitate this decision-making process by organising talks to parents and pupils and also through one-to-one personal guidance.

Those students who do not obtain the entry requirements necessary to proceed with their post-compulsory secondary education can follow a revision course in the subject/subjects required. This course is provided both during school hours at the Higher Secondary School and after school hours in evening classes centres.

Guidance teachers and counsellors provide educational and vocational guidance and counselling services in all secondary and post-secondary institutions. Teachers are assigned to guidance duties in a particular school after an annual call for applications. Guidance teachers only teach half the normal teaching load, while the rest of the timetable is devoted to guidance duties. Guidance teachers are generally in possession of a recognised qualification in educational guidance and counselling. Counsellors and guidance teachers in liaison with class teachers, follow each student through her/his secondary education. They help students surmount difficulties in their personal and social development as well as in their educational career. The service is co-ordinated and monitored by the Guidance and Counselling Services Unit.

### 3B.5 Teachers

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See 3A.4

### 3.6 Statistics

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State Sector	Schools	Students	Teaching Staff
Primary	77	19,928	1,236
Junior Lyceums	11	9,468	
Secondary Schools	25	9,386	2,162

Teaching staff includes also school administrators

	Student/ Teacher Ratio	Student/Class Ratio
Primary	20:1	22:1
Secondary General Education	9:1	22:1

(Source: Department of Operations, Annual Report, Dec. 2002)

Note: There were also 556 teaching personnel assigned to children with special needs in mainstream schools (inclusive education). These were not included in the calculation of pupil/student:teacher ratio.

Data for Secondary schools includes also Boys' and Girls' Schools

## 4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Post-compulsory education in Malta is referred to as post-secondary education and is defined as non-university education for students who have completed eleven years of compulsory schooling at age 16. This level of education is provided in both state and private institutions offering courses at ISCED levels 3 and 4. The Education Act, (Act XXIV1988) defines the general aims of post-secondary education as a process intended to initiate students to specialization while highlighting all along the open-ended prospects of life long education. An implied function of post-secondary education is to increase the percentage of citizens who are adequately qualified to perform a particular service in working life.

The main aims and objectives of the Maltese educational system are laid down in the Constitution and in the Education Act 1988 (Act XXIV of 1988)

These are:

- Contributing to the education of the 'whole' person;
- Helping to make students more community oriented through the promotion of dialogue, a group approach, a caring attitude towards others and the work ethic;
- Giving students a broader-based education in order to help promote a greater flexibility in their adapting and contributing to changing patterns of employment;
- Enlarging the students' outlook by encouraging them to reflect maturely on the specific learning derived from their chosen courses and helping them to relate it to other fields of knowledge within a broad social and cultural framework;
- Preparing students for effective democratic living by promoting critical skills, including the ability to sift through information in what is essentially an informative age;
- Enabling students to become self-directed learners, capable of taking charge of their own learning at different stages of their life.

The general outcome of the above aims and objectives as in the Education Act is to contribute to the proper development of the community as a whole. This is achieved by enhancing the following values and attitudes of the community namely:

- Moral values;
- Effective communication;
- Application of numeracy;
- Analytic and critical skills;
- Understanding of work and the world;
- Personal; interpersonal and participatory skills; Positive attitudes to change;
- A general historical perspective;
- A good and wise use of leisure time.

Post-compulsory education is provided free of charge for all full-time courses to students up to the age of thirty. Students also receive a maintenance grant. The Students Maintenance Grants Board manages the grant schemes. Further and adult evening education courses are against a nominal fee. Links between educational institutions and local industry are encouraged. The main feature of education business links is the work experience for students (vide apprenticeships), intended to motivate young people and improve their core skill. The second aspect is teacher placement in industry, intended to enhance teachers understanding of business, leading to a more relevant curriculum and better-prepared students. Education-business Partnerships include the education authorities, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), employers, Federation of Industry (FOI), Chamber of Commerce and Trade Unions. Governing bodies of vocational institutions usually have representatives from ETC, FOI, Chamber of Commerce and Trade Unions (vide MCAST).

### 4.1 Organization

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State post-compulsory educational institutions include the Higher Secondary School and a small number of pre-vocational/vocational schools, the Junior College and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). The Higher Secondary School and the pre-vocational/vocational schools fall under the responsibility of the Education Division. The other institutions are autonomous bodies, all of which however fall within the portfolio of the

Minister of Education. The Institute of Tourism Studies another state post-compulsory institution falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism. These institutions are completely funded by government. In the private sector, a small number of secondary schools have a sixth form where students can follow the two-year general upper secondary education course. The pre-vocational and vocational schools will be completely phased out by the end of the current school year (2002/03), their function being taken over by MCAST.

General upper secondary courses are generally provided on a full-time basis only. Provision of vocational upper secondary and post-secondary takes a variety of formats ranging from full-time to evening courses. To follow a general type of education students enter either a sixth form in a private school, the Junior College or the Higher Secondary School. Here students follow a two-year course in preparation for the Matriculation Certificate examination an entry requirement to tertiary education. The Higher Secondary School also provides short revision courses leading to the SEC for students who do not have all the entry requirements to continue with their post-compulsory education. Post-compulsory vocational courses provide an alternative educational pathway to students completing their compulsory education. Entry requirements and duration depend on the course opted for. The Secondary School Leaving Certificate is the minimum qualification required for foundation vocational courses. Some courses may also require and give due consideration to Accreditation to Prior Learning (APL) as well as Accreditation to Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

The academic year runs from September to July with breaks at Christmas, Easter and during the summer. During the holidays institutions may offer ad hoc and short courses.

## 4.2 Curriculum

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The curriculum of further education institutions reflects the pedagogical orientation of the courses provided. General education courses prepare students for the Matriculation examination (MATSEC), an entry requirement to University and other higher education institutions. This is the main external examination offered in schools at general post-compulsory level. The MATSEC is based on the Baccalaureate model, subscribing to the concept that students would be better prepared academically if their studies covered both the humanities and the sciences. To ensure that

students' choice of subjects cover both areas of knowledge, subjects are divided into four groups and students have to choose one subject from each of Groups 1, 2, and 3 and any other two subjects from any of the subject groupings. In addition students study Systems of Knowledge – a cross-curricular subject that bridges the artistic and scientific worlds of learning. A pass in the subject is obligatory in order to be awarded the certificate.

A wide range of vocational courses at different levels is provided mainly at MCAST. The courses are meant to meet the different attitudes and abilities of current and prospective students. The courses cover the following vocational area:

- Art and design,
- Business,
- Accounting,
- Building and construction,
- Engineering,
- Health and social Care,
- Hospitality and catering,
- Information & communication technology, Hairdressing and beauty therapy,
- Agriculture,
- Childcare,
- Maritime studies.

Young people who continue with their studies beyond compulsory school age in the field of vocational education benefit from a comprehensive preparation for employment as well as opportunities to higher-level qualifications. Vocational education is based on the dual system of studying and job placement to practice what is learnt at college. This system extends from block release to 2-day per week at the work place and 3-day per week at the educational institution. In all courses ICT is used to facilitate learning and teaching. Vocational courses have been re-organised so that students can achieve different levels within the EU framework of vocational qualifications.

## 4.3 Assessment/Certification

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Assessment in post-compulsory institutions is carried out on a continuous basis. In addition there are also two school-based exams annually. The latter carry a higher weighting in the overall annual assessment. Assessment is carried out by teachers or by externally appointed examination boards. Examinations

leading to a certificate or a diploma mainly cover a cluster of subjects but single-subject examinations are also possible. Examinations are compulsory.

Apprentices' schemes are assessed by externally appointed 'Trade Testing Boards'. Members on these boards are chosen from the ETC and from industry. These boards award the State's Journeyman Certificate to those students completing successfully one of the apprenticeship schemes.

Students may also sit for examinations organised by the University of Malta, UK universities, and UK awarding bodies such as Edexcel, City and Guilds of London Institute, Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), Chartered Institute of Bankers, and Chartered Insurance Institute (CII)

#### 4.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

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Students progress to post-compulsory education on the basis of their performance in the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination or equivalent. Progression through post-compulsory courses depends on the course, but usually includes elements of both continuous assessment and summative examinations. Vocational courses are modelled on European vocational levels and students can move from one vocational level to another.

Students may continue their studies at University after successfully completing this level of education. The Matriculation certificate or an equivalent qualification is the main entry requirement into University. Each post-compulsory institution has its information and careers guidance service. There are also counselling services. Services offered include personal guidance and counselling, orientation visits to industry and university, talks and seminars to students and parents. Web-based services are also available.

#### 4.5 Teachers

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With the setting up of colleges and institutes as autonomous bodies the recruitment of teacher has shifted from the central agency to the individual institutions. In those schools that are still under the responsibility of the Education

Division, teachers are recruited centrally and deployed to the different schools and institutes. In terms of Article 9 of the Education Act all teaching staff require a Teaching Warrant. To qualify for a Permanent Warrant a teacher must have one of the following qualifications:

- Teachers' Certificate
- Bachelor's Degree in Education
- Bachelor's Degree in the subject taught as well as a post-graduate certificate in education
- A Master's degree
- A Doctorate

Teaching staff not having the above qualifications may be granted a temporary teaching warrant, which is renewable annually. One way to ensure that teaching staff in the vocational spheres is up-to-date with developments in their field is the tendency to employ staff (e.g. engineers) from industry on a part-time basis. All teaching staff regularly attends in-service training.

#### 4.6 Statistics

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The basic indicators for October 2002 for post-compulsory education excluding the University are as follows:

The student/teacher ratio is approximately 12 students for every teacher (12:1).

The student/class ratio is approximately 24 students per class (24:1).

Sixty-two percent (62%) of the 16 years age cohort is in post-compulsory courses. For 17 year olds the percentage of the age cohort in post-compulsory education drops to 57.2%.

The preferred options taken by students in the vocational and general courses as a percentage of the total student population is given in the table below:

Subject	Classification	%
Information Communication Technology, Electrical, Electronics, Mechanical	Engineering Level	9%
Business and Commerce	Business	7%
Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, Caring, Preschool Education (Kindergarten)	Caring Profession	4%
Electrical, Electronics, Mechanical	Craft level	19%
SEC and MATSEC	Academic	58%
Nautical Studies, Art, Agriculture	Other	3%

Both state and non-state institutions were considered for the above table.

Altogether 16 institutions provide post-compulsory education (ISECD 3 and 4), MCAST being considered as one institution.

A total of 179 different courses are on offer. Lecturing staff amounts to 741, while the student population is 9,276.

All the above data has been quoted for the month of October 2002 from the Statistics records of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education, Ministry of Education.

## 4A General Post-Compulsory Secondary Education

### The Junior College

The major institution providing general post-compulsory education is the Junior College. There are also two schools under the responsibility of the Education Division that provide general post-compulsory education. Within the non-state sector a number of schools having sixth form classes also provide this type of education. The curricular and educational experience provided by these institutions follows more or less the same pattern as that provided by the Junior College. The Junior College is part of the University of Malta and provides a holistic education to students seeking entry to the University of Malta by preparing them to develop those attributes, needed for tertiary level of studies. The College offers a two-year course that aims at widening the general education of each student through the study of subjects at advanced level and three subjects at intermediate level and Systems of Knowledge.

The College further aims at developing in young men and women, in their formative years, autonomous abilities of learning and of choosing and experimenting so as to be able to participate consciously and whole heartedly in the democratic life of the nation.

The Principal of the College is responsible for the day-to-day management of the College. There is a Governing Board that is composed of the following members:

- The Rector of the University
- Principal of the College
- The vice-principal
- Five area co-ordinators
- Two members representing the academic staff
- Two members representing the students
- Two members appointed by the Minister of Education
- Three members appointed by the Senate of the University
- The head of the Academic Division, MATSEC Board.

The College is coeducational and covers the 16 to 18 age groups. The student population of the college during the academic year 2002/03 stands at about 2,792. Students attending the College receive a monthly stipend. Attendance is not compulsory, but students who are regularly absent have their stipend deducted. Absences for one day may be justified by a note from the parents. Absences for two or more days need to be covered by a medical certificate.

Students enrolling in the College must have six passes in the Secondary Education Certificate Examination at Grade 5 or better. These subjects must include: Maltese, English, Mathematics, Physics, or Chemistry or Biology, and any other two subjects.

### 4A.1 Organisation of the school

The College building is used by all the student body between 8.00am through 4.30pm Monday through Friday. The academic year follows that of University. Classes are organised by subjects chosen by students and level (Intermediate or Advanced). Students are arranged in groups that range between twenty and fifty students per group. A variety of teaching methods are used including; lectures, seminars and tutorials. The College has

freedom of choice, within the framework of the MATSEC syllabus, regarding teaching materials. Besides textbooks and reference books, students make use also of ICT facilities. Students purchase their own textbooks that are prescribed by their lecturers.

## 4A.2 Curriculum

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The Junior College follows the regulations set up by the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations board and it prepares students to sit for the MATSEC certificate for entry to University. Students choose an area of study that corresponds to the Matriculation Certificate Examination groups:

Group 1: Maltese, Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Russian, and Spanish.

Group 2: Accounting, Economics, Geography, History, Marketing, Philosophy, Religious Knowledge, and Sociology.

Group 3: Applied Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, and Pure Mathematics.

Group 4: Art Computing, Engineering Drawing, Graphical Communication, Home Economics, and Human Ecology, Information Technology, Music.

Systems of Knowledge at Intermediate level – Compulsory Subject.

Students choose one subject from each of Groups 1,2, and 3 and two other subjects chosen from any of the four groups. No subject may be offered at both advanced and intermediate levels.

Each student is expected to attend classes in two subjects at advanced level and three subjects at intermediate level, together with Systems of Knowledge. Three one-hour lectures per week are allocated to each subject at advanced level. Two one-hour lectures are allocated for each subject at intermediate level. Teaching strategies include seminars, lectures, discussions, practical sessions and projects.

## 4A.3 Assessment/Certification

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Each of the subjects taken at Advanced and Intermediate Levels has three assessments throughout the academic year. These three

assessments altogether make up 30 % of the total score. The remaining 70 % of the total is allotted in the end-of-year test.

In the case of Systems of Knowledge the assessments marks are replaced by the Aesthetics Project mark that carries a maximum of 25 % of the final mark. This is added to the end-of-year test mark, which carries the remaining maximum of 75 %.

In order to proceed to the second year, a first-year student must obtain at least 45 % in each of the two Advanced level subjects and at least 35 % in each of the three Intermediate level subjects and Systems of Knowledge. However, a global mark of 150 in the three subjects at Intermediate level and Systems of Knowledge must be obtained.

A maximum of 10 marks may be added to this global mark, if required, in the case of students participating in Cultural and Health Promoting Programmes organised or approved by the College authorities, as well as activities organised by the Guidance and Counselling Unit. This concession does not apply in the case of students who fail in more than two subjects.

Attendance at lectures, practicals, seminars and tutorials throughout the year will be taken into consideration.

Students are to hand in work assigned to them regularly and within the stipulated time. Repeated failure to do so will disqualify students from sitting for any College test.

## 4A.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

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Students may be allowed to resit a maximum of two subjects only. Resits start in the first week of September.

At the end of the two-year course students sit for the MATSEC examination. There are no special remedial classes. Unsuccessful students may repeat either the first year or the second year. They are only allowed to repeat once during the course.

Students at the Junior College benefit from the services of qualified counsellors in three main areas:

- Personal counselling,
- Educational guidance and counselling
- Vocational guidance.

Guidance teachers also provide a service to students when deciding on the choice of subjects to study. This service is provided prior to enrolment.

Day seminars are held to help students develop a positive self-image and to know each other. Through individual counselling students are encouraged to improve their study habits and their time and stress management skills. To help students orient themselves to a future career, the counsellors invite guest speakers from various sectors of the economy and organise orientation visits to places of work.

There are no transition arrangements within the course. However, first year students have up to the end of the first month at the College to review their choice of subjects. After the first term students cannot change their choice of subjects.

#### 4A.5 Teachers

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Teachers at the College are called lecturers and assistant lecturers. They are appointed either on a full-time or part-time basis and can be permanent or part-time employment according to the needs of the area. Lecturers must be in possession of a qualification at doctorate level. Assistant lecturers are qualified at masters level. Teachers are allocated by subject and level. They are subject specialists and have to complete their professional training. The lecturers are employees of the University and do not fall under the provision of civil service regulations. Teachers at the Junior College do not have to attend in-service training. They are however encouraged to continue with their post-graduate studies and research.

#### 4A.6 Statistics

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##### Junior College

Students	2,792
Staff	184 Full-time
	50 part-time

Percentage of students who were successful in MATSEC Examination in June 2002:	57%
Number of Students Accepted by University as Undergraduates in 2002	617 representing 57 % of 1,087 students who were registered as second year students in 2002

#### Percentage of Pupils by Options

In October 2002, there were about 165 different subject combinations at Advanced level taken up by students. The most popular combination of subjects at advanced level was Physics and Pure Mathematics which was chosen by 464 students (17%), followed by Biology and Chemistry, chosen by 293 students (11%) and Accounting and Economics, chosen by 204 students, (9%) out of 2,792 students.

(Source: Junior College, 2002/03)

## 4B Technical/Vocational Post-compulsory Secondary Education

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The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), which falls under the Ministry of Education, provides technical/vocational post-compulsory secondary education.

### 4B.1 Organisation of the School

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MCAST admitted its first students in September 2001. Its mission is to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy.

The College was formed by the bringing together of a number of mono-technic institutes and the creation of new ones. Its aim was to bring together the diverse and disparate institutes of vocational education and training into one comprehensive integrated organisation that would meet the present and future vocational education and training needs of Malta and Gozo.

When established in 2001, MCAST was made up of six Institutes viz.:

- Institute of Business and Commerce
- Institute of Maritime Studies
- Institute of Buildings and Construction Engineering
- Institute of Information and Communication Technology
- Institute of Art and Design

In 2003, three more Institutes (Community Services, Mechanical Engineering and Agribusiness) will be incorporated into the

College. This will mean that with the exception of the Institute of Tourism Studies, all post-secondary vocational education and training will be organised within one College. A centre in Gozo has also been opened.

MCAST is responsible to the Minister of Education and its funding is mainly derived from this source. However, it is intended that the College should operate a more of an arm's length from direct ministerial control and direction. A governing body is responsible for setting the overall strategy and development of the College, approving and monitoring expenditure and for its general governance. A President of the College chairs the governors. The majority of members of the governing body are drawn from the world of industry, business and commerce other members represent the Minister of Education; staff and students. Each Institute has its own Board of Studies with the majority of members drawn from the various industries, professions, etc associated with the programmes in the Institute.

Council of Institutes brings together the Principal and the various Directors of Institutes to determine academic policy and major operational matters. The Principal is the Chief Executive and is assisted by a variety of corporate staff including Director of Administration, Financial Controller, Personnel Officer, etc.

Students attending the College on a full-time basis usually study for approximately 30 hours per week including extra-curricular activities and any additional support required. Apprentices usually attend College on a full-time basis during the first year and then two to three days at College and two to three days at the work place during subsequent years. Apprentices receive a stipend as well as an additional payment made by the sponsor for their work placement. Students who are not on an apprenticeship scheme receive only the stipend.

## 4B.2 Curriculum

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The majority of programmes offered by the Institutes are either attended by students on a full-time basis or by apprentices who combine college-based activities with work experience with an appropriate employer (sponsor).

Programmes are offered at all levels from pre-foundation (level 0) to Higher National Diploma (level 4) and cover most vocational areas. Courses vary in duration according to the level and whether it is part of the apprenticeship scheme.

In addition to providing tuition for vocational training, support is also given to those students who have basic skills, weaknesses or which have learning difficulties or disabilities. The College also offers a wide variety of part-time courses during the day and evening and these mainly attract adult students. In 2003, two thousand students were registered in part-time programmes at the College.

## 4B.3 Assessment/Certification

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Courses lead to appropriate certification, which, is either college-based or through an external examination body.

The full array of assessment methods is used including written examinations, course work and portfolios. Apprentices who complete their programmes successfully are awarded a Journeyman's Certificate. Achievement at one level can lead to progression to a higher-level programme.

## 4B.4 Progression/Guidance/Transition Arrangements

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The College has an Information and Support Service that provides information and guidance to potential students especially those in their last year in compulsory education. There is also a counselling service for those students that may have personal difficulties or problems.

## 4B.5 Teachers

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The College employs 230 FTE teachers. Although some of the teachers will be progressively trained, many will have entered education and training with a business or industrial background. The College will be delivering a variety of in-service training courses for staff to gain professional qualifications and investment in staff development is a priority for the College.

## 4B.6 Statistics

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### Number of full-time apprentices registered at MCAST by Institute

Institute	October 2001	October 2002
Electronic Engineering	251	348
Building & Construction Engineering	342	408
Information and Communications Technology	210	400
Business and Commerce	617	689
Art and Design	202	208
Maritime	18	18
Total	1,640	2,071

(Source: MCAST)

## 4BI Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)

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The ITS is an institute of further education funded entirely by the government. It prepares students for the hospitality and tourism industry, which maintains close links with the Institute. The hospitality and tourism industry provides work placements for the students and representatives of the sector sit on the Board of Governors of the Institute. Tuition is free for Maltese nationals. One of the current programmes of study (Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management) enables graduates to join a degree course in tourism offered by the University of Malta. Foreign universities and Hotel Schools accredit programmes of study organised by the institute. The Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) also accredit the Institute.

Attendance is compulsory for all students enrolled at the Institute, since students must achieve a minimum of 80% attendance during their course of study. Attendance is also linked to the payment of stipends to students. As a result, levels of attendance are generally high. Tuition is co-educational and the students must be sixteen years prior to enrolment. There is no

maximum age limit for enrolment; mature students are allowed to join courses. The vast majority of students are within the 17 to 21-age bracket.

Entry requirements vary according to the course applied for. Students are required to have a minimum number of Accreditation to Prior Learning (APL) credit points prior to selection. Accreditation to Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is also taken into account.

## 4BI.1 Organisation

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The ITS runs a modular system. The Institute has a satellite campus in Gozo that offers a number of courses in Technical Professional Studies. The Institute also holds ad hoc courses organised for the industry by the Ministry of Tourism in conjunction with the Institute.

The academic year consists of two semesters of a 14-week duration, with examination and administration weeks comprising a further three weeks between the first and second semesters. Courses generally run during the daytime but modules may also run in the evenings for both full-time and part-time students. Classes are organised by subject module and include lectures, tutorials and laboratory events (e.g. kitchen, restaurant, etc.).

Teaching materials include the use of audio-visual aids, textbooks and educational software. Reading lists are provided for individual modules. The Institute has its own full library facilities.

## 4BI.2 Curriculum

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The ITS offers full-time programmes at both certificate and diploma level. Courses are generally of two years duration except for the higher diploma course, which runs over four years, including a one year international internship. The certificate courses require a minimum of 57 academic credits and 3 credits awarded for successful completion of a local industrial placement. Modules in Foundation Level Studies (FLS) and Humanities Level Studies (HLS) are of 45-hour duration and award 3 credits. Modules in Technical Level Studies (TLS), which are unique to every programme of study, award the same number of credits, but vary in length according to the practical element.

Compulsory modules include all TLS module, a number of FLS and HLS modules. The system allows a student to select a number of elective modules, which must include a number of recommended modules.

TLS cover theory and practical work and differ according to the course being followed. Programmes of study share a number of modules in FLS and HLS. Subjects are generally taught at the same level, however the modular system allows the Institute to offer modules at different levels.

The ITS also offers craft and technical programmes of study in food and beverage and accommodation services at three levels. Foundation level 1 programmes offer multiple skills training as a general introduction to hotel and catering industry. Level 2 and 3 programmes enable successful students to progress to specialist programmes in food preparation, food and beverage service or accommodation service, at intermediate and advanced level. All programmes give students the opportunity to gain a City and Guilds qualification in their specialist area.

The aim of these programmes of study is for students to gain a vocational qualification in food preparation and service or food and beverage and accommodation service. They are designed to equip students with multiple skills for entry into the hospitality and catering industry. These courses will help to develop social skills and personal qualities for all aspects of a successful working life.

These courses may lead to a career at trainee or operative level moving up to supervisory level.

### 4BI.3 Assessment/Certification

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Students are assessed by a variety of assessment methods, case studies, projects, written assignments, oral and written examinations as well as continuous assessment of practical work. Each module is individually assessed and the final module result is used to compute awards.

Students are required to complete all assessment requirements of a module and therefore must sit for an examination in a module, if this forms part of its assessment. Examinations are linked to an individual module. Module lecturers are responsible for the assessment of students. An external examiner vets the results.

The grading system used is the hundred-point scale, with fifty percent being the minimum

acceptable grade. The result obtained at the end of each module is used to compute the final grade awarded at the end of the course of study. The final award is graded as either pass, merit or distinction.

### 4BI.4 Progression/Guidance/Transition Arrangements

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Students may continue from one semester to another provided that they have completed any pre-requisite modules.

Students are allowed to retake assessments if they have not achieved the required standard. A student failing a module is required to repeat that module in a subsequent semester.

The Institute provides counselling services to students throughout their course of study. This is especially evident during the registration phase and selection of elective modules.

A compulsory life skills module on the commencement of the certificate programme assists students' integration into post-compulsory education.

### 4BI.5 Teachers

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Module lecturers are assigned to modules depending on their teaching skills. A number of lecturers are employed from the hospitality and tourism industry and take part in an in-house staff development programme. The University of Malta, at the request of the Institute ran a Teaching Certificate programme for assistant lecturers and instructors. During the current school year, the Institute intends to offer the same course to newly recruited academic staff. Academic personnel are generally subject specialists and the majority are employed on a full-time basis, with a number of specialist staff employed on a part-time basis.

## 4BI.6 Statistics

### Students

Male	Female	Total
431	256	687

On average a module group does not exceed 18 students, with one lecturer per class event.

### Course Options

Course Title	Percentage
Higher Diploma in Hotel Management	9.02%
Diploma in Hotel Operations	1.6%
Certificate in Hotel Operations	6.84%
Diploma in Accommodation Operations	3.06%
Accommodation Operations	11.21%
Accommodation Operations & Supervisory Studies	0.29%
Diploma in Food Preparation & Production	4.51%
Food Preparation & Production	6.84%
Food Preparation & Service (Foundation)	10.48%
Food Preparation & Service (Intermediate)	5.53%
Food Preparation & Production and Supervisory Studies	7.42%
Diploma in Food & Beverage Service	1.31%
Food and Beverage Service & Supervisory Studies	0.87%
Food and Beverage Service Level 2	2.62%
Hotel Services (Foundation)	1.31%
Hotel Services (Intermediate)	0.015%
Diploma in Sports, Leisure & Recreation	0.58%
Certificate in Sports, Leisure & Recreation	1.31%
Tour Guiding	2.33%
Travel Agency Operations	2.47%
Extended Skills Training Scheme – FPS (Malta)	15.28%
Extended Skills Training Scheme – Hotel services	0.58%
Extended Skills Training Scheme – FPS (Gozo)	4.37%
	100%

(Source: Institute of Tourism Studies, 2002/03)

## 4C Post-Secondary Education

Post compulsory educational institutions provide courses at both ISCED 3 and 4 levels. Please refer to above.

## 5. INITIAL/VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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Students following technical/vocational post-compulsory secondary education are eligible to enrol in apprenticeship schemes. These schemes are the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and the Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS).

### 5.1 Organisation

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The legal framework regulating 'Initial vocational education and training' is primarily represented by Legal Notice 56/1991 and other acts such as the ETC Act and LN 180 and LN 181/1991 concerning apprenticeship scheme. Currently the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) together with the Ministry of Education are reviewing the two apprenticeship schemes.

#### 5.1.1 Bodies Responsible for Vocational Training

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The Education Division under the auspices of the Ministry of Education ensures that there are sufficient facilities to provide education and training for post-compulsory students. State educational establishments are responsible for the provision of adequate underpinning knowledge and various vocational courses covering various levels.

The ETC, which forms part of the portfolio of the Minister of Education, is responsible for the apprenticeship schemes. It manages the placement of apprentices in local industry, on the job assessment as well as issuing of the Journeyman's Certificate (a national competency based vocational certification).

The setting up of MCAST has led to the standardization of the various vocational courses. MCAST is responsible for the coordination of all curricular developments with local industries and the Employment Training Corporation.

The Institute of Tourism Studies under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism is

responsible for vocational courses mainly in hospitality, catering and allied trades. This institute also runs apprenticeship schemes and is funded by the state through the Ministry of Tourism. All apprenticeship work-projects (local and abroad) are coordinated through the ETC, the Ministry of Education and the Tourism Industry.

Through the Leonardo mobility project students from all the above establishments are now undergoing training both locally and abroad.

#### 5.1.2 Types, Programmes and Level of Vocational Training

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See 4.2/4.3

### 5.2 Vocational/Initial Training Establishments

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Vocational courses are linked with industry through the two apprenticeship schemes. These schemes are intended largely for those who have just completed compulsory education (16-year olds). Older trainees are accepted on condition that they complete their training by their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Apprentices are paid a salary by their employer and also receive a maintenance grant. ETC in collaboration with MCAST and industry offers a wide range of training opportunities to school-leavers to learn a trade or skill thus enhancing their employability.

The two apprenticeship schemes are the Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS) and the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS).

#### 5.2.1 ESTS (Legal Notice 180)

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This training leads to the Journeyman's Certificate at craftsmanship level in various

trades. Trainees usually obtain a certificate comparable to an NVQ Level 3. Trades offered under this scheme are:

- Mechanical engineering and allied trades
- Woodworking trades
- Electrical Engineering trades
- Handicrafts
- Agricultural trades
- Building trades
- Personal service trades
- Hospitality trades
- Tailoring trades

### 5.2.2 TAS (Legal Notice 181)

This scheme is currently under review. TAS is intended to meet Malta's industrial needs at technician level in a world of rapid technological change and also to provide students in post-compulsory education with the opportunity to take up technical careers. Trainees usually obtain certification comparable to an NVQ level 4. Courses offered under this scheme are:

- Agricultural technician
- Computer aided design technician
- Draughtsman course
- Electrical and Electronics technician
- Industrial design technician
- Mechanical engineering technician
- Information technology technician
- Mechanical and electrical engineering technician.

Both schemes are of four years duration. Admission is subject to performance in the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination and in slower secondary education. Each course has its own specific subject entry requirements. The ratio of on- the- job to in school training for TAS and ESTS are 2:3 and 3:2 days respectively.

### 5.3 Access Requirements

These apply to both Maltese and non-Maltese students.

## 5.4 Financing

The Ministry of Education finances all aspects of the off-the-job training, including both capital and recurrent expenditure. The employer sponsoring the trainee pays on-the-job training costs.

Trainee wages/allowance are covered partly by the state in the form of students' maintenance grant during the first three years of the apprenticeship and partly by the sponsoring employer who pays a monthly wage during the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year.

This is shown in the table below:

Year of Apprenticeship	Funded By	
	State	Industry
1	Ministry of Education	–
2	60%	40%
3	40%	60%
4	–	Employer

During the summer months trainees are usually full-time on-the-job training. Students can avail themselves of pro-rata vacation leave during this period.

## 5.5 Curriculum

Curriculum (see 4.2) In post-compulsory vocational training the curriculum is largely determined by the requirements of qualifications as stipulated by the awarding and regulating authorities.

The primary function of compulsory education is the initiation of students into the process of specialization and hence the world of work. In addition to practical sessions in school laboratories and workshops, trainees generally have a minimum of 2 days placement in industry. Besides the compulsory elements of the curriculum, certain courses have both elective and optional subjects.

## 5.6 Assessment/Qualifications

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See 4.3

## 5.7 Guidance

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See 4.4

## 5.8 Teachers/Trainers

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See 4.5

## 5.9 Statistics

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Intake into Apprenticeship Schemes 2002	
Apprenticeship	No. of Apprentices
ESTS	382
TAS	273

## 6. HIGHER EDUCATION

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Higher education in Malta is offered at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels at the University of Malta that is totally funded by Government and is autonomous and self-governing. Courses of studies last between one and six years.

Students normally join University courses at the age of 17/18 years although some mature applicants are admitted mostly to part-time and evening courses.

### 6.1 Admission requirements

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The admission requirements to Tertiary level education are the University Matriculation Certificate and the Secondary Education Certificate examinations. Corresponding levels of other overseas examinations may be accepted as equivalent.

Courses of studies may specify special requirements for admission to that course.

The University Admissions Board may also accept graduates of another university or candidates with other qualifications.

Applications from local candidates are normally received in July and August of each year. Overseas students can apply through the International Office of the University up to the end of August of each year.

### 6.2 Fees/Financial Support for Students

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Local students do not pay fees and are given maintenance grants by Government during their course of studies. All Maltese students following a full-time degree course at the University who are under the age of thirty years receive a stipend. The allocation is Lm4, 000 per course, Lm200 a year, Lm60 a month. Students registered for courses at the Institute of Health Care receive Lm90 a month since these carry out work placements. A limited number of scholarships are available in terms of bilateral agreements with some countries. Overseas

students are charged fees. (Approx. exchange rate: Lm1: 2.4 Euros)

### 6.3 Academic Year

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The academic year is divided into two semesters – 1st October to 31st January and 1st February to 31st May. The summer recess is between the middle of July and the end of September of each year.

Testing is held during the last week of January and May whilst final examinations are held in June of each year. Lectures, seminars and workshops are normally held between October and May.

### 6.4 Courses

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The University of Malta offers a number of courses in various faculties leading to a Bachelor's degree at the end of three to four years, depending on the course followed. First-degree courses in Dental Surgery, Engineering & Architecture, and Medicine and Surgery take five years whilst the course leading to doctor of law lasts six years.

Most undergraduate courses at the University are based on the modular or credit system. A credit is obtained by completing a study unit comprising a total of 50 hours of study. Lectures are supplemented by tutorials and where appropriate clinical teaching, practical demonstrations and laboratory work. Post-graduate degrees at Master's levels are also offered and require between one and four years of full-time or part-time study through course work and/or research work. Post-graduate doctoral degrees are awarded and are based on research.

Books and other educational material have to be obtained by the students. However, the University library houses nearly half a million volumes.

## 6.5 Assessment/Qualifications

As a general rule end of semester tests are held during the last week of January and during the last week of May of each year. End of year examinations are held in June and to proceed from one year to the next, students must be successful in these statutory assessments. Students who fail have the opportunity to re-sit failed examinations in September. Many faculties include continuous assessments throughout the year, projects, long essays and research and fieldwork.

The qualifications awarded by the University are degrees at Doctorate, Master and Bachelor levels and also diplomas and certificates in a wide range of disciplines.

## 6.6 Teachers

Lecturers at the University faculties are appointed on a full-time or part-time basis. They can also be permanent on part-time employment according to the needs of the subject area. All lecturers that are appointed to the University need to be in possession of a qualification at doctorate level. Professors should have an established reputation amongst their peers as authorities in their field of learning.

The University of Malta is autonomous and staff do not form part of the Government civil service

## 6.7 Statistics

The student population during the academic year 2002/03 is 8,931, of which 5,001 are females.

Academic Staff Full-time and Part-time (excluding temporary staff) totals 853 of which 218 are females.

(Source: University of Malta: 2002/03)

## Students Graduating in 2002

Faculty/Institute	M	F	T
Architecture & Civil Engineering	20	6	26
Arts	68	125	193
Board of Studies for Information Technology	34	5	39
Centre for Communication Technology	21	40	61
Economics, Management & Accountancy	256	218	474
Education	128	273	401
Engineering	60	12	72
European Documentation Research Centre	10	14	24
Island and Small States	4		4
Public Administration	12	11	23
Agriculture	1	2	3
Forensic Studies	3	2	5
Health Care	50	91	141
Baroque Studies	3	5	8
Law	141	181	322
Link Campus	14	18	32
Medicine & Surgery	45	41	86
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies	24	23	47
Mediterranean Institute	1	1	2
Science	26	19	45
Theology	24	13	37
Workers' Participation Development Centre	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>2,048</b>

All registered students – Academic year 2002/03			
Faculty	F	M	T
Agriculture	9	21	30
Architecture & Civil Engineering	84	190	274
Arts	499	275	774
Baroque Studies	4	12	16
Board of Studies for Information Technology	39	174	213
Centre for Communications Technology	239	164	403
Conservation and Restoration Studies	27	18	45
Dental Surgery	20	21	41
European Documentation Research Centre	40	44	84
Education	1096	421	1,517
Engineering	60	275	335
Economics, Management & Accountancy	1,163	1,029	2,192
Forensic Studies	5	12	17
Foundation Studies	23	38	61
Institute of Health Care	596	274	870
International Environment Institute	5	4	9
Islands and Small States	6	3	9
Law	422	313	735
Linguistics	1	3	4
Masonry &	6	0	6
Medicine & Surgery	298	233	531
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies	35	31	66
Mediterranean Institute	4	7	11
Public Administration	11	21	32
Science	122	143	265
Theology	96	143	239
UOM	91	61	152
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,001</b>	<b>3,930</b>	<b>8,931</b>

## 7. ADULT EDUCATION

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### 7.1 Legislative Framework

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There is no specific Adult Education Act. The Education Act (1988) and as subsequently amended gives the right to education to every citizen. Adult education is covered in a limited manner by this Act. The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) has been organising day and evening courses for learners from the age 16 upward for a considerable number of years. It offers over a hundred different courses mostly in the evening, which are either free or heavily subsidised by the State. These courses cover academic, technical, craft, leisure IT and aesthetic subjects, including courses in drama, music and art.

Legal Notices cover the fees to be paid for the evening and adult oriented courses and also provide for exemptions. Literacy and numeracy courses are offered free of charge. Refugees, the unemployed social cases and senior citizens are entitled to free adult education.

The University of Malta (UM) organises diploma, first degree and postgraduate courses in the evening for the benefit of mature students. The University also runs the University of the Third Age specifically for people over the age of 60 who would like to courses/studies at tertiary level.

MCAST is expected to extend services for further adult education through continuation courses.

The Employment and Training Act (1990) set up the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) to provide employment services and training in various crafts, trades and other basic subjects. It also supports apprenticeship programmes in collaboration with the Education Division.

### 7.2 Management/Organisation involved

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The DFSAE is solely responsible for the provisioning of adult education under the aegis of the Ministry of Education (ME). Apart from those listed in 7.1, the Department also

organises courses for various entities including other government departments and private entities. These include industries and the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM).

Courses are generally held on a one-year basis, but there are also short thirteen-week courses leading to certification (e.g. Advanced level, ECDL).

The ETC supports the DFSAE by providing work practice placements for apprentices under the Training Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) for technician level and the Extended Students Training Scheme for (ESTS) craftsman level. Such apprentices follow theoretical and practical courses, alternating between school and industry.

The Night Institute for Further Training and Education (NIFTE) set up by ETC provides further opportunities for adults wishing to pursue various vocational courses, including IT and Computer Practice.

Apart from what has already been listed in 7.1, the University provides courses in middle management and AutoCAD, but does not usually co-ordinate with the previously mentioned institutions. Participants attending such courses are expected to pay fees and are awarded certificates on completion of course. (It should be noted that University education in Malta is free; fees are payable only for the aforementioned type of course).

The Corradino Correctional Facilities (CCF i.e. Prisons) has set up its own educational facilities with the support of the Faculty of Education (UM) and the DFSAE. Courses are provided in personal and social skills, crafts and academic subjects.

DFSAE is also responsible for a second-chance day school for over 16s, returnees and women. This school provides adult learners with the possibility of finishing their secondary education and obtain the SEC. An individual timetable is prepared for each learner attending this centre. Other courses held during the day in this centre include crafts, tailoring, and weaving and art appreciation. Female learners mainly attend these courses.

## 7.3 Funding

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The Ministry of Education provides recurrent funds for the DFSAE. These cover both adult education and media and broadcasting. The ETC also gets its funding from the Ministry of Education. In the previous legislature ETC formed part of the Ministry of Social Policy; it has now been taken over by the ME to ensure better co-ordination. Local Councils have been empowered to provide courses in their locality. They receive financial assistance from the Ministry of Information Technology and Investment. Co-ordination on the level of adult and continued education still needs further development.

The beneficiaries, (those persons attending courses) as indicated above, pay a token fee for most of the courses. Fees charged by UM are much higher.

ESTS and TAS students receive financial assistance through student's maintenance grants or wages when they are actually engaged as apprentices. Wages are funded partly by the Ministry of Education and partly by the Industry.

## 7.4 Human Resources

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Teachers receive their training at the UM, graduating as Bachelor of Education (Bedeck) after a four year course. On a rotational basis all teachers attend a mandatory in-service course provided by the Education Division. The UM also provides training for teachers in various areas of specialisation, running both short and longer (second degree) courses.

All personnel in charge of classes need a government warrant to exercise their profession. This is not granted unless candidates measure up to the minimum requirements as established in the Education Act (1988)

## 7.5 Organisation

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The Adult and Evening Courses Section, under the aegis of the Director, DFSAE, has the following managerial structure: an Assistant Director is in charge of this section and is also responsible for Media Education and Educational Broadcasting (this section provides

television and radio programmes for schools but also includes programmes aimed at adults and senior citizens). Three Education Officers and one other Officer in charge of the island of Gozo aid the Assistant Director. Their area of responsibility is as follows: (a) Evening Courses – academic, vocational, craft and leisure (b) Adult Education- basic literacy and numeracy, Maltese for foreigners, Lifelong Learning Centre at Secondary level (c) Distance and e-learning (d) Gozo Centre. Academic and vocational courses are generally centralised in principal colleges and institutions; basic courses are provided in local primary schools, which are being developed as community centres. Art, music and drama are provided in specifically built centres.

Courses are generally held in the early evening, starting at 17.00hrs onwards during working days (Mondays to Fridays). Centres generally follow the academic year as for State Schools. There are adult courses, held in the morning, usually from 08.00 to 12.00hours. Private institutions licensed to provide the teaching of English as a Foreign Language provide most of their courses during summer. These cater for foreign students and all courses are subject to the payment of fees. A Monitoring Board, within the ME, supervises such schools.

### 7.5.1. Types of Training Institutions

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The Foundation for Educational Services (FES) is a government funded foundation established in April 2001. Its mission is to be at the forefront of innovation in educational services and educational change by complementing, incorporating, facilitating and strengthening specialised initiatives and approaches. The Foundation is committed to be a force towards educational equity and excellence, contributing directly in this respect to the wider educational systems and to society, especially towards persons at risk of social exclusion and to future generations.

Parental involvement is at the core of key programmes of the FES. Since its inception it has worked with families through its various programmes.

One of its programmes is the Community Literacy Project. In collaboration with Local Councils, school councils and community-based organisations, NGOs, the FES develops and supports a web of informal and non-formal community literacy and social inclusion initiatives with special reference to families that are most at risk.

Social Partners and Professional Bodies do not provide support to state sponsored courses. As already stated all funding is basically borne by the State except for the ESTS and TAS schemes.

There are various institutions providing an array of programmes. Some are free of charge, others against payment. The Adult and Evening Courses Section published information about such institutions. These include the following:

The GEM (Guze Ellul Mercer Foundation) funded by the General Workers Union (one of the two major trade unions) provides various courses including aspects of social education.

The AZAD(Academy for the Development of a Democratic Environment) funded by the Nationalist Party also provides various courses related to political education.

The CSL (Centre for Social Leadership) a branch of the Social Action Movement is a Catholic oriented organisation providing various courses in sociology, public relations, women in society and other general courses in literacy.

Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Brigade provide life saving courses.

Paolo Freire Institute for Literacy provides courses in literacy for marginal groups.

Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (founded in 1852- the oldest existing institution) provides and promotes courses in music, art and crafts. It is subsidised by the ME.

The Chamber of Commerce also provides courses in business education.

The two major banks (Bank of Valletta and HSBC) both provide in-house training for their employees.

There are other professional bodies that target specific groups, e.g. Malta Institute of Management, Malta Institute of Accountants, Chamber of Engineers, Chamber of Commerce, Malta University Services.

Government does not impose any restrictive regulations except for the issue of a licence to open a school / educational institution and that certain standards regarding building and amenities have to conform to established norms.

### 7.5.2. Access Requirements

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The various institutions DFSAE and UM have different entry requirements for the various courses they provide. In practice anyone can enrol for any course subject to the proviso of

having the required entry and if applicable, age and qualifications. There are no other restrictions of gender, race or religion. Act XVIII of 2001 – an Act relating to the mutual recognition of Qualifications (aligned with EU directives) regulates all the necessary criteria and procedures to be followed. The Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre is the unit that is responsible for the implementation of these regulations whilst also providing guidance in this area.

### 7.5.3. Objectives of the Programmes

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ME have plans to attract SMEs to make use of available expertise and resources for training their work force, this ranges from basic literacy and numeracy to technical subjects and skills. The TAS and ESTS schemes are in the process of being reorganised. The systems are designed to enable workers to acquire certification, knowledge and skills necessary for employment, job mobility and promotion. The Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Regulations (2000) provide for all modular systems developed by the Standards Development Board.

### 7.5.4. Main Principles of the Organisation of Time and Venue

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The information relevant to this section has already been provided. (See 7.1, 7.2 and 7.5) The DFSAE is at the very initial stages of developing distance education courses, tailor-made to take into consideration local conditions. Malta is a very small country and access is easy and not time-consuming. The ME and the Ministry of Social Policy are collaborating in the development of distance learning. The use of distance learning is being piloted in the teaching of Physics – a core subject in the curriculum and in demand by manufacturing industries. The underlying principle of reaching out to a huge audience as possible through the use of new technologies has only started to gain ground recently.

The short descriptions below focus on the programmes that have an in-built parent participation component:

### 7.5.5. Curriculum

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The National Curriculum (2000) is the official document to which subjects' syllabi are attuned. The UM, through the Matriculation Secondary Education Certificate Board (MATSEC Board), draws up syllabi in relation to its examinations. Those institutions preparing students for other local /foreign examinations follow the relevant syllabi. All teachers and trainers taking classes/ students regularly attend in-service courses provided by local and foreign experts.

Special arrangements for disadvantaged groups (see 7.1, 7.2, 7.5.1 and 7.5.2).

### 7.5.6. Quality Assurance

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The DFSAE is responsible in all respects for the smooth running of all the courses provided. The Department conducts inspections to ensure that standards are maintained and regularly analyses examination results and other statistical information. Evaluation questionnaires are utilised to get feedback from learners regarding different aspects of the course attended. Other agencies and institutions have their own monitoring boards, which have to abide by the general provisions of the Education Act and follow the official syllabi.

### 7.6. Guidance/Counselling Services

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Reference has already been made to the 'second chance' school run by the DFSAE (see 7.2). There are special programmes for drug addicts and other socially disadvantaged groups provided by other Ministries and the Church. There are also sheltered homes for young offenders young single mothers, etc. All these operate and are funded by various ministries. However, at a strategic level, these are co-ordinated by the ME and the Ministry of Social Policy.

### 7.7. Assessment, accreditation and recognition

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See 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.5.1 and 7.5.2.

### 7.8 Statistics

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Number of Institutions 28 (The majority are schools that double as adult education centres in the evening – however, there are buildings that are specifically used for their intended role e.g. School of Drama, and School of Music.

Number of adult education facilitators 330 (many of those teaching during the evenings teach in mainstream schools during the day).

Number of beneficiaries is 8,915 – 3,141 males and 5,774 females.

The maximum number of participants per group is 30. However, this varies and may be as low as 10 participants per group in the basic literacy courses.

Age of Beneficiaries ranges from 10 to 61+ years. Drama, music and art courses attract younger pupils. The average age of most classes is in the 17+ to 50+ age-band.

(Statistics source is Statistics, DFSAE, academic year 2002/03.