

The Learning Curve of Learning Outcomes

MALTA: A CASE STUDY

Professor Joachim James Calleja

MCAST CEO/Principal



AGENDA

- Defining Learning Outcomes
- EU and Malta's Context
- Malta's Brief overview of the recognition and validation of learning outcomes
- Malta's Legal Notices on Accreditation, Recognition and Validation
- Institutional Arrangements: Sectors Skills Unit, The National Occupational Standards
- Key stakeholders
- Case Study 1: The Shift in Compulsory Schooling
- Case Study 2: MCAST Towards Homegrown courses with LOs

VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Learning Outcomes are statements of what is expected that the learner will be able to do as a result of learning the activity. (Jenkins and Unwin, 2001)
- Learning Outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills or attitudes. (American Association of Law Libraries 4)
- Learning Outcomes are an explicit description of what a learner should know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning. (Bingham, 1999)
- Learning Outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. (ECTS Users' Guide, 2005)

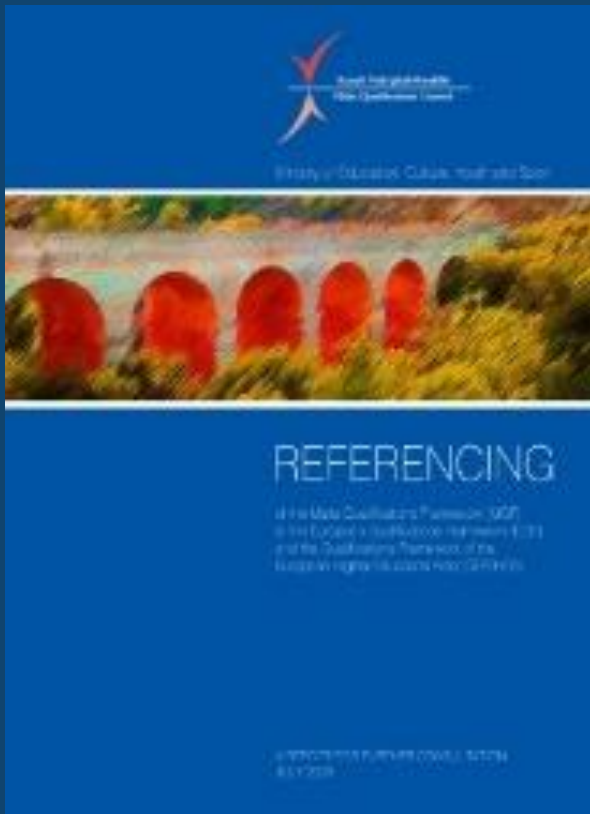
EU CONTEXT

Since Malta's membership in the EU in 2004, it triggered the need to establish national policy documents aligned with documents issued by the EU Commission, namely:

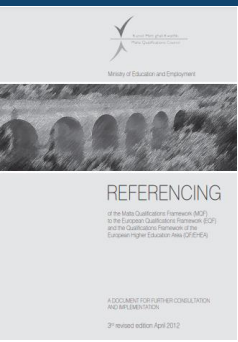
- the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework (2006);
- the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (2009),
- and Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth (2010) which is the follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (2006).
- European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- The Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA).

MALTA'S CONTEXT –

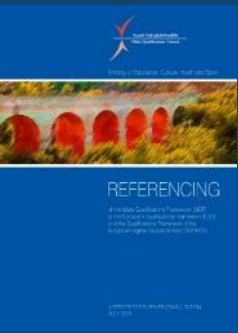
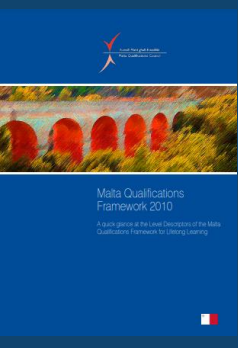
ISSUING THE FIRST REFERENCING REPORT IN 2009



- The 2009 report outlines the referencing process of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA).
- It provides a conceptual and institutional background that led to the setting up of a European Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area and how these two overarching Frameworks can be referenced to the Malta Qualifications Framework which is also based on an eight-level system.
- The Referencing Report is an important tool that helps bridge the gaps between the various educational systems in Europe and build a culture of mutual trust and transparency..



MALTA'S REFERENCING REPORT 2016



- Malta issued its 4th referencing report in 2016
- It describes the Malta Qualifications Framework and the different levels of qualifications in Malta.
- It provides details of the parameters which need to be adhered to by any conferring awarding body in Malta in terms of the **level of learning outcomes and number of credits.**

MALTA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (MQF)

COMPREHENSIVE AND VALIDATING ALL LEARNING

MQF for Lifelong Learning
Diagrammatic Representation of the Education system in Malta

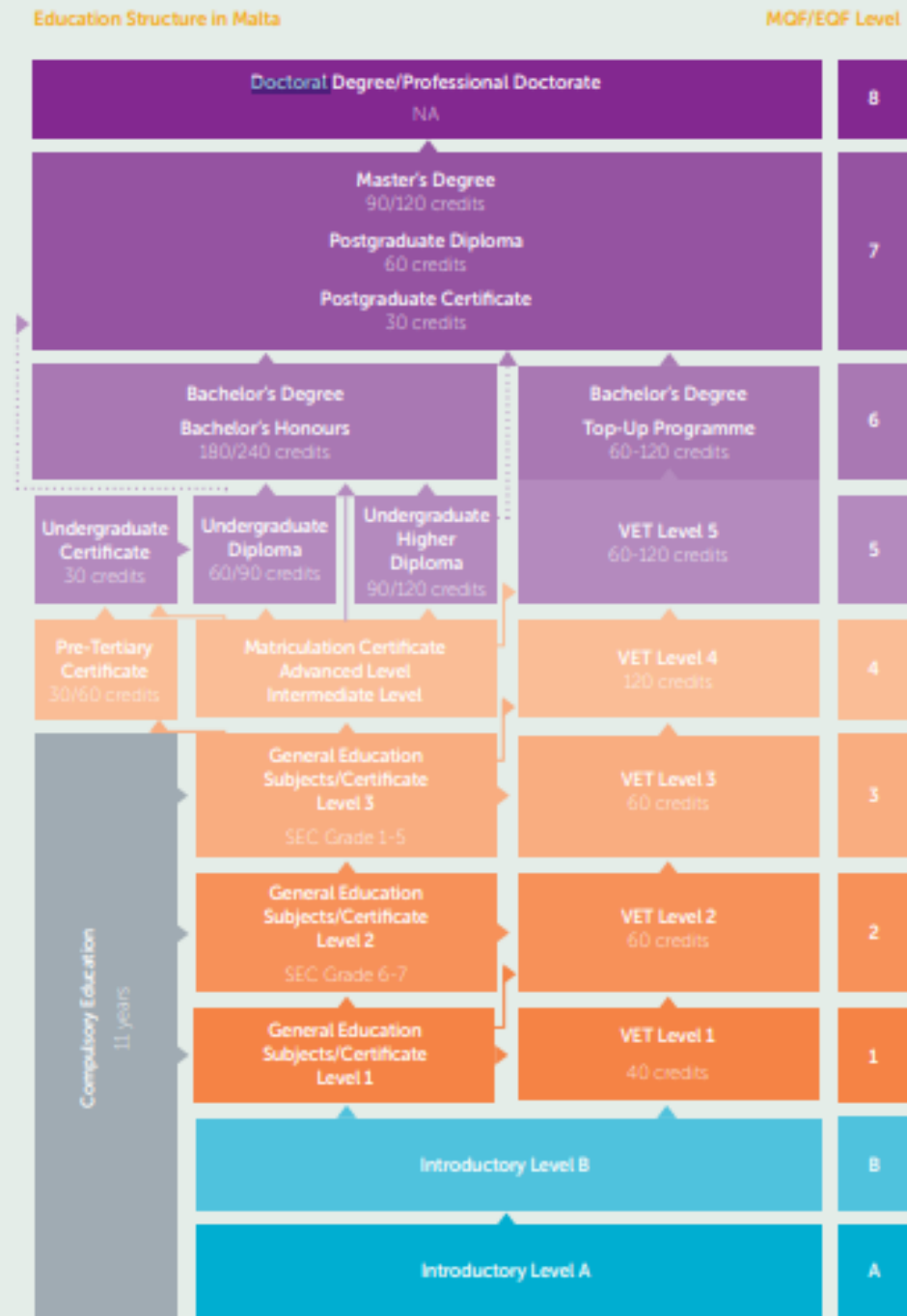


Figure 2: Diagrammatic Representation of the Education system in Malta

Competences	--	With appropriate guidance begins to participate in similar and familiar activities.
Learning Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge and understanding; 2. Applying knowledge and understanding; 3. Communication Skills; 4. Judgmental Skills; 5. Learning Skills; 6. Autonomy and Responsibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply basic knowledge and understanding to carry out a part of a repetitive/rehearsed task, with varying degrees of support; 2. Follow instruction and apply repetitive/rehearsed steps needed to begin simple activities, with varying degrees of support; 3. Respond to the main points of simple discussions/exchanges in a familiar/rehearsed situation, with varying degrees of support; 4. With prompting is able to identify the completion of an assigned task; 5. Applies basic competences to carry out a familiar task, with varying degrees of support; 6. With appropriate guidance shows levels of participation in simple and familiar activities.

Figure 5: Level Descriptors for Introductory Level A



Trade Testing has been set up long ago in order to assess individuals who have acquired knowledge, skills and competence in a particular occupation but do not possess a formal qualification. Through trade testing a person is assessed in a particular area by sitting for the following types of assessment

Not linked with MQF

Malta's Legal Notices on: Accreditation, Recognition and Validation

S.L. 607.01 Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations

S.L. 607.02 Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Regulations

S.L. 607.03 Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations

Chapter 327 of 1988 – Education Act

Chapter 451 of 2002 – Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act

SL 451.01 – Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre and the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Appeals Board Regulations

SL 451.02 – Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Regions Regulations

SL 451.03 – Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING REGULATIONS (2012)

Non-formal Learning

Learning embedded in a planned activity organised outside the formal educational system, which activity is not explicitly designed as learning but which contains an important learning component.

Informal Learning

A learning process resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure, by which an individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes, insight and competences from daily experiences and from exposure to one's environment.

The validation of informal and non-formal learning (VINFL) consists of the:

- identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual
- documentation to make visible the individual's experiences;
- formal assessment of these experiences; and
- certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.
- **LINKED TO MQF**

Validation of Informal and Non- Formal Learning (VINFL)

- VINFL has been regulated through L.N 327.433
- The VINFL has been legislated to form part of the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) within the remit of the Ministry for Education
- Regulates the framework on which VINFL works in Malta.
- The validation is levelled to the Malta Qualifications Framework from Level 1 up to Level 5.
- Aiding in benchmarking occupations which will undoubtedly help in career development.
- By having a regulatory framework on validation, Malta has a good functioning validation process which helps in increasing employability opportunities to anyone who benefits from this opportunity. Another advantage of VINFL is that throughout the years it has been in operation, there have been various skill shortages identified and thus Malta has been able to act upon these

The view of added value that industry puts in the accreditation of VINFL

- relevance of experience
- verified skills and competences
- matching with existing qualifications and the level rating

INSTITUTIONAL : SECTORS SKILLS UNIT (2016)

ensuring the consistency and relevance of occupational standards within the sectors

reduce skills gaps and skills shortage

improve the skills and productivity of the sector's workforce

improve learning supply

ensure the recognition and certification of skills and competences within the sector.

developing **occupational standards** relevant to the sector it represents and proposing regulations and mechanisms for validating informal and non-formal learning for all skills within the sector

Assessments and tests for validating informal and non-formal learning and, auditing assessment processes and results achieved.

THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS (NOS)

- The National Occupational Standards are a set of job-related standards which highlight the performance expected when carrying out a specific occupation at a specific level.
- The NOS are written using an LO approach
- These standards define the main jobs that people carry out, and links qualifications to the requirements of the labour market.
- These standards are pegged to the Malta Qualifications framework and are thus compiled using the Learning Outcomes approach, which is achieved by stipulating knowledge, skills and competences.
- Such standards are then reviewed by the Sector Skills Units which include a number of industry relevant stakeholders, such as the economic sector, education and training, government and social partners.

**KEY
STAKEHOLDERS**

MALTA FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION
AUTHORITY (MFHEA)

PUBLIC PROVIDERS

PRIVATE PROVIDERS

EMPLOYERS

TRADE UNIONS

SOCIAL PARTNERS

CASE STUDY 1: THE SHIFT IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

- As of 2018, the island has started shifting from a content-based to an outcomes-based system, referred to as the introduction, or better, the enactment of the **Learning Outcomes Framework (2015) - LOF**.
- The LOF is being promoted as a way to decentralize teaching and give schools the autonomy to develop their own learning programmes. This structure is in line and has been assembled to support the **National Curriculum Framework (2012) - NCF**.
- In fact, the NCF explains that as a legal document, it is to be supported by a Learning Outcomes Framework

CASE STUDY 1: THE SHIFT IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

- LOF promises to reduce the subject content and shift the importance to 21st-century skills, to smoothen the transition between the various stages of the curriculum, provide a wider selection of learning programmes and various recognized and certified learning pathways to meet the needs of all learners (Attard Tonna and Bugeja 2016).
- One way of doing so is by freeing schools from syllabi which are centrally imposed and giving them a degree of flexibility to design their own learning programmes. Such an approach gives schools the right and responsibility to design and implement programmes which fulfil the framework of knowledge, attitudes and skillsbased outcomes to give educational entitlement to all learners in Malta.
- The LOF should also be addressing learners from a migrant background who contribute to a growing internationalized culture present in Maltese schools.
- When implemented properly, **the LOF is expected to allow for flexibility, lifelong learning and a new outlook on how assessment is devised in Malta**
- the LOF focuses on being 'student-centred' and is described as progressive, holistic, respectful to the individual and diverse

LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK



DASHBOARD

ABOUT THE LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

CONTACT US

[EN](#) | [MT](#) | [LOGIN](#)



Search



Welcome to the Learning Outcomes Framework

[View Subjects >](#)

CASE STUDY 2: MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MCAST) TOWARDS HOMEGROWN COURSES



ECVET
Malta

- Through the national project-VET Credit Conversion System (2011-2013)
- A pilot project to test the ECVET Implementation in Malta
- Funded through the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme 2007-2013
- National Team of ECVET Experts
- 8 Partners (3 Foreign and 5 Local Partners) – INCLUDED MCAST
- Piloting of the process to convert 30 qualifications into the ECVET System

CASE STUDY 2: MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MCAST) TOWARDS HOMEGROWN COURSES

This process included a total of 15 qualifications with approximately 180 units that had to be converted

A steep learning curve for everyone involved with no specific reference point considering the pilot nature of this exercise

Internal training had to be organised for staff, especially in relation to learning outcomes in the new MQF format



MCAST TODAY

STRUCTURE OF A TYPICAL UNIT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES: MCAST

- Unit Title, Unit Type, Learning Hours, Level and Credit Value
- Unit Description
- Learning Outcomes
- Unit Content
- Learning Outcomes and Assessment criteria
- Guidance for teaching and assessment



MCAST'S HOMEGROWN COURSES INCLUDED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

The Knowledge, Skills and Competences are important factors in a Unit of Learning Outcomes.

Competences are a combination of knowledge and skills done with autonomy and responsibility.

The knowledge section will indicate outcomes that are related to the knowledge the learners need to have to be able to achieve the competence.

Then the learners will use that knowledge to be able to obtain different skills which are divided in **Applying Knowledge and Understanding, Communication Skills, Judgemental Skills and Critical Abilities, and Learning Skills**, which together will give the ability to the learner to achieve the competences.

THANK YOU

Professor Joachim James Calleja
MCAST CEO/Principal



MCAST