

European Commission
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
Economic Policy Committee

**Efficiency and effectiveness of public
expenditure
on tertiary education in the EU**

**ANNEX : COUNTRY FICHE
MALTA**

**Joint Report by the Economic Policy Committee
(Quality of Public Finances)
and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs**

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Brief characterization of the tertiary education system

1. Main features

Tertiary education in Malta is offered predominantly by the University of Malta, which provides services for 97% of the total tertiary level student population. The number of students enrolled at the University of Malta in 2008 was 9,508 with an additional 239 in the private sector.

Private institutions provide programmes run by foreign universities. The private sector provides for 7% of tertiary level programmes and 3% of tertiary students, often in niche areas not provided for by the University of Malta.

The participation rate of 19 year-old students in higher education was 24%¹ in 2008. The student population at the University of Malta increased from 7,332 in 2002 to 9,739 in 2009. The total number of graduates from the University of Malta in 2008 was 2,684². University of Malta students attending a first full time degree course pay no tuition fees and are eligible for a student maintenance grant subject to eligibility criteria.

Over the last decade, Malta has had a substantial increase in enrolment rates for Undergraduate, Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral programmes offered at the University of Malta. The growth per year in total tertiary enrolments was around 8% per year for the period 2000-2006³ however for the period 2004-2008 the growth rate has been of 1% per year.

In 2009, the Malta College for Arts Science and Technology (MCAST) has also launched a number of new top-up degree programmes in collaboration with foreign prestigious higher education institutions, in order to offer pathways for graduates in vocational studies in a number of different areas.

¹ Source: National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) Further and Higher Education Statistics (2008)

² Source: Registrar's Office, University of Malta

³ Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training – Indicators and benchmarks 2008 (page 73) and data compiled by the NCHE

1/ TEACHING	Malta										
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Academic staff per 1000 inhabitants relative to the average	:	0.34	:	:	1.57	1.1	1.92	1.93	2.01	2.02	2.15
Number of students per 1000 inhabitants	:	14.9	16.2	18.9	18.3	22.5	18.37	18.85	18.62	18.63	19.12
Number of students (graduate and post-graduate) per 1000 inhabitants	:	:	:	:	:	:	23.66	24.28	23.99	24.06	24.63
<i>From public institutions</i>	:	:	:	:	:	:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>From private government-dependent institutions</i>	:	:	:	:	:	:	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>From private independent institutions</i>	:	:	:	:	:	:	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ratio of students per academic staff	:	43.8	:	:	11.7	20.5	12.29	12.59	11.95	11.90	11.47
Number of graduates per 1000 inhabitants	3.47	5.1	5.14	4.75	5.17	5.38	6.94	6.98	5.09	6.83	6.79
Ratio of graduates per 1000 academic staff	:	15.0	:	:	3.3	4.9	3.6	3.62	2.53	3.38	3.16
Standardized recruiter view indicator (graduates' employability as perceived by recruiters)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	N/A
Standardized peer view country indicator (quality perceptions among peers)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	N/A
PISA scores	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	N/A
Average total time spent by students in order to obtain a BA degree	:	:	:	:	:	:	3	3	3	3	3
Average total time spent by students in order to obtain a MA degree	:	:	:	:	:	:	2	2	2	2	2
Remuneration of a tenured university professor with 10 year seniority	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	33,505

2/ RESEARCH

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Publications per 1000 inhabitants	0.09	0.08	0.06	0.07	0.1	0.12	0.08	0.14	:	:	:
	1998-2002	1999-2003	2000-2004	2001-2005	2002-2006	2003-2007					
Quality of research (position in the ISI citation index)	5.76	2.48	2.17	2.45	:	:					
% of research done in cooperation with industry	:	:	:	:	:	:					

3/ EXPLANATORY FACTORS FOUND RELEVANT FOR EFFICIENCY

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Main categories of composite indicator											
Funding Rules Indicator	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Evaluation Indicator	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Staff Policy Indicator	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

4/ EXPENDITURE

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total public expenditure on tertiary education institutions as a percentage of GDP (excluding student support)	:	0.50	0.50	0.70	0.70	0.60	0.60	0.50	:	0.51	0.58
Total expenditure per student (€) (excluding student support)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	3403	4013
Private expenditure on tertiary education institutions as a percentage of	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

GDP												
Total expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	4.82	4.39	4.52	4.46	4.38	4.70	4.85	5.92	5.79	5.60	5.85	
Private expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	:	0.25	0.47	0.85	0.61	1.40	0.45	1.52	1.47	1.48	1.47	
Funds from non-public sources as % of total income (fees, earned income, investment, other)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
Tuition fees as average of the cost of tuition	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	N/A
Percentage of funds received by private government-dependent institutions from public sources	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	N/A
Total public expenditure on grants, loans, and other programmes to cover education and/or maintenance of students (universal programmes / by categories such as merit or socio-economic status) (in thousands)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	21195	21315

Source: Eurostat, OECD, UOE and Member States.

2. Structure of institutions and funding arrangements

Structure of institutions

Public

University of Malta (<http://www.um.edu.mt/>)

The University of Malta is the highest teaching and research institution tracing its origins to 1592 and was founded as a state university in 1769⁴. Admission is open to all students who have the requisite qualifications. The University of Malta is regulated by the Education Act (Cap. 327), and all subsidiary legislation including statutes, regulations and bye-laws made by the competent governing bodies of the University. Article 75 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) grants the Council of the University the power to make statutes, the Senate to make regulations, and Faculty Boards to make bye-laws.

Together with the Education Act (Cap. 327), all subsidiary legislation made by the respective governing bodies of the University of Malta constitutes the most significant part of the regulations governing higher education in Malta. All subsidiary legislation is laid on the Table of the House of Representatives as soon as it is published by means of Legal Notices.

⁴ The University was first known as the *Collegium Melitense* and was founded by Bishop Garagallo in 1592. It was originally run by the Jesuits. After the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Maltese islands in 1768, the assets of the *Collegium Melitense* were seized and the University itself was founded by Grandmaster of the Knights of Malta, Manuel Pinto da Fonseca, in 1769.

MCAST (<http://www.mcast.edu.mt/>)

MCAST, established by Public Deed of the 11 August 2000, has been re-established and incorporated in the Education Act (Cap. 327) to implement the mission to provide studies, education and training in the vocational and professional sectors.

By virtue of Article 90(g) of the Education (Amendment) Act (Cap. 327) , MCAST may:

(...) award such degrees, diplomas, certificates or other distinctions which it may deem suitable to such candidates who satisfy the prescribed conditions after following the required study courses.

MCAST will shortly be launching a pilot programme to develop vocational education and training courses leading to a degree.

Private government-dependent

No government dependent institution exists in Malta other than those described under headings of public or private independent institutions at a higher education level.

Private independent institutions

Private institutions exist mainly in the form of licensed tuition centres providing education in collaboration with foreign universities to students undertaking exams leading to foreign qualifications.

This sector is regulated by the Ministry for Education by virtue of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

This sector receives no indirect funding for the provision of higher education; however, scholarships schemes exist to cover tuition fees and maintenance costs for postgraduate degrees at a Masters or Doctoral level within this sector. Additionally, scholarships exist to offer students undertaking undergraduate studies in the private sector with maintenance support.

Funding arrangements by type of institution

The current policy for higher education funding is outlined in the annual budget speech of the Minister of Finance, and the debates preceding and following the budget speech.

Additionally, the Ministry for Education undertakes periodic reviews of the funding requirements of Higher Education and makes recommendations for future policy in this area.

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) also carries out various sectoral reviews and makes recommendations on the funding strategy of higher education in Malta on a periodic basis to Government.

The major share of funding for MCAST and the University of Malta is from public sources. This section outlines different regulations which apply to capital and other resources, including for example, whether they make premises, equipment, or furniture available to higher education institutions free of charge, or directly pay their staff salaries and so on.

University of Malta Article 73 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) gives the Government the responsibility for funding the University of Malta:

73. (1) The finance of the University shall derive from periodic agreements entered into between the University and the Government stipulating, among other things, the supply of funds to the University by the Government.

(2) The amount of funds to be stated in the agreement shall be established in relation to the requirements of the University to achieve its aims determined in the context of the needs of the country as perceived by the Government.

In line with Article 73 of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the University of Malta owns its own property, buildings and equipment. The Council is responsible for administration and control of all property and assets of the University:

77. The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the University and shall have the following functions:

(a) to administer and control all the property, movable and immovable, of the University; (...)

The University of Malta is allocated two block votes: one for capital and the other for recurrent expenditure. The capital vote covers all capital expenditure including property, buildings and equipment necessary, whereas the recurrent vote covers all operating expenses including predominantly the staff wages and salaries.

MCAST

In the case of MCAST, all MCAST expenditure is directly paid by public sources. Property is owned by the Government and rented by the Ministry of Education and allocated to MCAST under a separate arrangement. Such rent is the only case where the Ministry of Education pays directly for the use of land by MCAST.

General funding arrangements for the University of Malta and MCAST

The distribution of public expenditure between different higher education institutions is the joint responsibility of the Minister for Education and the Minister responsible for Finance.

The process used for such decisions is described in Article 120 of the Education Act (Cap. 327), relevant extracts of which are outlined hereunder.

120. (1) An entity shall cause to be prepared in every financial year, and shall not later than the end of September of each such year adopt, estimates of the income and expenditure of the entity for the next following financial year: Provided that the estimates for the first financial year of each entity shall be prepared and adopted within such time as the Minister may by notice in writing to the entity specify (...)
(...) (4) A copy of the estimates shall, upon their adoption by the entity, be sent forthwith by the entity to the Minister and to the Minister responsible for finance. The Minister shall at the earliest opportunity and not later than six weeks after he has received a copy of the estimates from the entity, after consultation with the Minister responsible for finance, approve the same with or without amendment. The Minister shall as soon as practicable cause the total amount of these approved estimates to form an integral part of the Government General Estimates.

The criteria for allocation of funds to each institution are determined by various actors within the Ministry of Education. The Minister for Education, in consultation with the Minister for Finance, set the overarching policy framework.

The amount of annual expenditure is predominantly input oriented, linked significantly to remuneration of staff, the collective agreements in force and the number of staff (both academic and administrative) appointed or planned to be appointed in any financial year. The student enrolment data indirectly influences the scale and resource capacity required, and such data is taken into consideration by the institutions when formulating their estimates of the income and expenditure of the entity for the next financial year.

Additionally, higher education institutions can also benefit from EU structural funds (such as the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund) based on the priorities defined within the operating programmes for the respective funds. Decisions for allocation of funds from these sources are taken by the implementing authority of these programmes.

Funding is not strictly linked to performance except in the field of research. Basic research is covered by the framework described above, however funding for advanced research in specialised fields is allocated to higher education institutions on a competitive basis through Research funding initiatives co-ordinated by MCST. MCST is responsible for allocating funds for research on such competitive basis. Additionally the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme Board appointed by the Minister for Education is responsible for allocating research bursaries to students for advancement of studies at post-graduate level.

The procedure used by public authorities to award grants to higher education institutions, requires at an initial stage all the institutions to prepare financial estimates for the following

year, justifying the expenditure taking into account all the changes projected, and in the second instance, a tripartite negotiation occurs between the Institution, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance (reflecting all other competing needs for national funds).

With regard to official regulations concerning the distribution of public funds inside higher education institutions (among faculties and other units), the different institutions have specific regulations which determine how funds are allocated.

3. Governance and regulatory framework

The system of Governance of the University of Malta and MCAST, are both determined by the relevant articles in the Education Act (Cap. 327) which regulates these institutions. The respective governance structure of these two entities is explained below by means of extracts from the Education Act (Cap. 327).

Private independent tuition centres determine their own governing structure and often comply with requirements from foreign Universities with which they collaborate to offer courses in Malta leading to a foreign qualification.

University of Malta

As explained above, the University of Malta is regulated by Part VII of the Education Act (Cap. 327). This section specifies the decision making powers within the University of Malta. The governing bodies of the University as outlined in Article 74 (1) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) are:

- the Council;
- the Senate;
- the Faculty Boards.
- Additionally the following Principal Officers are involved in the decision making of the University:
 - the Chancellor;
 - the Pro-Chancellor;
 - the Rector;
 - the Pro-Rectors;
 - the Secretary;
 - the Deans and Deputy Deans of the Faculties.

The role of the different actors or members of the management and administrative staff, and the process of their appointment and interaction, is outlined hereunder.

The Chancellor

The Chancellor is the highest officer of the University and is responsible of ensuring that the University conforms with the laws of Malta and the University. The Chancellor promulgates the statutes, regulations and bye-laws of the governing bodies of the University and may refer back once to the governing body concerned any such statutes, regulations or bye-laws which in his opinion are not in accordance with the law. In special circumstances, he shall also have the power to summon the Council, the Senate and Faculty Boards. He is appointed for a term of seven years by the President of Malta acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister given after the latter has consulted the Leader of the Opposition.

The Pro-Chancellor

Whenever the office of Chancellor is temporarily vacant, and until a new Chancellor is appointed and whenever the holder of that office is absent from Malta or on vacation or is for any reason unable to perform the functions conferred upon him, those functions shall be performed by the Pro-Chancellor who shall continue to perform those functions notwithstanding the expiration of his term of office. The Pro-Chancellor also performs the functions of Chancellor whenever required to do so in writing by the Chancellor, and is the *ex officio* president of the Council. The Pro-Chancellor is appointed by the Chancellor following the Minister of Education's approval for a term not exceeding five years.

The Rector

The Rector is the principal academic and administrative officer of the University of Malta, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the University acts as the president *ex officio* of the Senate and Faculty Boards, and is also vested with the legal representation of the University. The Rector is elected by the Council for a term of five years. Every member of Council has the right to nominate a candidate to the office of Rector. If there are more than two candidates, each member has a single transferable vote. Prior to an election, the Council determine as required the procedural details relating to the method of election.

The Rector, without prejudice to the powers vested in the governing bodies of the University, is responsible for the day to day administration of the University and has the power to decide upon any urgent matter, of an academic nature or otherwise, provided that such decision which impinges upon a power or function vested in a governing body of the University shall be registered by the Secretary and brought before that body at its first meeting following that decision.

The Rector, as the officer vested with the immediate government of the University, can exercise authority over the teaching staff, the examiners, the students, the candidates for examinations and all the employees of the University, and can enforce discipline and the strict

observance of the provisions the laws, statutes, regulations and bye-laws. The Rector also confers University degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions, has the power to summon the Council, Senate and Faculty Boards, and must ensure that any elections required are held and is responsible to provide for the procedures of those elections. The Rector is responsible for the planning and coordination of the work of the various bodies and institutions of higher education and for the implementation of the decisions of the competent authorities of the University.

The Pro-Rectors

The Pro-Rectors perform the functions of the Rector in the circumstances that the Pro-Chancellor would perform the functions of the Chancellor under the provisions of Education Act (Cap. 327). One of the Pro-Rectors determined from time to time by the Rector, performs the functions of the Rector whenever required to do so in writing by the Rector. Pro-Rectors are appointed by the Rector for a term of one year.

The Secretary

The Secretary is the second highest administration officer of the University and shall be appointed by the Council for a term of five years.

The Deans and Deputy Deans of the Faculties

The Dean of a Faculty is elected for a term of four years by the academic staff of that Faculty and from among the heads of departments of that Faculty and is the president *ex officio* of the Faculty Board in the absence of the Rector. The Deputy Dean of a Faculty is appointed by the Rector for a period of one year, in consultation with the Dean of the respective Faculty. The Deputy Dean besides such other functions as may be delegated to him by the Dean, performs the functions of the Dean in his absence or when delegated to do so in writing.

The composition and membership of the different bodies within the University of Malta, and their respective decision making procedures, are outlined hereunder, as stipulated by regulations in the Education Act (Cap. 327).

The Council

The Council of the University shall be composed as follows:

- a) the Pro-Chancellor who shall be *ex officio* president;
- b) the Rector who shall be *ex officio* vice-president;
- c) four members representing the Senate;

- d) two members elected by the academic staff from those amongst them who are not members of the Senate;
- e) two members elected by and from among the non-academic staff;
- f) two members elected by and from among the University students;
- g) one member appointed by the Minister of Education and a member appointed by the Chairman of the Foundation for Theological Studies;
- h) a number of members appointed by the Prime Minister from among the leading representatives of the economic, industrial and social fields, to represent the general interest of the country, such number never to exceed the number of all the members mentioned in paragraphs (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g).

The Council is the supreme governing body of the University and has the following functions:

- to administer and control all the property, movable and immovable, of the University;
- to establish and abolish posts of an academic nature or otherwise;
- to establish, administer and abolish institutes and other entities;
- to make statutes in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to make appointments to posts, of an academic nature or otherwise, in accordance with procedures established by statutes;
- to pay the wages or salaries of all members of the academic and non-academic staff in accordance with scales determined by it with the approval of the Minister of Education;
- to establish Faculties, departments and institutes for the proper organisation of academic work and interdisciplinary collaboration, taking into account any directions given by the Minister of Education in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to appoint heads of departments for periods not exceeding four years after considering the recommendations of the departments concerned;
- to appoint and provide for the payment of Maltese or foreign examiners in accordance with statutes and predetermined procedures;
- to do all other acts or things not vested in any other governing body of the University.

The Senate

The Senate of the University is composed as follows:

- the Rector who shall be ex officio president;
- the Pro-Rectors, one of whom as may be designated by the Rector from time to time shall be the vice-president;
- the Deans of all the Faculties;

- a representative of each Faculty elected by and from among the academic staff of that Faculty;
- four members elected by and from among the University students;
- two representatives of the Minister of Education appointed by him from among graduates of the University;
- two members appointed by the directors of the institutes and other entities established by the University;
- the Librarian.

The Senate has the general direction of the academic matters of the University and has the following functions:

- to regulate studies, research, documentation and examinations in the University by means of regulations;
- to make regulations in accordance with the provision of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to decide on whom should be conferred academic degrees, diplomas and other distinctions;
- to establish by regulations the conditions for admission into the University;
- to give recognition to the degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions of foreign universities or institutes of higher education;
- to advise the Council on matters of an academic nature even if of such a nature only in part;
- to advise the Government on all matters in the fields of learning, science and technology referred to it by the Government;
- to deal with any other matter of an academic nature arising in the administration of the University.
- The Board of each Faculty is composed as follows:
 - the Rector who shall be *ex officio* president;
 - the Dean of the Faculty who shall be *ex officio* vice president;
 - the heads of all the departments in the Faculty;
 - a representative of each department of the Faculty elected by and from among the academic staff of the department;
 - two members elected by and from among the students of the Faculty;
 - two members appointed by the Minister to represent the interests outside the Faculty and who, in the opinion of the Minister of Education, can give an effective contribution towards the good administration of the Faculty, provided that in the case of the Faculty of Theology the two members shall be appointed by the Foundation for Theological Studies to represent the interests of the said Foundation.

The Faculty Board has the following functions:

- to direct the academic tasks of the Faculty in a unitary manner and in consultation;
- to determine the studies, teaching and research within the Faculty and to provide for the administration, publication and diffusion of the academic work of the Faculty and to distribute tasks within the said activities;
- to make bye-laws concerning the Faculty in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to prepare plans for the development of the Faculty and to present those plans for approval by the Senate and the Council.

All bodies

Any question proposed for decision at any meeting of any governing body of the University is determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting, and if on any such question the votes are equally divided the member presiding shall have and exercise a casting vote.

MCAST

The MCAST is regulated by Part VIII of the Education Act (Cap. 327). This chapter specifies the decision making powers within MCAST.

The governing bodies of MCAST as outlined in Article 91 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) are: the Board of Governors; the Council of the Institutes; the Administrative Bureau; the Boards of Studies of the Institutes; the Partnership Office.

The principal officers of the College are: the President of the Board of Governors; the Principal; the Deputy Principals; the Registrar; the Administrative Director; the Heads of the Institutes; the Head of the Partnership Office; the Librarian; and the Financial Controller.

The role of different members of the management and administrative staff, and the process of their appointment, is outlined hereunder.

The President; the President of the Board of Governors is appointed by the Minister for three years. He is the highest officer of the College and responsible for ensuring that the College complies with its legal responsibilities, issues the statutes, regulations and byelaws of the governing bodies of the College and may revert once to any governing body such statutes, regulations and bye-laws which in his opinion are not in terms of the law. The President has the power to convene and preside over the Board of Governors, the Council, the Administrative Bureau and the Board of Studies.

The Principal; the principal is the Chief Executive Officer of the College. He has all the powers necessary for the governance and administration of the College, including the power to make necessary appointments of officers and employees having an academic or technical background or of any other kind, for such period, under such conditions and in accordance with procedures established by the Board of Governors, including the power to decide upon any urgent matter of an educational or other nature. The Principal has authority over the teaching staff, examiners, students, examination candidates, College employees, and whosoever is entrusted with rendering any service to the College, and he shall enforce discipline and the strict observance of the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327), of the Statute of the Institutes, bye-laws and other rules made by the competent bodies of the College. The Principal shall confer the degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions of the College. The Principal shall ensure that, insofar as it depends on him, the governing bodies are regularly constituted, and that he provides for the organisation of such elections required by this Act, including that they actually be held as established and without undue delay. The Principal also ensures that the governing bodies meet regularly and is responsible for the planning and coordination of all the activities of all the college. All other officers of the college are directly answerable to the Principal.

The composition and membership of the different bodies within MCAST, and their respective decision making procedures, are outlined hereunder, as stipulated by regulations in the Education Act (Cap. 327).

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors shall be the highest governing body of the College and shall have the duty of performing the objectives and to exercise the powers of the College as laid down in the provisions of this Act, and shall in particular have the following functions:

- to acquire, administer and control the resources, facilities and property, both movable and immovable, of the College;
- to establish Institutes, departments, centres, programmes and other educational and training entities
- for the due performance of the educational and training tasks and of interdisciplinary co-operation;
- to distribute between the several Institutes and other educational and training entities within it the resources available to the College by way of funds and by way of premises, facilities, services, equipment and persons;
- to supervise the expenditure and the administration of the College at all levels and to approve the annual budget proposals to be submitted to the Minister of Education within a given time;
- to appoint a Principal, and on his advice, also to appoint the Deputy Principals, the Heads of the

- Institutes and of other educational and training entities, on the basis of a definitive contract, and to set up, and abolish, any post of an academic, technical or other nature;
- to make statutes, rules and other procedures in terms of the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to appoint Maltese or foreign examiners according to pre-established statutes and procedures, and to ensure that payment is effected for their services;
- to ensure that proper academic and training levels are retained and improved on, and to establish and supervise internal auditing schemes which ensure the quality of education;
- to enter into such agreements as appear to it necessary with sectors of economic activity in the country and with institutions in Malta and overseas for the better achievement of the objectives of the College;
- to do anything which it may deem necessary to be done to achieve the objectives of the College and to execute the powers and functions of the College which have not been previously vested in another governing body of the College: Provided that the Institutes, departments, centres, programmes on other education and training entities as referred to in paragraph (b) may be established by the Board of Governors, following consultation with the Council of Institutes, and their establishment, statutes and regulations are to be deemed to have come in force on that date that the Minister may by notice establish in the Gazette.

The Board of Governors shall also approve the curricula and the syllabi submitted by the Institute and by each educational and training entity within it and, where it deems it so necessary, to revert same to such Institutes or entities together with its advice about any proposed amendments.

The Board of Governors shall, where so approved by the Malta Qualifications Council, certify the capabilities for the exercise of a trade, calling and profession, and also of proficiency in any trade, technical work, technology, or any other commercial or economic activity.

The Board of Governors shall ensure that the qualification degrees, diplomas, distinctions and certificates of the College are recognised both at a national and at an international level, and that, wherever applicable, are related to the standards established by the Malta Qualifications Council.

The Board of Governors shall meet at least once every two months with a quorum of not less than one-half of the number of members of the Board plus one.

Council

The Council of the Institutes shall be constituted of the following members:

- the Principal who presides *ex officio*;
- the Deputy Principals *ex officio*;
- the Registrar *ex officio*;
- the Administrative Director *ex officio*;
- the Heads of the Institutes *ex officio*;
- the Head of the Partnership Office *ex officio*;
- the Librarian *ex officio*;
- two members elected by and from among the College teaching staff;
- two members elected by and from among the College students; and
- four members appointed by the Minister.

The Council is responsible for the direction of the vocational and professional education and training of the College, and has the following functions:

- to regulate by means of regulations the programmes of studies, training, research, documentation and examinations at the College and to establish such degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions for such candidates satisfying the prescribed conditions after following the required courses of studies and training;
- to decide about the persons to whom the academic, vocational and professional degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions shall be awarded;
- to establish, subject to the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the entry conditions to the College;
- to give recognition, following a recommendation by the competent authorities according to law, to such degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions of other universities or educational institutions;
- to give advice to the Board of Governors on any matter related to vocational and professional education or training;
- to deal about any other matter which refers to education and training and as may arise in the administration of the College.

Administrative Bureau

The Administrative Bureau of the College is constituted of the following persons:

- the Principal who shall be Chairperson;
- the Deputy Principals;
- the Registrar;

- the Administrative Director;
- the Head of the Partnership Office; and
- the Financial Controller.
- The Bureau shall meet at least every four weeks in order to:
 - ensure that the policies, strategy and decisions adopted by the Board of Governors and by the Council are actuated;
 - ensure dialogue, co-ordination and the effective functioning of the governing bodies, structures, officers and employees of the College;
 - under the direction of the Principal, and without prejudice to any of the provisions of this Part, take care of all the matters related to the process of selection and engagement of the personnel the College may from time to time require, and to propose for the approval of the Principal the nominations of the persons so selected;
 - to pay any wage, salary or remuneration to the members of the College staff according to scales which the Board of Governors establishes with the approval of the Minister;
 - adopt all necessary measures to apply the disciplinary procedures and the auditing and quality assurance schemes of all operations within the College;
 - ensure the keeping of lively and proactive relations between the College and its partners in Malta and overseas.

Board of Studies

Each Institute has a Board of Studies constituted of the following members:

- the Head of such Institute who shall be president *ex officio*;
- one of the Deputy Principals as may be decided by the Principal who shall be vice-president *ex officio*;
- the Heads of the Departments of the Institute *ex officio*;
- a member elected by and from among all the teaching staff of the Institute;
- a member elected by and from among the students of the Institute;
- two members appointed by the Minister from among persons recognised for their competence and experience in the educational and training area of such particular Institute;
- representatives of foreign institutes with which the College may have partnership agreements;
- a representative who is selected by the Minister from an economic sector having close ties with the area of studies and training of such particular Institute;
- a representative of a professional body which is recognised by the Minister in the area of studies and training of such particular Institute.

The Principal has the right to convene a meeting of the Board of Studies of any Institute whenever he may deem necessary and in such cases he shall preside the meeting.

The Board of Studies has the following functions:

- to conduct the educational and training work of the Institute;
- to establish the studies, the instruction to be imparted, the training and the research at the Institute, centre or programme for which it may be responsible, and to provide for the administration, publication and dissemination of the academic, training and development operations of the Institute and to allot the work to be done in such activities;
- to draft and propose bye-laws relating to the Institute in terms of the provisions of the Education Act (Cap. 327);
- to nominate Maltese or foreign examiners in terms of previously established and approved procedures by the Board of Governors;
- to prepare plans for the development of the Institute and to present them for the approval of the Council and of the Board of Governors.

Bye-laws which are made by the Board of Studies are sent to the Council for its approval and shall not be presented to the Board of Governors to be issued unless they are so approved by the Council.

The Board of Studies meets at least once every six weeks and the quorum of the meetings is of five members.

Partnership Office

The head of the Partnership Office is appointed by the Board of Governors and is responsible for the bilateral and international relations at the College, including such matters as are related to Europe.

The functions of the Partnership Office are:

- to develop the necessary relations for the greater cooperation and synergy between the College and educational and training institutions, both public and private, operating in Malta;
- to develop by agreement and suitable measures a proactive partnership between the College and its Institutes on one part, and the industrial and services economic sectors on the other;
- to develop a partnership agreement between each Institute of the College on one part, and a foreign University, College or Institute which acquired recognition in the particular area of vocational and professional studies and training for which the Institute is responsible, on the other;

- to ensure full participation in local and international exchange programmes and those of the European Union in which Malta participates;
- to seek to obtain scholarships for the College students and to administer those scholarships which may be offered to foreign students;
- to operate schemes which attract foreign students to College courses.

Recent policy developments in relation to governance, evaluation and accountability policies

In 2009 the University of Malta signed a new collective agreement which governs the University's staff policy, conditions and obligations for the coming years. The agreement provides for more staff development, research and intellectual property development and better conditions for academic and non-academic staff.

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) also published a series of studies on the requirements for a new licensing, accreditation and external quality assurance framework which implements the European Standards and Guidelines in Malta. It also published its first recommendations for a Further and Higher Education Strategy up to 2020, in April 2009.

On the basis of these recommendations, government is currently preparing a reform which will introduce a Further and Higher Education Act to replace the current Education Act (Cap. 327) on matters concerned with further and higher education (institutions, agencies, and quality assurance framework).

The recommendations aim for a more responsive tertiary education system with the following objectives:

- Shifting the role of internal governance of the University of Malta towards more strategic planning, professional governance and internal accountability;
- Ensuring adequacy of funding to the extent to which institutions can generate other sources of income and efficiency with which funds can be utilised for timely responses;
- Securing fair and equitable access to all Maltese students willing to pursue studies at a higher education level;
- Sustaining student support schemes;
- Establishing a quality assurance agency and providing for independent external evaluation;
- Fostering a quality culture across the sector, whilst monitoring the performance and safeguarding standards.

4. System's strengths and weaknesses

The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current higher education system are best described in the recent NCHE publication relating to a Further and Higher Education Strategy for 2020.

The strategy identifies 4 strategic objectives:

- Attract more young students and adults into further and higher education;
- Ensure fair and open access to all students willing to further their studies;
- Make Malta a centre of excellence in education and research;
- Sustain public responsibility for adequate regulation, resources and funding to secure an inclusive, qualitative and responsive education system.

The recommendations highlight a number of strengths and weaknesses in relation to governance, funding and quality related issues, and propose measures which address the areas of potential improvement.

These include in particular, the recommendations under Objective 4 (Sustain public responsibility to secure an inclusive, qualitative and responsive education system) as follows:

Priority 10: Ensure responsive systems through adequate governance and funding policies

- Establish common principles, objectives, and guidelines for more proactive governing structures within the state further education sector;
- Orient the internal governance system of the University of Malta towards more strategic planning, professional governance and internal accountability;
- Review funding systems – the adequacy of public funding, the extent to which institutions can generate other sources of income and the efficiency with which funds can be utilised for timely responses;
- Promote Malta as a destination for investment in educational services for international markets.

Priority 11: Maintain active participation and co-operation within Europe and Internationally

- Consolidate Malta's participation within the Bologna Process and implement the necessary actions to position Malta with the European Higher Education Area up to 2020;
- Ensure that targets set for Malta within the renewed Lisbon Agenda are met and maximise the opportunities for exchange of good practices and shared experience with other member states;
- Ensure that the goals of the Copenhagen Process are met on a national level, in particular through the validation of non-formal and informal learning and the implementation of the future European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET);

- Ensure that Malta plays an active role in the development of the European Research Area (ERA)
- Develop an all encompassing external policy to embrace opportunities beyond the European level for international co-operation and visibility.

Priority 12: Develop and implement a long-term Investment Plan

The current investment plan projects the following:

- Expenditure required on further and higher education under the current system will amount to €1.2 billion over the coming years up to 2020 if participation targets are to be reached;
- Over 100,000 students and adults attaining further and higher levels of qualifications and;
- Raising potential revenues of over €1.5 million annually as a result of attracting 500 foreign fee-paying students annually by 2020 towards the objective of attracting 5,000 students to Malta in the coming decade.

Both the NCHE and the Ministry for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport are actively engaged in following the various recommendations outlined above.

Explanatory factors for efficiency

1. Staff Policy

1.1. Hiring/Firing

University of Malta

The University of Malta has the autonomy to hire and dismiss academic staff and to deal with personnel matters such as the nature and duration of contracts subject to its statutes and regulations which are determined by the University Council. However, the number of academic staff that the University of Malta can afford to hire, and the remuneration for different academic posts requires prior authorisation by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance.

Article 77(h) gives responsibility to the Council of the University of Malta for deciding on the number of faculties, departments and institutes which indirectly determines the number of academic staff required at the University of Malta. In so doing the Council must take into account the directions of the Minister of Education. Subsequently, appointment to posts is the responsibility of the Council (Article 77(f)) taking into account the regulations for

appointments and promotions of academic staff stipulated in Statute 7 of the University of Malta, in Schedule II of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

77. The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the University and shall have the following functions: (...)

- to make appointments to posts, of an academic nature or otherwise, in accordance with procedures established by statutes;
- to pay the wages or salaries of all members of the academic and non-academic staff in accordance with scales determined by it with the approval of the Minister;
- to establish Faculties, departments and institutes for the proper organization of academic work and interdisciplinary collaboration, taking into account any directions given by the Minister in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- to appoint heads of departments for periods not exceeding four years after considering the recommendations of the departments concerned;
- to appoint and provide for the payment of Maltese or foreign examiners in accordance with statutes and predetermined procedures;

The Council is responsible for determining the categories of staff, the qualifications and criteria involved in each case, and how staff should be allocated across the various faculties and departments. The structure is defined in Statute 7 of the University of Malta.

The responsibilities for recruitment procedures vary depending on the different categories of academic staff, as outlined hereunder.

Schedule II

Statute 7

7.6 Conditions applicable to particular appointments

1. The general duties of staff with formal teaching and/or research duties are those listed under the sub-heading "lecturers". They apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to all other grades subject to particular conditions for each grade as listed hereunder:

(i) Teaching Assistants

- are expected to be in possession of a good first degree or analogous qualifications and will be required to assist in the teaching programmes of the University;
- may be required to help in other activities such as research and other related work as deemed necessary by the competent authority;
- are not expected to carry out research work on their own initiative although they are encouraged to involve themselves in research related to their teaching area. Although

not entitled to Sabbatical leave, Teaching Assistants will be encouraged and as far as possible assisted to further their expertise in their area of specialisation. In this regard, authorisation by Council for study leave can be expected, subject to the exigencies of the University at different times.

(ii) Research Assistants

- are expected to be in possession of a good first degree or analogous qualifications and are mainly required to assist in particular research programmes of the University. They may also be required to help in other activities such as teaching and other related work, as deemed appropriate by the competent authority;
- may be required to assist senior students in research work being undertaken under the supervision of another member of the teaching staff;
- are not expected to carry out research work on their own initiative;
- are appointed for a definite period of time as required for the particular research programme for which they are employed.

(iii) Assistant Lecturers

Assistant Lecturers may be appointed either in the expectation that they will provide mainly tutorial assistance, teaching at the foundation level or until promotion to the grade of Lecturer on the attainment of further qualifications. In the latter case, they will be provided with the necessary assistance and the opportunity to obtain these qualifications.

In the case of Assistant Lecturers who are not pursuing full-time studies abroad, arrangements will be made within their Departments so that they may avail themselves of periods during which their normal workload is eased to enable them to carry out their research.

(iv) Lecturers

- are expected to teach in any university courses where the subject is required - including lecturing, tutorials and seminars, supervision of practical work and placements, counselling on projects and other
- personally undertaken student enterprises;
- carry out research for publication - both individual and collaborative particularly in priority areas established by the University;
- share in the continuous assessment of students, setting and marking of examination papers within established time-frames;
- participate in the administration of academic affairs at departmental, faculty and university levels;

- contribute to national development, particularly in the area of specialisation and through co- operation with governmental and nongovernmental institutions and services.

(v) Senior Lecturers

- are expected to perform all the duties of lecturers with the leadership expected in the light of their qualifications for appointment (paragraph 7.3.1 (d)).

(vi) Associate Professors

- are expected to perform all the duties of lecturers and to carry particular responsibility for the collaborative design and development of didactic and research programmes, the direction of institutes and analogous entities, and other coordinating functions.

(vii) Professors

- are expected and entitled to devote more time to supervision of research and advanced study than the norm for all teachers and to have the necessary facilities whereby to do so;
- are entitled to communicate directly with the Rector on all matters and to participate in an advisory capacity in the Faculty Board;
- are entitled to be consulted on matters that are related to their area of expertise and are expected to provide the Head of Department, or Director of the Institute, to which they belong, the additional support which their status and scholarly authority warrants.

(viii) Visiting Professors

Foreign or local scholars of professorial rank or distinction may be appointed Visiting Professors by a resolution of Council on the recommendation of Senate.

A Visiting Professor will be expected to contribute to the activities of the University in one or more of the following ways:

- through sets of lectures or intensive short courses;
- through participation in the supervision or completion of research programmes; and
- through expert advice and consultancy tendered to the authorities of the University.

A Visiting Professor will be entitled to: the academic prerogatives of Professors insofar as a regular presence on the campus is not required for their exercise; and such honoraria as may be established by Council for each specific task.

(ix) Honorary Professors

- Foreign or local scholars of professorial rank or distinction may be appointed Honorary Professors by a resolution of Council on the recommendation of Senate.
- An Honorary Professor will be expected to contribute to the activities of the University in any way that will enhance its service and prestige, in accord with the competent authorities.
- An Honorary Professor will be entitled to such academic prerogatives of Professors as are not attached to specific duties.

(x) Emeritus Professors

- Professors who retire after at least ten years of service at that grade or, if they retire before, by resolution of Senate, will become Emeritus Professors.
- An Emeritus Professor is entitled to the same prerogatives as an Honorary Professor.
- An Emeritus Professor shall take precedence in all public ceremonies of the University immediately after the members of Senate.

(xi) University Fellows

Fellows may be appointed by Council on the recommendation of Senate as:

- Honorary Fellows, where the University wants to confer such honour on deserving individuals;
- Senior Fellows, in the case of retiring members of staff to enable them to carry on with their research contributions at the University;
- Visiting Fellows, in the case of senior foreign or local scholars of professional rank or distinction.

(xii) Chancellor Emeritus

- A former Chancellor may be appointed Chancellor Emeritus by a resolution of Council.
- Chancellor Emeriti shall take precedence in all public ceremonies of the University as the most senior of the Emeritus Professors and will have the right to wear the appropriate academic robes.

7.7 General Provision

1. For the purpose of the Education Act (Cap. 327), staff appointed under Statute 7 shall be considered as academic staff.

The official regulations applicable to academic staff recruitment procedures, are prescribed in the following statutes which may be revised by the governing bodies of the University of Malta.

Schedule II

Statute 7

7.1 Appointments of Staff with Formal Teaching and/or Research Duties

- Appointments of staff with formal teaching and/or research duties shall be made in the grades of professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant lecturer, teaching assistant, research assistant or in any other grades approved by Council on the recommendation of Senate, according to the qualifications of the persons being appointed.
- Posts may be advertised for appointments within specified grades.

When staff members are recruited by public advertisement (national/international), the Rector on behalf of the Council circulates the advertisements. The regulations specify those responsible for the procedure used to select applicants as follows:

Schedule II

Statute 7

7.1 Appointments of Staff with Formal Teaching and/or Research Duties

3. An appointment to a post with a formal teaching and/or research duties shall be made by Council on the recommendation of a Selection Board composed as follows:

- the Rector, who shall be chairman;
- three members of staff with formal teaching and/or research duties appointed by Senate, normally including the head of department concerned (or, in the case of posts specifically intended only for an institute, or other entity of similar nature, the director of that institute or the chief officer of the entity concerned) and another head of department from outside the Faculty:

- Provided that when it is envisaged that the appointee is to give significant service to a second Department/Institute/Centre or other entity of similar nature, the chief officer of the entity concerned is to replace the head of department from outside the Faculty.
- one member of Council not in the employment of the University appointed annually by the Council to be a member of all Selection Boards for posts

Official regulations do not specify exclusion criteria, such as no in-house (internal) appointments for certain positions.

Academic staff negotiates their employment contracts under a collective agreement with the University of Malta, represented jointly by the President of the Council and the Rector as the legal representative of the University.

MCAST

Article 90(h) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) gives responsibility to MCAST for determining the number of teaching and training posts required.

90. The College shall: (...)

(h) establish the teaching and training posts or act otherwise as may be required from time to time and appoint persons to such posts;

The Board of Governors determines the number of staff, taking into consideration the fields of study, the necessary institutes, departments, centres, programmes and other entities that are necessary. Article 93(1)(c) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) gives the Board of Governors the responsibility of allocating all resources including staff, across various faculties and departments.

93. (1) The Board of Governors shall be the highest governing body of the College and shall have the duty of performing the objectives and to exercise the powers of the College as laid down in the provisions of this Act, and shall in particular have the following functions: (...)

(b) to establish Institutes, departments, centres, programmes and other educational and training entities for the due performance of the educational and training tasks and of interdisciplinary co-operation;

(c) to distribute between the several Institutes and other educational and training entities within it the resources available to the College by way of funds and by way of premises, facilities, services, equipment and persons;

Article 109(3) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) gives appointment responsibilities to the Principal of the College, subject to approval by the Board of Governors.

109. (...) (3) An appointment to a post with formal duties of teaching and, or, research shall be made by the Principal and confirmed by the Board of Governors.

However, superseding these powers, the Minister for Education can intervene in determining further appointments, by virtue of article 113.

113. (1) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and of any other enactment applicable hereto, including this Act, any entity, acting with the concurrence of the Minister, may appoint and employ such officials and other employees which may from time to time be required for the due and efficient performance of its functions.

(2) Such appointment and employment of the said officials and employees shall be effected with such remuneration and upon such terms and conditions as the entity may, in concurrence with the Minister, from time to time, determine.

Article 109(1) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) determines the different categories of staff appointed at MCAST.

109. (1) The appointment of staff with duties of teaching, training and, or research shall be made in the grades of professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant lecturer, teaching assistant, research assistant or in any other grade approved by the Board of Governors according to the qualifications of the person being appointed.

The Principal is responsible for determining the categories of staff, the qualifications and criteria involved in each case, and how staff should be allocated across the various departments.

MCAST has internally set recruitment procedures for different categories of academic staff. The Education Act (Cap. 327) limits itself to specifying the appointment of the principal officers of the College. Once MCAST starts awarding its own higher education qualifications, it will strengthen its regulations prior to appointing academic staff at these levels.

The Education Act (Cap. 327) specifies the responsibility for the recruitment of academic staff. The Principal with the approval of the Board of Governors is responsible for appointments. The procedures are outlined in Article 102 (2) of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

102. (1) The Principal shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the College.

(2) The Principal, without prejudice to the powers vested in the governing bodies of the College by the provisions of this Act, shall have all the powers necessary for the governance and administration of the College, including the power to make such necessary appointments of officers and employees having an academic or technical background or of any other kind, for such period, under such conditions and in accordance with procedures established by the Board of Governors, including the power to decide upon any urgent matter of an educational or other nature:

Provided that any such aforementioned decision effecting any power or function vested by this Act in a governing body of the College shall be registered by the Principal and put on the agenda of that governing body in its first meeting after such decision.

The Principal is responsible for advertising appointments. Subsequently, the responsibility for determining the selection process is of the Principal with the assistance of the Administrative Bureau of the College as specified under Article 97(c) of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

97. The Bureau shall meet at least every four weeks in order to: (...) (c) under the direction of the Principal, and without prejudice to any of the provisions of this Part, take care of all the matters related to the process of selection and engagement of the personnel the College may from time to time require, and to propose for the approval of the Principal the nominations of the persons so selected;

No regulations specify exclusion criteria, such as no in-house (internal) appointments for certain positions. Academic staff negotiates their employment contracts under a collective agreement between the trade union and the College, represented jointly by the Principal and the President of the Board of Governors. The employer is MCAST represented legally by the Principal.

1.2. Wages

Both the University of Malta and MCAST negotiate wages within a collective agreement between the University and staff representatives, with the approval of Government.

University of Malta

The Council requires approval of the Minister, who in turn follows procedural norms prior to consent, in terms of establishing the wages or salaries of all members of the academic staff.

77. The Council shall be the supreme governing body of the University and shall have the following functions: (...)

(g) to pay the wages or salaries of all members of the academic and non-academic staff in accordance with scales determined by it with the approval of the Minister;

The Council, in agreement with the Minister for Education, fix the gross annual basic salary through a collective agreement with the union representing academic staff.

A Promotions Board is responsible for the consideration of promotions of academic staff. Such a board is appointed according to Article 7.2 (1) of Statute 7 of the University of Malta.

Schedule II

Statute 7

7.2 Promotion of Staff with Formal Teaching and/or Research Duties

1. Every three years, normally during March/April, applications from staff with formal teaching and/or research duties for promotion shall be considered by a Promotions Board appointed for a period not exceeding three years and consisting of:

- the Rector, who shall be Chairman;
- three full professors appointed by Senate; and
- one member of Council not in the employment of the University appointed by Council.

2. The Rector may propose any member of staff with formal teaching and/or research duties for consideration by the Promotions Board at its regular meeting or, in exceptional circumstances, at any other time.

Staff is eligible to a Performance Bonus as defined in the Performance Bonus Scheme of the collective agreement between the University of Malta and the Malta Union of Teachers. Under the agreement in place, the principles of the scheme are outlined in the agreement and agreed to by Council. Additionally a Review Committee within the Quality Assurance Committee appointed by the Senate, is charged to review the operation of the scheme and make recommendations on interpretations of the criteria for appraisal, review performance standards and measures intended to improve academic standards, and recommend to Council such modifications of the principles and procedures of the performance scheme as it may consider necessary.

Promotions Board as defined in Article 7.2 of Statute 7, outlined above, are responsible for fixing the criteria for career advancement.

Subject to the conditions stipulated in Schedule II, Statute 7, Article 7.6, (conditions applicable to particular appointments), members may receive fast track appointments at the discretion of the Council.

MCAST

The Board of Governors is responsible for making decisions concerning remuneration of academic staff, in concurrence with the Minister for Education, who in turn follows procedural norms prior to consent, in terms of establishing the wages or salaries of all members of the academic staff.

The Minister for Education can intervene in determining remuneration of staff by virtue of Article 113(2) of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

113. (1) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and of any other enactment applicable hereto, including this Act, any entity, acting with the concurrence of the Minister, may appoint and employ such officials and other employees which may from time to time be required for the due and efficient performance of its functions.

(2) Such appointment and employment of the said officials and employees shall be effected with such remuneration and upon such terms and conditions as the entity may, in concurrence with the Minister, from time to time, determine.

The Board of Governors, in agreement with the Minister for Education, fix the gross annual basic salary through a collective agreement with the union representing academic staff.

Progression between scales falls under the responsibility of the Principal with the approval of the Board of Governors.

The staff is not eligible to bonus by statutory right. Should such bonuses be contemplated by the Board of Governors, in concurrence with the Minister for Education, they would be included within a collective agreement.

The Principal with the approval of the Board of Directors fix the criteria for career advancement. Fast track career advancement is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

2. Output flexibility

2.1. Course content and exams

University of Malta

Article 72(a) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) empowers the University of Malta to determine what fields of study and research to provide, in its own discretion.

72. The University of Studies of Malta is, by means of the present Act, being refounded under the name of University of Malta with the following functions and powers:

(a) to provide for instruction in such branches of learning and to make such provisions for research and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge as it may from time to time determine;...

The power to establish or remove fields of study is shared between Council and Senate. Council will approve all the capacity and resources required to establish institutes, appoint

staff, allocate resources, under Article 77 of the Education Act (Cap. 327), whereas Senate has the responsibility “to regulate studies, research, documentation and examinations in the University by means of regulations” under Article 79 of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

MCAST

Article 892(1) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) empowers MCAST to determine what fields of study and research to provide, in its own discretion.

89. (1) The College shall in a general manner ensure the existence of educational institutions accessible to all, and to establish such facilities and such programmes of education and training, and of work and practical experience which the College may deem necessary to provide all with the opportunity to qualify in trades, skills, artisan or technical or commercial activities, and in the professions according to the socio-economic needs of the country in a lifelong learning curriculum framework and holistic personal development.

The power to establish or remove fields of study is shared between the Board of Governors and the Council. The Board of Governors will approve all the capacity and resources required to establish institutes, appoint staff, allocate resources, under Article 93(1) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), whereas the Council has the responsibility to regulate studies, research, documentation and examinations under Article 95(1) of the said Act.

93. (1) The Board of Governors shall be the highest governing body of the College and shall have the duty of performing the objectives and to exercise the powers of the College as laid down in the provisions of this Act, and shall in particular have the following functions:

(a) to acquire, administer and control the resources, facilities and property, both movable and immovable, of the College;

(b) to establish Institutes, departments, centres, programmes and other educational and training entities for the due performance of the educational and training tasks and of interdisciplinary co-operation;

95. (1) The Council shall be responsible for the general direction of the vocational and professional education and training of the College, and shall have the following functions:

(a) to regulate by means of regulations the programmes of studies, training, research, documentation and examinations at the College and to establish such degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions for such candidates satisfying the prescribed conditions after following the required courses of studies and training;

No minimum standards for the establishment or retention of a field of study are prescribed by law for either the University of Malta or MCAST.

Official regulations concerning the organisational structure of fields of study and the actors/bodies are involved in defining them, are outlined hereunder by institution.

University of Malta

Official regulations exist concerning the organisational structure of fields of study. All subsidiary legislation regulating the structure of fields of study is organised by level and type of course.

Article 72 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) grants the University of Malta the responsibility for defining the organisational structure of fields of study. This responsibility is shared between the Council responsible for the administrative issues relating to faculties and resources, and the Senate responsible for all academic issues. Article 74(5) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) makes the Chancellor the supreme officer responsible for promulgating Statutes, Regulations and bye-laws.

74. (5) The Chancellor promulgates the statutes, regulations and bye-laws of the governing bodies of the University and may refer back once to the governing body concerned any such statutes, regulations or bye-laws which in his opinion are not in accordance with the law; the Chancellor, in special circumstances, shall also have the power to summon the Council, Senate and Faculty Boards.

Article 75 defines the shared responsibilities of different bodies regulate and define different fields of study.

75. (1) The University shall have the power to make statutes, regulations, and bye-laws in order to provide for its own administration and for the administration of its activities and of the entities created by it.

(2) Statutes shall be made by the Council and shall bind the whole University as well as the entities created by it.

(3) Regulations shall be made by the Senate and shall provide for matters of an academic nature and shall bind the whole University.

(4) Bye-laws shall be made by the Faculty Boards and shall provide for matters of an academic nature and shall bind the Faculty represented by the Faculty Board that made those byelaws.

(5) No statute providing for a matter of an academic nature may be made or, when made, may be amended or revoked by the Council, unless the Council requests the advice of the Senate of that statute or on that amendment or revocation but if such advice is not tendered within the term established by the Council, which term shall in no case be less than twenty-one days from the date of the said request, then the Council may make that statute or amend or revoke it without that advice.

(6) Statutes, regulations and bye-laws made by the competent governing bodies of the University in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act shall be without

effect unless promulgated by the Chancellor and published in the Government Gazette but when those statutes, regulations or bye-laws have been so promulgated and published they shall have the force of law: Provided that the subsidiary legislation herein mentioned shall as soon as may be after it is made, be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives.

(7) Any power given by this Act for the making of statutes, regulations or bye-laws by the competent governing body of the University shall be construed as including a power, exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like consent and conditions, if any, to rescind, revoke, amend, or vary the statutes, regulations or bye-laws, and such power shall be exercisable without prejudice to the making of new statutes, regulations or bye-laws.

The Senate of the University of Malta is the key body responsible for all academic aspects of fields of study. Article 79 defines its responsibilities.

79. The Senate shall have the general direction of the academic matters of the University and shall have the following functions:

- to regulate studies, research, documentation and examinations in the University by means of regulations;
- to make regulations in accordance with the provision of this Act;
- to decide on whom should be conferred academic degrees, diplomas and other distinctions;
- to establish by regulations the conditions for admission into the University;
- to give recognition to the degrees, diplomas, certificates and distinctions of foreign universities or institutes of higher education;
- to advise the Council on matters of an academic nature even if of such a nature only in part;
- to advise the Government on all matters in the fields of learning, science and technology referred to it by the Government;
- to deal with any other matter of an academic nature arising in the administration of the University.

MCAST

Generally different fields of study are organised within different institutes. Each institute shall have a board of studies as defined by Article 98 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) described in Section 1.1 above. The actors include academic staff in the area as well as representatives of professional bodies or economic sectors related to the area and field of study.

Study programmes are developed solely by the institutions and in partnership with other entities to their discretion, depending on whether a particular programme is meant to satisfy

the specific needs of industry, commerce or the services. Some programmes are adopted from partnering institutions, both local and foreign.

The Council, the Senate and the Faculties are all involved in designing and approving new study programmes. Programmes are governed by the General Regulations for University awards of different levels, which determine the course structure, duration, and assessment criteria amongst other matters. Generally programmes are defined using the European Credit transfer System (ECTS) and are linked to the three cycle degree system whereby First degree duration is between 3-4 years, Masters is an additional year and Doctorate is a further three years.

Passing examination requirements are drawn up at an institutional level, however, since both institutions are self governing, any regulations drawn up become de facto part of subsidiary legislation to the Education Act. Some specific regulations pertinent to examinations are listed hereunder for different institutions.

University students may request a revision of paper according to the University Examination Regulations (LN274/09):

6. Revision of Examination Papers

6.1 Subject to the provisions of regulations and to any procedural guidelines made by the relevant University authority, a candidate may, within two weeks from the publication of the examination results, request that a revision of his examination scripts be undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining that no error was made in the award of marks or grade obtained in a particular examination paper.

6.2 The revision of examination scripts will be undertaken by the same Board of Examiners together with an additional examiner appointed by the Senate for the purpose. The provisions of regulation 3 apply *mutatis mutandis*.

6.3 The academic judgement of the original examiners is not reviewable by the Board of Examiners considering the appeal and the result will only be altered if the change can be justified by objective criteria.

6.4 The result of the revision of papers will be communicated to the candidate in the form of a short report giving the motivation of the result.

2.2. Offer of short studies and other diversifies studies

Both the University of Malta and MCAST offer short study programmes some of which have a duration of a couple of weeks, whilst others go into two years. Such courses are offered in a variety of fields and interests and are also well attended.

For a comprehensive list of such courses visit the websites of the University of Malta (www.um.edu.mt) and MCAST (www.mcast.edu.mt).

2.3. Student choice

Under each field of study institutions offer a wide selection of courses.

For a comprehensive list of such courses visit the websites of the University of Malta(www.um.edu.mt) and MCAST (www.mcast.edu.mt).

These courses are established flexibly for each programme and amended according to needs and demands. Options usually are made at the beginning of the year; however students have the faculty to change their courses options through the programme.

Institutions offer a variety of teaching modes, from part-time to distance-learning. For most courses including the full time courses, institutions offer mature students (over 23 years of age) not having the usual enrolment requirements, the possibility to enter the course after an interview.

21.6 % of those enrolled within the tertiary education sector are attending part-time and evening courses.

In 2007, 6% of adults in Malta were participating in lifelong learning.

Mature applicants may not necessarily be required to present the formal qualifications. However, they may be accepted on the basis of a wide variety of acquirements. The Admissions Board, acting on the advice of a faculty admissions committee, assesses mature candidates in order to ascertain whether they possess the necessary academic background to follow the proposed course with profit.

34% are adult learners within the University of Malta (2008)

Flexibility exists in certain fields of study, such as business and commerce, arts and humanities. However in specific areas, mostly related to regulated professions, specific education backgrounds are normally required, for example, medicine; engineering; architecture and dentistry.

2.4. Numerus clausus

There are no national / regional regulations which restrict or ration entry into specific academic fields. Restrictions exist in very few and particular courses where the studies require access to specific capacity. In such cases the institutions self-regulate the restrictions in place.

Both MCAST and the University of Malta, have full autonomy in determining their admissions criteria, and are self governing through relevant subsidiary legislation to the Education Act (Cap. 327), in the form of statutes, regulations and bye-laws of the Institutions, depending on the area and level of studies.

Both institutions have full autonomy in determining the number of study places in specific courses, by way of bye-laws issued by the governing bodies of the institutions.

University of Malta All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (except for Medicine and Dental Surgery) are defined using the ECTS system and fall within the three cycle degree system whereby the duration of first degrees is between 3-4 years, Masters is a further 1-2 years and Doctorates a further 3 years.

Article 75 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) establishes the power of different governing bodies to make regulations which determine the limit of study places in each course.

75. (1) The University shall have the power to make statutes, regulations, and bye-laws in order to provide for its own administration and for the administration of its activities and of the entities created by it.

(2) Statutes shall be made by the Council and shall bind the whole University as well as the entities created by it.

(3) Regulations shall be made by the Senate and shall provide for matters of an academic nature and shall bind the whole University.

(4) Bye-laws shall be made by the Faculty Boards and shall provide for matters of an academic nature and shall bind the Faculty represented by the Faculty Board that made those byelaws.

(5) No statute providing for a matter of an academic nature may be made or, when made, may be amended or revoked by the Council, unless the Council requests the advice of the Senate of that statute or on that amendment or revocation but if such advice is not tendered within the term established by the Council, which term shall in no case be less than twenty-one days from the date of the said request, then the Council may make that statute or amend or revoke it without that advice.

(6) Statutes, regulations and bye-laws made by the competent governing bodies of the University in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act shall be without effect unless promulgated by the Chancellor and published in the Government Gazette but when those statutes, regulations or bye-laws have been so promulgated and published they shall have the force of law: Provided that the subsidiary legislation herein mentioned shall as soon as may be after it is made, be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives.

(7) Any power given by this Act for the making of statutes, regulations or bye-laws by the competent governing body of the University shall be construed as including a power, exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like consent and conditions, if any, to rescind, revoke, amend, or vary the statutes, regulations or bye-laws, and such power shall be exercisable without prejudice to the making of new statutes, regulations or bye-laws.

MCAST

Generally all applicants who satisfy the admission requirements may join the course of their choice. Limitations in the admission of students in certain courses may be owing to limitations of spaces, services or facilities, in which case decisions on limitations are taken by the board of governors of MCAST.

2.5. Regional/ European/ global mobility

There are no set limits to the transfer of students between programmes and between different higher education institutions.

Currently no data is kept on the number of students from outside Malta enrolled in tertiary institutions. However, the University of Malta has an average of 800 incoming students from Erasmus programmes

The higher education sector is fully open to students from other Member States. Diplomas take around 6 -12 weeks to be recognised and its average is €10.

The higher education sector is fully open to teachers and researchers who have obtained their qualification in other Member States. Diplomas take around 6 -12 weeks to be recognised and its average is €10.

Most of the faculties offer the possibility for students to go on exchange visits which are then recognised as an integral part of the degree being undertaken in Malta.

3. Evaluation

3.1. Institutional evaluation

Currently, there is no independent evaluator/agency in Malta established to undertake external evaluations of the UoM. Whilst this will be reflected in the intended reforms for Higher Education, currently the University relies on the long standing practice of inviting external examiners to review various examination papers and report on their findings to the University Faculty and to Senate.

MCAST faces a similar situation in that no external evaluation agency exists in Malta, however most of its programmes are evaluated by foreign Universities or examination boards as part of their internal quality assurance arrangements, and MCAST may also receive

external audit visits from quality assurance agencies of their respective partner institutions abroad.

University of Malta

In 1997, by virtue of Statute 11, a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and an Academic Audit Unit (AAU) were set up and is responsible for evaluating teaching and management staff at the University of Malta. The terms of reference of the QAC and the AAU are defined in article 2 of Statute 11.

Statute 11

2. The terms of reference of the Quality Assurance Committee shall include the following:

- establishing procedures for the evaluation and promotion of quality teaching, research and administrative services;
- instituting schemes to reward quality services and innovative teaching approaches, research and administrative services; and
- proposing ways of improving the University's support services to teaching, research and administrative services.

The QAC has since then developed its own internal audits and outcomes of such audits are as yet not available to the public domain. With the establishment of the NCHE in 2006, it is one of their objectives to develop a quality assurance framework to strengthen the accountability of all Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Malta. Kindly visit the following website for more information (https://secure2.gov.mt/NCHE/mediacenter/PDFs/1_NCHEQuality%20Report%20on%20MEYE%20website.pdf).

The strongest reference to performance appraisal is specified within the collective agreement between the University of Malta and staff representatives. The performance is appraised in terms of meeting general obligations and specific obligations specified in different job descriptions in the Act or any subsidiary legislation. No productivity objectives are specified in the appraisal process explicitly. In this context the appraisal is linked to the performance bonus to which academic staff is entitled.

MCAST

Arrangements for evaluating teaching and management staff in higher education are the joint responsibility of the Principal and the Board of Directors. The only reference for evaluation is made in Article 97(d) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), which gives the Administrative

Bureau the responsibility to evaluate teaching and management staff at large and defines the frequency with which such a Bureau should meet.

97. The [Administrative] Bureau shall meet at least every four weeks in order to: (...)
(e) adopt all necessary measures to apply the disciplinary procedures and the auditing and quality assurance schemes of all operations within the College.

4. Funding rules

4.1. Public funding

As stated above the current policy for higher education funding is outlined in the annual budget speech of the Minister of Finance, and the debates preceding and following the budget speech. Further that this the Ministry for Education undertakes periodic reviews of the funding requirements of Higher Education and makes recommendations for future policy in this area, whilst the NCHE also carries out various sectoral reviews and makes recommendations on the funding strategy of higher education in Malta on a periodic basis to Government.

The University of Malta is allocated two block votes: one for capital and the other for recurrent expenditure. The capital vote covers all capital expenditure including property, buildings and equipment necessary, whereas the recurrent vote covers all operating expenses including predominantly the staff wages and salaries.

The University of Malta

In Article 73 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) it is stated that:

73. (1) The finance of the University shall derive from periodic agreements entered into between the University and the Government stipulating, among other things, the supply of funds to the University by the Government.
(2) The amount of funds to be stated in the agreement shall be established in relation to the requirements of the University to achieve its aims determined in the context of the needs of the country as perceived by the Government.

MCAST

In the case of MCAST, all MCAST expenditure is directly paid by public sources.

The process used for such decisions is described in Article 120 of the Education Act (Cap. 327), relevant extracts of which are outlined hereunder.

120. (1) An entity shall cause to be prepared in every financial year, and shall not later than the end of September of each such year adopt, estimates of the income and expenditure of the entity for the next following financial year: Provided that the estimates for the first financial year of each entity shall be prepared and adopted within such time as the Minister may by notice in writing to the entity specify...

(...) (4) A copy of the estimates shall, upon their adoption by the entity, be sent forthwith by the entity to the Minister and to the Minister responsible for finance. The Minister shall at the earliest opportunity and not later than six weeks after he has received a copy of the estimates from the entity, after consultation with the Minister responsible for finance, approve the same with or without amendment. The Minister shall as soon as practicable cause the total amount of these approved estimates to form an integral part of the Government General Estimates.

The criteria for allocation of funds to each institution are determined by various actors within the Ministry of Education. The Minister for Education in consultation with the Minister for Finance set the overarching policy framework.

The amount of annual expenditure is predominantly input oriented, linked significantly to remuneration of staff, the collective agreements in force and the number of staff (both academic and administrative) appointed or planned to be appointed in any financial year. The student enrolment data indirectly influences the scale and resource capacity required, and such data is taken into consideration by the institutions when formulating their estimates of the income and expenditure of the entity for the next financial year.

Funding is not strictly linked to performance except in the field of research. Basic research is covered by the framework described above, however funding for advanced research in specialised fields is allocated to higher education institutions on a competitive basis through research funding initiatives co-ordinated by MCST. MCST is responsible for allocating funds for research on such competitive basis. Additionally the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme Board appointed by the Minister for Education is responsible for allocating research bursaries to students for advancement of studies at post-graduate level.

4.2. Impact of quality assessments on funding

Currently no system is in place to assess quality in higher education and hence funding decisions are not based on quality assessments or any other form of performance measures.

4.3. Private funding

4.3.1. Tuition fees and/or households

Decisions of the amounts of contributions towards tuition costs, certification and registration fees are not made by the institutions but are determined the Minister for Education by virtue of Article 126 of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

126. (1) In State schools and the University all teaching shall be given to Maltese citizens without any fee being charged. So as to ensure the full exercise of choice of school by parents, the State shall, through agreements of subsidy of non-State schools, when such are of a non profit-making character, in accordance with the availability of public funds, provide gradually for the same gratuity of teaching in such schools as is afforded to students in State schools.

(2) The Minister may by regulations prescribe the fees to be charged for examinations and special courses outside regular hours and the fees to be paid by students who are not Maltese citizens: Provided that the Minister may exempt any person from the payment of those fees.

The University Fees are stipulated by the Minister for Education in the University Fees Regulations (LN258/09).

The University Fees Regulations (LN258/09) do provide for varied tuition fees based on different courses (not faculties), and by different levels of education such as first degree, masters or doctorate level. Additionally the fees vary between full-time and part-time provision. Fees for full-time courses are only applicable to non-Maltese citizens. Both Maltese and Foreign students are however subject to fees for part-time courses or post-graduate courses.

The funds from fees are all accrued at a central level. Funds generated through tuition fees are included with all other revenue, and are regulated under the same financial provisions outlined earlier.

The Minister for Education is the sole body charged with regulating the fees for students attending higher education institutions. Since the establishment of the NCHE, the Minister must consult on all areas of higher education policy, including any change in policy regarding tuition fees. There is no further elaboration in the regulations, regarding the collection and use of fees, meaning that such fees accrue to the institutions as part of their overall revenue.

4.3.2. Business, other

Higher education institutions may raise funds from sources other than students and families. The University of Malta has a number of investments including the Malta University Services – the commercial arm of university, providing technology transfer to industry, professional training services and publications.

Under the current financial framework, all revenues that the University of Malta generates fall into one single fund which then contributes to future expenditure requirements. When revenues exceed expenses, Article 116(3) of the Education Act (Cap. 327) allows institutions to invest such surplus with the approval of the Minister.

117. (...) (3) Any funds of an entity not immediately required to meet expenditure may be invested in such manner as may from time to time be approved by the Minister.

Industry funding is very limited and related to singular initiatives. The University of Malta has full autonomy on the use of these funds.

No public incentives or forms of support for private fund-raising by higher education institutions exist. Current regulations do not encourage higher education institutions to establish strategic policies linked to private fund-raising through the charging of fees to Maltese students; however allow the institutions to attract foreign students on a commercial basis and engage in research activity which have fund-raising potential.

In 2008, the NCHE proposed the creation of a Trust Fund which encourages private or corporate bodies to donate funds to the university. The funds raised from private donors should be tax deductible in order to incentivise this activity. In effect, the Government becomes a co-investor with corporations and society at large to develop significant reserves for the University of Malta which in the long-run permit it to embark on innovative research activity and plan its activities beyond the reach of annual recurrent allocations from the Government.

4.3.3. Grants/loans

In total 14 schemes are available to support students for education and training initiatives:

- eight of these schemes are related to higher education studies;
- one scheme is a soft-loan facility;
- another three schemes relate to mobility support such as Leonardo, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus.

More information on these schemes can be found on the ‘*Guide to Financial Support Scheme for Maltese Students*’, available on the NCHE website (www.nche.gov.mt/publications).

The largest student support scheme, worth €1 million per year, is the Student Maintenance Grants (SMG) scheme which is available for students attending public and private sixth forms, vocational colleges such as MCAST and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) as well as the University of Malta. Students receive a monthly stipend during their academic year and also receive part of their grant on the student card which covers educational related costs. The card is topped up once on commencement and annually with a sum of money. Standard grants are available and vary from post-secondary to University level studies. Specific ‘prescribed’ courses, mostly related to Science and Technology, receive higher grants. Furthermore, students with particular hardships or who face certain circumstances may apply for additional support. Students from Gozo also receive a special grant to attend institutions in Malta.

The table hereunder summarises the applicability of different schemes available according to sector.

Funding Schemes available per level of the Malta Qualification Framework

Funding scheme	Further Education in Malta		Higher Education in Malta	International studies
	General Education	Vocational Education and Training		
Student Maintenance Grants				*
ESTS				
TAS				
My Potential				
Training Subsidy Scheme				
Training Aid Framework				
Malta Government Scholarship Scheme - Undergraduate				
Malta Government Scholarship Scheme - Postgraduate				
Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarship				
Career Guidance Capacity Building Scholarship				
Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme				
Leonardo da Vinci Programme				
Erasmus Programme				
Erasmus Mundus Programme				
* Student Maintenance Grants are only portable to other EU countries as part of EU mobility programmes				

The SMG has a specific means-tested supplementary grant for students with proven financial hardship; this is generally evaluated by the SMG Board on a case-by-case basis.

All other schemes contain different provisions which take into consideration groups with particular circumstances, these include additional grants for students who undertake long term studies but have children, students with special needs, with special travel requirements or students from Gozo who have an additional burden for living and transport costs.

5. Impact on Employability

According to EUROSTAT 2008 data, the employment rate for those with a tertiary level of education was of 85.1% in 2007 whilst the employment rate of those with an upper-secondary level of education was of 71.7% for the same year.

The University of Malta has held close ties with industry over the years with meetings being held throughout the years between the academics and their business counterparts and the Rectorate and the authorities involved in the various sectors.

Over the past months, in response to the European Commission's movement to modernise universities, the University of Malta together with the Chamber of Commerce are developing a University-Business Forum in order to:

- present new teaching and research initiatives undertaken which address areas of potential economic growth and innovation;
- present innovative projects for collaboration with targeted business sectors;
- present different views on long term developments and future skill requirements in specific sectors;
- highlight the importance of emerging skills requirements in growing sectors and new developments within the University.

The first University-Business Forum will be held in March 2010.

The Employment and Training Corporation offers services of job matching and guidance. Apart from this the University of Malta has created the Degree Plus initiative where all students are given the opportunity to enrich their academic studies with extra skills and experiences that can add value to their knowledgebase. The activities are intended to provide the opportunity for one to undertake a more holistic approach to formal education without the added stress of tests and examinations.

Apart from this many faculties offer placements within the labour market and internships during the academic year which form an integral part of the programme.

6. Recent and planned reforms of the tertiary education system

6.1. Planned reforms (or reference to ongoing policy debate)

In 2008, the NCHE published a series of studies on the requirements for a new licensing, accreditation and external quality assurance framework which implements the European Standards and Guidelines in Malta.

In 2009, NCHE also published its first recommendations for a Further and Higher Education Strategy up to 2020.

On the basis of these recommendations, government is currently preparing a reform which introduced a Further and Higher Education Act to replace the current Education Act (Cap. 327) on matters concerned with Further and Higher Education (institutions, agencies, and quality assurance framework).

The recommendations aim for a more responsive tertiary education system with the following objectives:

- shifting the role of internal governance of the University of Malta towards more strategic planning, professional governance and internal accountability;
- ensuring adequacy of funding to the extent to which institutions can generate other sources of income and efficiency with which funds can be utilized for timely responses;
- securing fair and equitable access to all Maltese students willing to pursue studies at a higher education level;
- sustaining student support schemes;
- establishing a quality assurance agency and providing for independent external evaluation;
- fostering a quality culture across the sector, whilst monitoring the performance and safeguarding standards.