

Boosting Employability by Designing qualifications in terms of groups of learning outcomes- The case of Malta

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Reform Origins

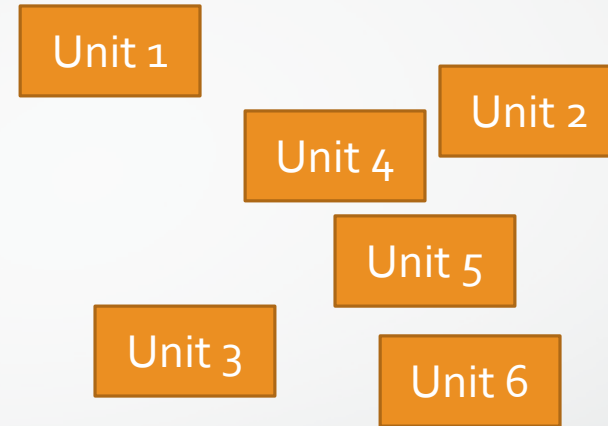
- Publication of Legal Notice 347 of 2005 provided the foundations of the MQF
- Launch of the MQF In June 2007
 - MQF as a means for qualifications to become comparable and transparent
- Referencing to the EQF
 - 1st Referencing Report published in 2009 (latest edition published in February 2016)
- Introduction of the notion of learning outcomes expressed in terms of Knowledge, Skills and Competences
- Introducing the notion of a credit system, units of learning outcomes as building blocks for qualifications
 - 1 credit equates to 25 Total Learning Hours

Compatibility with ECVET

- MQF pushed forward the issue of parity of esteem between VET and General or academic education as well as making possible permeability between VET and HE which enhanced lifelong learning
- The MQF as referenced to the EQF served as a reform tool towards the shift to learning outcomes, an increase in quality assurance mechanisms, permeability, recognition and mobility
- ECVET is being used in VET institutions
 - Piloting of ECVET through VET Credit Conversion System Project (2011-2013)- 30 qualifications were converted from MCAST, ITS, ETC(now Jobsplus) and CDL Ltd
- NCFHE is implementing the legal notice 295 of 2012 regarding validation of informal and non-formal learning. This is being done through the establishment of sectoral skills committees
 - Establishing occupational standards
- Facilitation of mobilities through the use of learning outcomes and qualifications based on groups of learning outcomes

Units of Learning Outcomes (i)

- Component of a qualification consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences, which can be assessed and validated
- A unit can be the smallest part of a qualification that can be assessed, transferred, validated and possibly certified
- A unit can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications
- Maltese Qualification Framework caters for different forms
 - Short Courses of even 1 unit (awards)
 - Full Programmes (Qualifications)



Quality in Programme Design

Definition of the expected student workload

Units of learning outcomes, distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competences

Involvement of different stakeholders

Robust assessment processes

Student Centered learning, teaching and assessment

Major Achievements and Successes of the Reform


- Once the ECVET system was set and MQF stipulated a clear transversal path between Academic and VET routes was established
- This permeability had a positive effect on enhancement of flexibility in educational routes especially from within compulsory education which was typically academic in nature, and also towards Further Education

8	Doctoral Degree	
7	Master's Degree Post-graduate Diploma Post-graduate Certificate	
6	Bachelor's Degree	
5	Undergraduate Diploma Undergraduate Certificate	VET Higher Diploma Foundation Degree
4	Matriculation Certificate Advanced Level Intermediate Level	VET Diploma (iv)
3	General Education SEC Grade 1-5	VET Level 3 (iii)
2	General Education Level 2 SEC Grade 6-7	VET Level 2 (ii)
1	General Education Level 1 School Leaving Certificate	VET Level 1 (i)
B	Introductory Level B*	
A	Introductory Level A*	

* These are not yet included in legislation

Annotations

- A Full VET Level 1 qualification should enjoy the same parity of esteem as a Full Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSC&P) Level 1.
- A Full VET Level 2 qualification should enjoy the same parity of esteem as 4 Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) subjects at Grade 6 and 7.
- A VET Level 3 Qualification should enjoy the same parity of esteem as 6 Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) subjects at Grades 1 to 5.
- A VET Diploma should enjoy the same parity of esteem as the Matriculation Certificate.



Not only schools moved towards a learning outcome based approach (learning outcome framework) but also:

- Included full programmes with a vocational orientation (ALP, ALP+)
- Developed short ad hoc programmes designed with industry
- Enhanced liaison with vocational institutions to enhance engagement of students while still in compulsory education (VET subjects, My Journey applied subjects)
- Develop partnerships to top up the compulsory education courses and enable students to reach end of compulsory education with a full VET qualification (Partner Schools)
- Develop Skills Kits, levels Introductory A and B

Challenges and Solutions

- Increasing Flexibility while retaining sustainability
- Striking the balance between *holistic educational* vs *skills specific* when designing programmes
- Pressures from industry (which may result in short term needs)
- Strengthening VET qualifications across all levels
- Enhancing permeability between qualifications
- Facilitate transitions between levels
- Developing short/skills specific programmes to speed up prospects of employability and top up with further training once in employment
- Blended learning (e.g. MCAST Online)
- Acknowledgement of Prior Learning (APL)