



The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)



www.ncfhe.gov.mt



National Commission for Further and Higher Education Malta
T: +356 2381 0000 • E: ncfhe@gov.mt
National Commission for Further and Higher Education
www.ncfhe.gov.mt



Qualifications vs Awards

The term Qualification in Malta refers to programmes based on learning outcomes at the corresponding MQF level, having enough workload to meet the requirements depending on the level. Different levels on the MQF have a minimum number of credits required to be certified as a Qualification (Refer to Diagram).

| MQF Level | Examples of Qualifications | 'Qualification' Minimum Credits Required | 'Award' Credits Required |
|----------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| Level 8 | Doctoral Degree Third Cycle Bologna Process | NA | NA |
| Level 7 | Masters Second Cycle Bologna Process Post-Graduate Diploma Post-Graduate Certificate | 90-120 60 30 | Less than 30 |
| Level 6 | Bachelor ³⁾ /Bachelor (Hons) ¹⁴⁾ First Cycle Bologna Process | 180-240 | Less than 180 |
| Level 5 | Short Cycle Qualification Undergraduate Higher Diploma Undergraduate Diploma Undergraduate Certificate VET Level 5 Programme ²⁵⁾ | 120 90 60 30 60-120 | Less than 60 |
| Level 4 | Pre-Tertiary Certificate VET Level 4 Programme ²⁶⁾ MATSEC Certificate | 30 120 NA | Less than 120 |
| Level 3 | VET Level 3 Programme ²⁷⁾ General and Subject Certificate | 60 NA | Less than 60 |
| Level 2 | VET Level 2 Programme ²⁸⁾ General and Subject Certificate | 60 NA | Less than 60 |
| Level 1 | VET Level 1 Programme ²⁹⁾ General and Subject Certificate | 40 NA | Less than 40 |
| Introductory Level A | Preparatory Programme | 30 | Less than 30 |
| Introductory Level B | Pre-entry Basic Skills Course | 30 | Less than 30 |

The term Award refers to programmes that have less credits than the minimum number required to be certified as a Qualification as per the different levels on the MQF. Accredited Awards still need to have level-rated learning outcomes to indicate the level of the Award on the MQF.

Other Sources of Information

The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) is the entity responsible for the regulation of the Further and Higher education sector in Malta, making sure that the MQF is respected throughout. It also acts as the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework. More information about the MQF is available online on www.ncfhe.gov.mt and on the Referencing Report for Malta which is also available on this site.

What is a Qualifications Framework?

A Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria using level descriptors applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes. In Malta, this is known as the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).

The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)

The MQF assists in making the Maltese qualifications system easier to understand and more transparent at a national and international level. It consists of 10 different levels, Levels 1 to 8 and Introductory Levels A and B. Levels 1 to 8 are referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA); and the Transnational Qualifications Framework of the Small states of the Commonwealth (TQF). Introductory Levels A and B were introduced in 2016. These levels, which are applicable only in Malta, recognise any learning which does not yet reach Level 1.

The Referencing Report is Malta's national document which describes the MQF and the different levels of qualifications in Malta. It provides details of the parameters which need to be respected by any national qualification conferred in Malta in terms of the level of learning outcomes and number of credits.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 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 Grade 1 and 5.
- A VET Diploma should enjoy the same parity of esteem as the Matriculation Certificate.

| MQF Levels | EQF Levels | QF/EHEA Levels | TQF Levels |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 8 | 8 | 3 rd cycle | 10 |
| 7 | 7 | 2 nd cycle | 9 |
| 6 | 6 | 1 st cycle | 8 |
| 5 | 5 | Short cycle | 7 |
| 4 | 4 | | 6 |
| 3 | 3 | | 5 |
| 2 | 2 | | 4 |
| 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Introductory Level A | | | 2 |
| Introductory Level B | | | 1 |

Explaining the MQF Levels

Each Level on the MQF is expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, in accordance to the Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations.

Knowledge involves the understanding of basic, factual and theoretical information and is normally associated with formal learning.

Skills involve the application of the acquired knowledge and understanding in different contexts.

Competences refer to a person's capability, such as whether one is competent to exercise skills with or without supervision, with or without autonomy and with or without responsibility.

Collectively, knowledge, skills and competences are known as the level descriptors and explain the learning outcomes, i.e. what a learner should know, understand and is able to do to successfully complete a learning process at a particular level. In view of this, the level of difficulty on the Framework increases gradually, with Introductory Levels A and B being the lowest and Level 8 the highest.

The Levels on the MQF cover qualifications achieved as an outcome of compulsory education; vocational education and training; as well as further and higher education. The number of credits required per Level is also set by the Referencing Report.



Credit Workload

Credits are designed to measure workload and facilitate the implementation of transferring learning at national and European level. They are used by authorities, education and training providers, awarding bodies and learners to support arrangements for accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes towards a qualification.

In line with European tools, all education pegged to the MQF is quantified in workload hours known as 'credits'. Workload can be defined either as ECTS¹ or ECVET². In Malta, both 1 ECTS and 1 ECVET is equivalent to 25 hours of learning (consisting of a minimum of 5 hours of direct contact teaching hours; practical sessions; mentoring; self-study such as reading, research, seminars, conferences, tutorials, assignments and assessments; and related organised activities such as informal and non-formal learning). Thus both ECTS and ECVET are subject to the same quality standards and have equal value.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

² European Credit System for Vocational Education & Training