

ANNUAL

REPORT

2025





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Malta
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Education Authority

Introductory Note

Chairman's Introductory Note to the MFHEA Annual Report 2025

The quality and international reputation of Malta's education system are fundamental to supporting student success, workforce development, economic competitiveness and social progress. As the national authority responsible for further and higher education, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) is entrusted with safeguarding these foundations through its work in quality assurance, accreditation, qualifications recognition, professional mobility, research and policy development.

Throughout 2025, the Authority continued to fulfil its responsibilities in a dynamic and evolving educational environment. The further and higher education sectors continue to grow in both scale and complexity, creating new opportunities for learners while also presenting new challenges for regulators, providers and policymakers. In this context, MFHEA remained focused on ensuring that educational provision in Malta continues to meet high standards of quality, transparency and accountability, whilst supporting innovation, internationalisation and lifelong learning.

The Authority's work extends beyond regulatory oversight. Through its various functions, MFHEA contributes to the development of a trusted education system that supports individual aspirations, workforce development and national competitiveness. The recognition of qualifications, facilitation of professional mobility, collection of educational data, policy development and stakeholder engagement all form part of the Authority's broader contribution to Malta's educational and economic development.

During the year, MFHEA continued to strengthen its engagement both nationally and internationally. Through collaboration with education providers, students, employers, competent authorities, government entities and international partners, the Authority contributed to important discussions and initiatives that support the continued advancement of education. Such engagement is essential in ensuring that Malta remains aligned with European developments while maintaining a system that reflects national priorities and aspirations.



The achievements outlined in this Annual Report reflect the dedication and professionalism of the Authority's employees, experts and stakeholders. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who have contributed to the Authority's work throughout the year. Their commitment and expertise continue to strengthen the Authority and support its mission.

As Chairperson, I remain confident in the Authority's direction and in its ability to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. By continuing to uphold high standards, promote trust and confidence, and support continuous improvement across the sector, MFHEA will continue to play an important role in strengthening Malta's position in ensuring quality provision of further and higher education.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board Members, The Quality Assurance Committee, the leadership team, employees and all stakeholders for their continued dedication and collaboration. Together, we will continue to build an education system that serves learners, supports society and contributes to Malta's future prosperity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Edward Woods". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Edward Woods
Chairperson
Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Board and Committee Members

MFHEA 2025 Board Members:

Dr Edward Woods

Chairperson

Edward Woods (LL.D.) is the Chairperson of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority. During his career, Dr Woods specialised in Civil and Commercial Law, with a focus on marine disputes, business partnerships, and property law. Through his legal experience, Dr Woods has gained a wealth of knowledge, which he has channelled during his various appointments, serving as Chairperson of the Malta Maritime Authority, member of the Board of Governors of the Malta Arbitration Centre and Chairperson of the Malta Communications Authority. He also served on a number of boards and worked on several projects, including the Valletta Cruise Liner Terminal Project.

Mr Anthony Borg

Member

Mr Anthony Borg had an extensive career in the Civil Service and then ventured in various Business Operations.

As a Civil Servant he held executive positions in the Ministries of Finance, Works, Social Services, Parliament, and the Office of the Prime Minister, appointed Director on the Boards of ARMS, ERL, MECS and MITA and held the position of Executive Secretary of the National Maritime Security Committee and of Secretary of the Maritime Safety and Pollution Prevention Committee, both for 7 years.

Mr Anatole Baldacchino

Member

Anatole Baldacchino is a Certified Public Accountant, with professional experience spanning 30 years, covering management consultancy and audits. His main area of academic interest is inclusive education.

Anatole has several years of board experience. He served as Deputy Chairperson for the National Commission for Further and Higher Education in 2020. He founded his private consultancy firm in 1998 and is involved in a number of research and consultancy assignments. He is currently the Chairperson of the Independent Community Living Appeals Board.



Dr Desiree Cassar

Member

Desiree Cassar graduated with a Doctorate in Law from the University of Malta in 2003 and was admitted to the Maltese Bar, Superior Courts of Malta, in 2004. She advises clients across different sectors. Desiree has delivered lectures and seminars on specialist subjects for a number of years. She is a member of the Chamber of Advocates and the Institute of Financial Services Practitioners. She was a member of the Board of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education before it was statutorily established as the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority.

Mr Paul Gauci

Member

Mr. Paul Gauci obtained a Bachelor of Science in Health studies from the University of Malta in 2008. He then furthered his education and obtained a Master of Science in Management studies from the University of Leicester in 2012 and a Master of Arts in European Politics, Economics and Law from the University of Malta in 2020. For the past 16 years, Mr Gauci held various positions with public and private institutions in both the health and education sectors.

Mr Edgar Francis Borg

Member

Mr. Edgar Borg FCCA., FIA., and CPA., is a Certified Public Accountant, with an extensive number of years of experience. He worked in various senior positions in the private sector, and was also Public Auditor, for private-sector companies, for some years. For eight years, he was Finance Director, and then Group Finance Director, with Maltacom and Go plc. For 10 years he was Chief Finance and Administration Officer at the Ministry For Health.

Ms Nicola Cuschieri

Member

Ms Nicola Cuschieri currently serves as the Assistant Head at a primary school. She earned her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Malta and holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Mentoring. Additionally, she is actively pursuing a Master's in Educational Leadership and Management at the University of Malta, with aspirations to pursue a doctoral degree in education in the near future.



Ms Allison Zammit

Member

Allison graduated with a Bachelor of Honours in Social Administration from the University of Malta in 2005. She read for a Master of Arts in European Studies at the same university and completed it in 2010. Allison works as Manager (Research and Policy) at the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, which is the national regulator on disability issues in Malta.

Dr Alicia Agius Gatt

Secretary

Dr Alicia Agius Gatt graduated with a Doctorate in Law from the University of Malta in 2008, and in the same year she obtained her Warrant to practice in the Notarial Profession in Malta. Dr Agius Gatt has her own notarial practice and advises clients on succession, property law and other related legal advice. She was a Director of Bank of Valletta from December 2014 till December 2015. She was then appointed Director of Tigne Mall plc from June 2016 till September 2020.

Quality Assurance Committee

From 3rd July 2024 onwards:

Dr Mateja Farrugia (Chairperson)
Dr Francis Abela (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Pamela Zerafa (Member)
Prof. Olgun Çiçek (Member)
Prof. Khatuna Saganelidze (Member)
Mr Claudio Cauchi (Member)
Dr Josef Mifsud (Member)
Dr Sylvana Zammit Pulo (Member)

Dr Katya Micallef (Member) was appointed as a Quality Assurance Member in May 2025.

Advisory Committee

Members/Representation (as of December 2023)

- Malta Chamber
- Malta Union of Teachers
- Malta's National Youth Council
- Chamber of SMEs
- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- University of Malta – Academic Staff Association
- Institute of Tourism Studies
- University of Malta
- Further Education Institution's Rep – Elected member
- Higher Education Institution's Rep – Elected member

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority has established an Advisory Committee as per Article 18 of Cap. 607 of the Laws of Malta. The Advisory Committee provides a forum for consultation with stakeholders, who meet at least twice a year, and is chaired by the Chairperson and/or the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority. The Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from private and public further education institutions, of representatives from private and public higher education institutions, of representatives from students, of representatives from civil society, of representatives from the business community, and of representatives from trade unions which represent the majority of employees in the further and higher education sector.

CEO Introduction

Foreword to the 2025 Annual Report

The year 2025 was a significant year in the continued development of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). It was a year characterised by achievement, organisational strengthening and a continued commitment to supporting a high-quality, internationally respected further and higher education system.

Although I assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer towards the latter part of the reporting period, it quickly became evident that 2025 represented an important chapter in the Authority's journey. I had the opportunity to witness first-hand the dedication, professionalism and commitment of our employees, as well as the breadth of responsibilities entrusted to MFHEA. From quality assurance and accreditation to qualifications recognition, professional mobility, policy development and stakeholder engagement, the Authority continues to play a vital role in supporting students, providers, employers and society as a whole.

Throughout the year, MFHEA continued to deliver on its statutory responsibilities across a wide range of functions. The Authority oversaw the licensing and accreditation of institutions and programmes, conducted through quality assurance activities, processed thousands of qualifications recognition applications through the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC), supported the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, strengthened regulatory compliance and learner protection mechanisms, and contributed to national and European policy initiatives. At the same time, our Communications, Corporate, Legal, Research and operational teams continued to support the Authority's mission through effective stakeholder engagement, organisational development and evidence-based decision-making.

A key focus during 2025 was the continued strengthening of the Authority's regulatory and quality assurance frameworks. In line with its commitment to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), MFHEA advanced a number of important initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency, consistency and effectiveness across its operations. These included the development of new programme accreditation standards and procedures, the strengthening of regulatory frameworks governing online learning, the refinement of quality assurance processes, and the continued review of national quality assurance mechanisms. Together, these initiatives contribute to a stronger and more resilient quality assurance system that supports both learners and providers while maintaining public confidence in Maltese qualifications.

Beyond its regulatory role, MFHEA continued to strengthen its contribution to Malta's education landscape. Through the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC), the Authority supported thousands of individuals seeking employment, further studies and professional progression. Through its Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications and EU Affairs functions, the Authority facilitated professional mobility and represented Malta in important European discussions. The Research and Policy Unit continued to support evidence-based decision-making through data collection, research and international projects, while the Legal and Compliance Unit remained focused on learner protection, regulatory compliance and good governance.



The Authority also continued to strengthen its international profile and contribution to the European education community. Through active participation in the Bologna Process, ENIC-NARIC, ETINED, EUROSTUDENT, EUROGRADUATE, EQAVET and other international initiatives, MFHEA contributed to important discussions shaping the future of quality assurance, qualifications recognition, academic mobility and education policy. A particular highlight during the year was Malta's hosting of the 9th Plenary Meeting of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED), which brought together international experts and policymakers to discuss the promotion of integrity and trust in education. Such initiatives reinforce Malta's position within the European Higher Education Area and reflect MFHEA's commitment to contributing actively to international dialogue, cooperation and the continuous advancement of education standards.

Equally important was the continued investment in organisational capacity. During the year, the Authority strengthened its workforce through staff development initiatives, updated policies and procedures, and enhanced internal systems. These investments are essential to ensuring that MFHEA remains responsive, effective and capable of meeting the evolving expectations of learners, providers, employers and policymakers. The achievements presented in this Annual Report reflect the collective efforts of many individuals. I would therefore like to express my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson and Members of the Board, The Quality Assurance Council, The Advisory Board, the senior leadership team, all employees of the Authority, our peer reviewers and experts, education providers, students, national partners and international colleagues. Their professionalism, commitment and collaboration continue to contribute significantly to the Authority's success. As we look ahead, MFHEA remains committed to strengthening quality, promoting trust and confidence in qualifications and institutions, supporting innovation and lifelong learning, and ensuring that Malta's regulatory framework continues to reflect both national priorities and international standards. The foundations strengthened during 2025 provide a strong platform upon which we will continue to build an Authority that is transparent, responsive, internationally respected and fully committed to excellence.

Chief Executive Officer, MFHEA
Mr James Perry Maia

Year in Review:

Who We Are and What We Do

Our Mission Statement

“to foster the development and achievement of excellence in further and higher education in Malta through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance, and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta Qualifications Framework.”

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) is the academic programmes of study authority for recognising qualifications and accrediting courses against the Malta Qualifications Framework. The Malta Qualifications Framework is a referencing tool that helps describe and compare both national and foreign qualifications to promote quality, transparency, and mobility of academic programmes of study in all types of education. It is mainly referenced against the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), as well as other non-European qualifications frameworks.

Our Services

The Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) is the competent body within the MFHEA that recognises programmes of study against the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). Recognition statements for programmes of study may be required for various reasons, such as: to pursue further studies, to apply for a job or a promotion, qualification allowance, tax rebate, scholarship schemes, a single permit/visa/citizenship with Jobsplus, among others.

The Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications is a key element to ensuring the free movement of citizens, in this case pertaining to professionals throughout the EU to ensure the full functioning of the Internal Market. The principle of mutual recognition for professional qualifications is guaranteed through a harmonised legal framework, in place since 2005, applicable to all EU Member States.

Provider Accreditation is the formal acknowledgement, issued by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), of the status, legitimacy, and appropriateness of an



educational institution. Programmes of study are referred to as ‘accredited’ when they have been assessed by the MFHEA and referenced to the Malta Qualifications Framework. All educational institutions interested in offering programmes of study which are accredited and ibid to the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) are required to submit their prospective programmes to the MFHEA for accreditation.

Quality Assurance refers to one or more processes that safeguard the quality of further and higher education within the economic, social, and cultural context at national, European, and international levels. External Quality Assurance audits conducted by the MFHEA provide public assurance about the standards of further, higher, and VET qualifications, and the quality of the students’ learning experience.

Validation is the process of assessing the skills, knowledge, and competencies an individual has acquired. This is benchmarked against National Occupational Standards, which are evaluated by Sectoral Skills Units. The Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning is a process that identifies, assesses, and formally certifies the knowledge, skills, and competences which individuals develop throughout their lives by means of participation in non-formal and informal learning.

The **Compliance Unit** within the MFHEA plays an important part in ensuring that licensed further and higher educational institutions adhere to the pertinent laws regulating further and higher education provision in/from Malta, among others. The Compliance Unit carries out its main responsibilities through licence checks, media checks, spot-checks, and investigations of non-compliance claims flagged by MFHEA officials, and or by the general public.

The **Research and Policy** Unit’s role is spread over several central functions which are all interrelated, positioning the groundwork for the further and higher education sphere on a national and international level. Accurate data collection is essential to maintaining the integrity of research, which, in turn, is essential for the development of national policies and strategies.

Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC)

The MQRIC was established under the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act (Chapter 451 of the Laws of Malta). It is responsible for the evaluation and recognition of both academic and vocational programmes of study. Through the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), MQRIC ensures the comparability and recognition of programmes and provides guidance on both local and international credentials.

MQRIC operates in accordance with the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention—formally known as the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO, this convention serves as the principal legal framework for the recognition of qualifications across Europe.

As Malta's designated ENIC (European Network of Information Centres) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre), MQRIC actively participates in the ENIC-NARIC network, contributing to recognition procedures, the development of standard practices, and policy and legislative initiatives in the sector.

Recognition statements issued by MQRIC are commonly required for a range of purposes, including further studies, employment or promotion, eligibility for qualification allowances, tax rebates, scholarships and applications related to single permits, visas or citizenship through Jobsplus.

Recognition in 2025

Now in its tenth year of providing online recognition services, MQRIC has developed the capacity to accurately track annual and seasonal trends, the findings of which are presented in this year's annual report. During the 2025 calendar year, MQRIC received a total of 16177 applications, of which 16053 were processed and communicated to applicants.

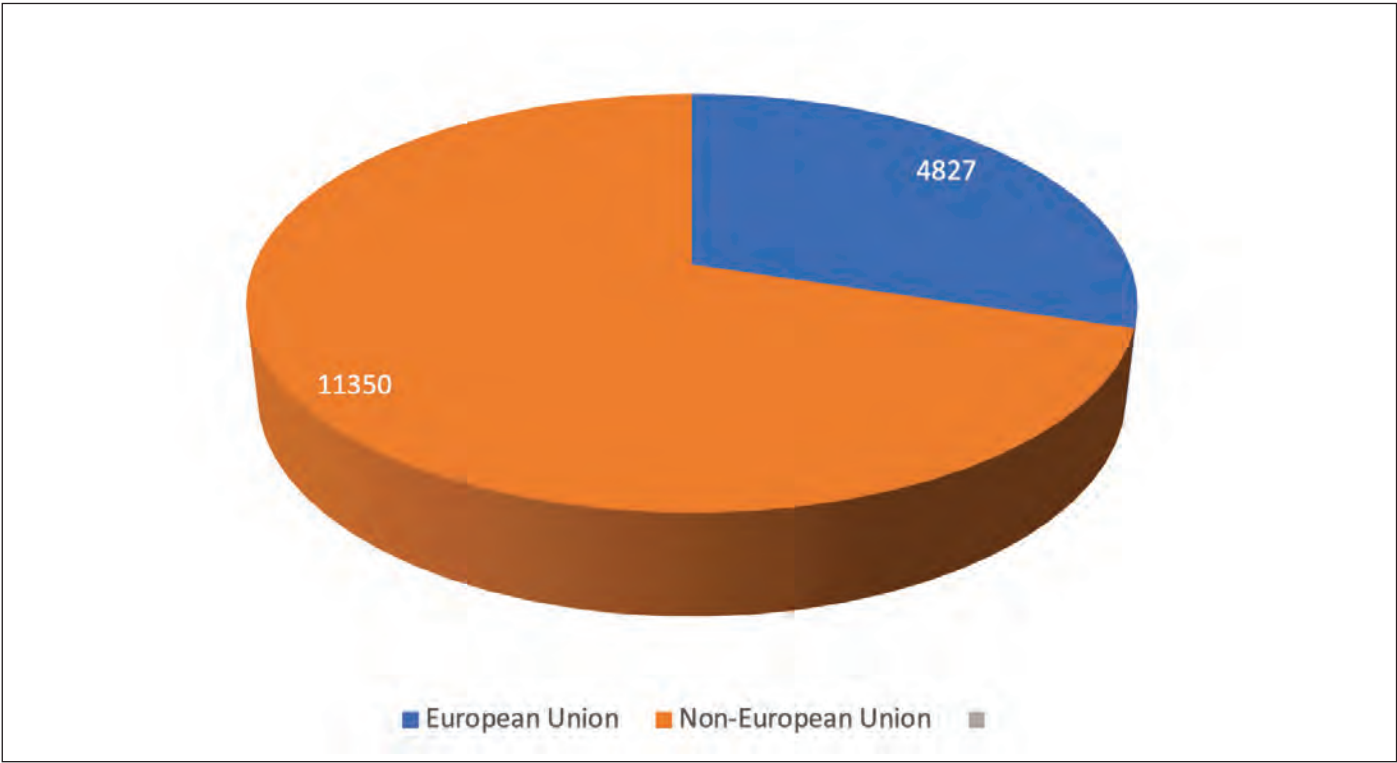
A total of 1005 applications were handled through the fast-track procedure, enabling applicants to receive their recognition statements within two working days. Other applications were not processed due to various reasons, including the submission of fraudulent certificates,

incomplete documentation, or inconclusive or pending verification from foreign ENIC-NARIC centres or awarding institutions.

The online system has since been further enhanced to provide improved functionality for evaluators. These upgrades allow for a more precise assessment of programmes by factoring in the date of award—an important feature that enables the system to assign different recognition statuses to the same programme where its accreditation or licensing status has changed over time.

Total Qualifications Received in 2025

Fig. 1 – Total Cumulative Applications – by Nationality of Applicant (2025)



Demographics of MQRIC Applications

In 2025 MQRIC received 16177 applications from around the world (Fig.1).

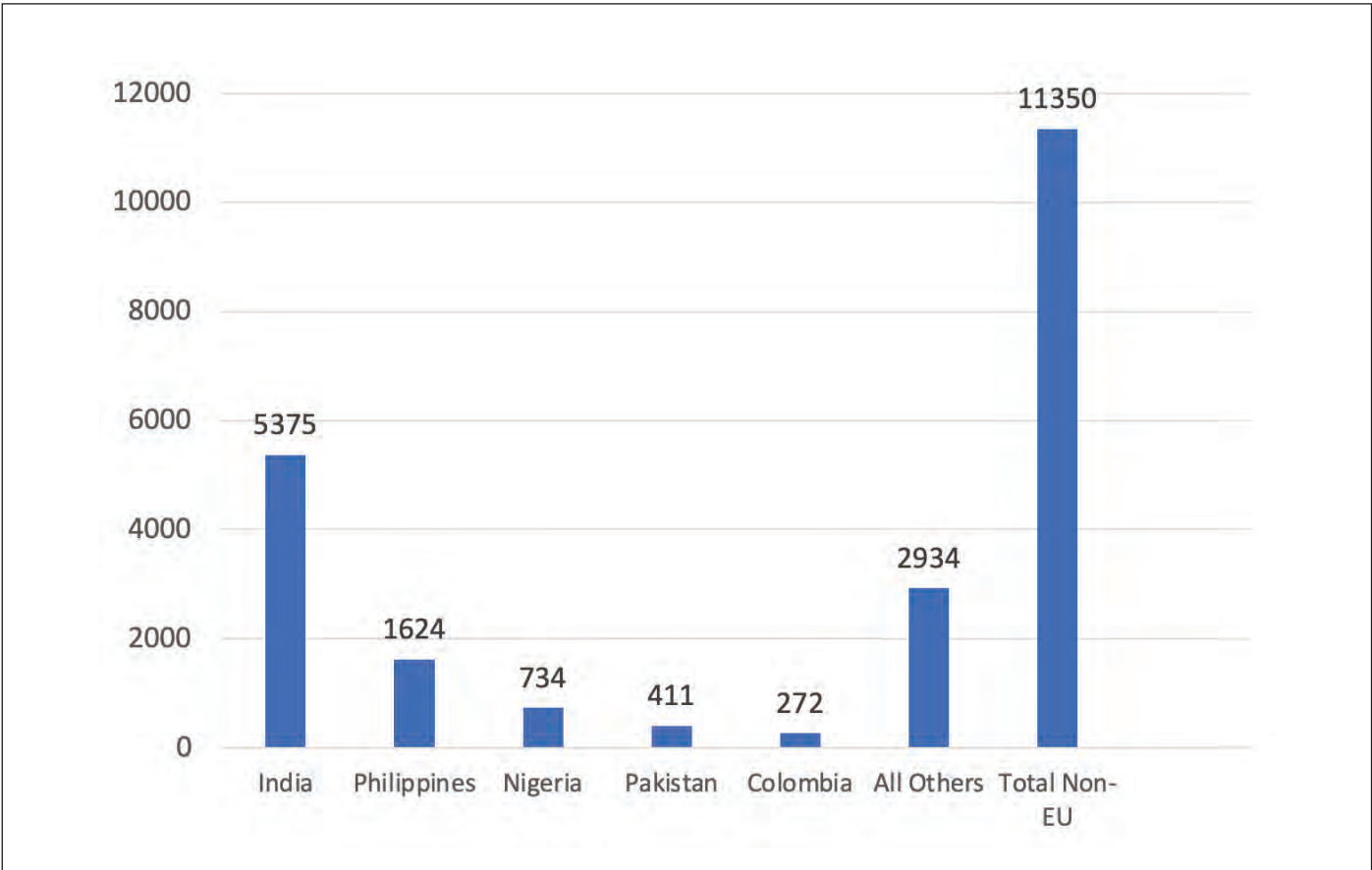
India and the Philippines represented the highest volumes of nationals applying for academic recognition, with 5375 and 1624 applications received respectively (Fig. 2).

Among EU nationals, Maltese and Italian citizens were the primary users of MQRIC services, with 3699 applications submitted by Maltese nationals and 437 by Italian nationals (see Figure 3). Figure 4 presents a breakdown by nationality for all Non-EU applicants.

Figure 5 provides a detailed breakdown of applications by nationality for all EU applicants.

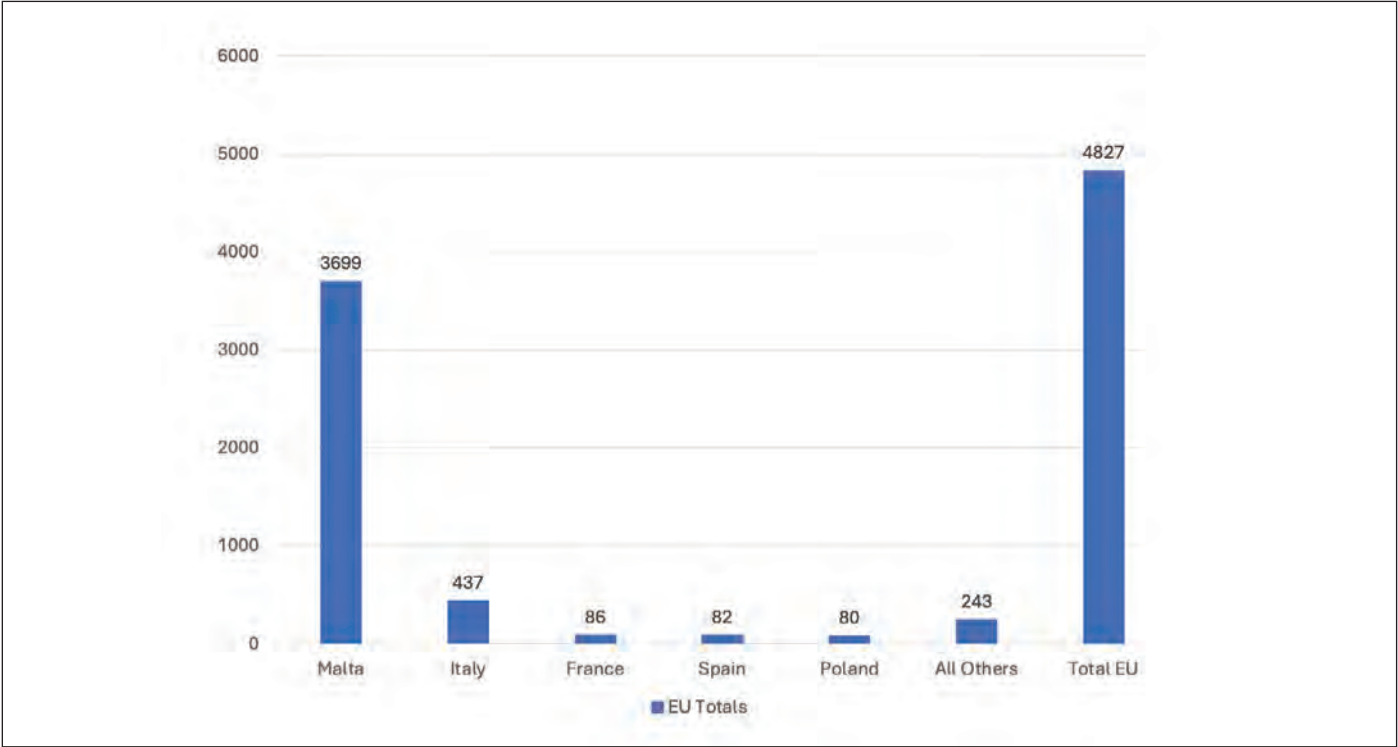
The data also includes cancelled applications—those submitted with incorrect information, duplicate entries or other issues that necessitated their complete removal from the system.

Fig. 2 Top 5 Non-EU Applications by Nationality of Applicant



Of a total of 11350 non-EU applicants received, India has the highest number of applications; followed by Philippines, Nigeria, Pakistan and Colombia (all others include other non-EU countries we have received applications from).

Fig. 3 Top 5 EU Applications by Nationality of Applicant



Of a total of 4827 EU applications received, Maltese applications were the highest, with the next four being Italy, France, Spain and Poland (all others include the other EU countries).

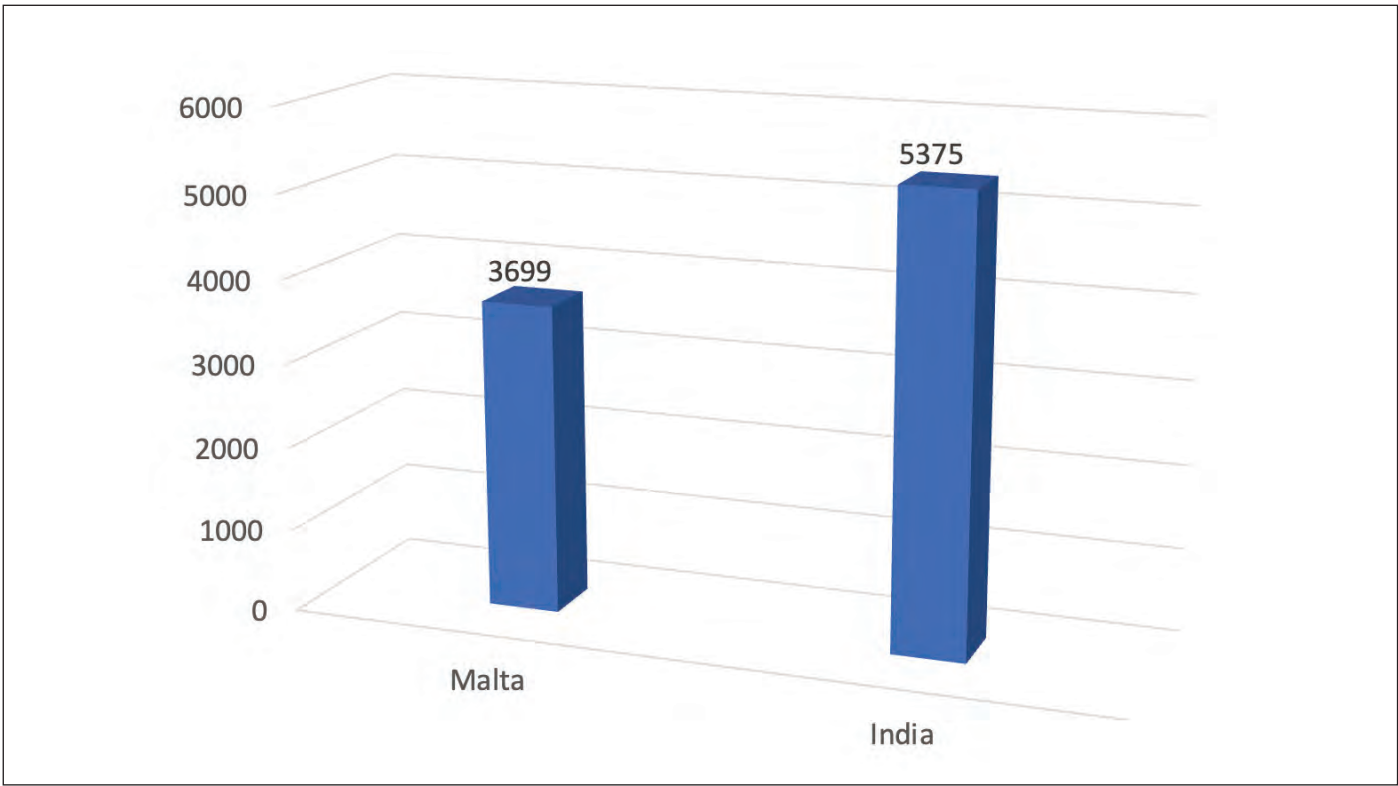
Fig. 4 Breakdown Country by Country of Non-EU Applications Received

Afghanistan	2	Chile	17	Jamaica	1	New Zealand	2	Sri Lanka	225
Albania	39	China	69	Japan	12	Nigeria	734	St. Vincent & Grenadines	5
Algeria	19	Colombia	272	Jordan	15	Niue	1	Sudan	5
Andorra	1	Comoros	1	Kazakhstan	8	North Macedonia	27	Switzerland	4
Angola	1	Congo	3	Kenya	66	Norway	4	Syria	10
Argentina	19	Costa Rica	10	Kosovo	1	Oman	2	Taiwan	13
Armenia	15	Cuba	2	Kuwait	1	Pakistan	411	Tajikistan	2
Australia	20	Dominican Republic	1	Kyrgyzstan	2	Palestine	12	Tanzania	7
Azerbaijan	16	Ecuador	5	Lebanon	29	Panama	2	Thailand	3
Bahamas	1	Egypt	68	Lesotho	2	Peru	18	Togo	5
Bahrain	42	El Salvador	4	Liberia	1	Philippines	1624	Trinidad & Tobago	1
Bangladesh	86	Eswatini	1	Libya	23	Pitcairn	3	Tunisia	80
Barbados	1	Ethiopia	9	Macao	2	Qatar	2	Türkiye	221
Belarus	10	Gambia	3	Malawi	1	Russia	58	Uganda	12
Benin	1	Georgia	13	Malaysia	35	Rwanda	3	Ukraine	106
Bolivia	2	Ghana	127	Mauritius	72	Saudi Arabia	7	United Arab Emirates	17
Bosnia & Herzegovina	11	Honduras	2	Mexico	11	Senegal	2	United Kingdom	215
Botswana	7	Iceland	5	Moldova	5	Serbia	104	United States of America	97
Brazil	154	India	5375	Mongolia	2	Seychelles	1	Uruguay	5
British Indian Ocean Territory	2	Indonesia	9	Morocco	29	Singapore	2	Uzbekistan	1
Burundi	1	Iran	9	Mozambique	1	Somalia	4	Venezuela	20
Cambodia	2	Iraq	2	Myanmar	5	South Africa	88	Vietnam	9
Cameroon	39	Isle of Man	3	Namibia	1	South Korea	12	Yemen	2
Canada	26	Israel	3	Nepal	158	South Sudan	1	Zambia	11
								Zimbabwe	137

Fig.5 Breakdown Country by Country of EU Applications Received

Austria	18	France	86	Malta	3699
Belgium	27	Germany	49	Netherlands	13
Bulgaria	46	Greece	55	Poland	80
Croatia	10	Hungary	52	Portugal	32
Cyprus	11	Ireland	26	Romania	38
Czechia	8	Italy	437	Slovakia	4
Denmark	4	Latvia	8	Slovenia	5
Estonia	3	Lithuania	14	Spain	82
Finland	4	Luxembourg	3	Sweden	13

Fig. 6 Highest application by nationality: European Vs non-European



Participation in International Initiatives

ENIC-NARIC Annual joint meeting 2025

The 32nd Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks took place in Tirana, Albania, from 25 to 27 May 2025, bringing together around 150 participants from 43 ENIC and NARIC Centres.



Mutual Recognition of Profession

(MRC and EU Affairs)

The year 2025 was marked by numerous initiatives, packed with events and commitments which kept the Unit and all stakeholders engaged to achieve the set goals. Thanks to the accumulated experience, commitment and flexibility of all stakeholders, our priorities and ongoing initiatives kept the agenda full and on track without losing focus on the key objectives and responsibilities.

Functions of the MRC and EU Affairs Unit

All functions were directed towards a key aim: ensuring the freedom of movement for professionals and the relevant services with the minimal legislative and administrative barriers. This facilitated permanent establishment, as well as the temporary and occasional provision of services, for professionals seeking to practice their profession in a country, other than their home country or origin. The work of the Unit focused on ensuring the smoothest mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

The MRC and EU Affairs Unit coordinated efforts to implement the European Commission Directive 2005/36/EC and its subsequent amendments to the fullest through the “Competent Authorities” – the Designated Authorities responsible for various regulated professions in Malta.

All the Competent Authorities have played a pivotal role in ensuring that all Maltese and other EU nationals can fully benefit from the provisions outlined in the current regulatory framework. The unit is responsible for maintaining an active network to facilitate the continuous flow of information from the European Commission to the Designated Authorities, providing instructions and ensuring that corrective actions are implemented promptly and effectively. The unit has handled as per its legal obligations a substantial amount of data which was duly submitted on two main European Commission databases:

• **The Internal Market Information System (IMI system)**

A considerable number of alerts reached the unit each month. These were immediately disseminated to the respective Competent Authorities for processing. The Alert (IMI) system allows all the Competent Authorities to have immediate access to the latest developments in the relevant Member State pertinent to the specific targeted profession;

• **The Regulated Professions Database (REGPROF)**

Until 2025 REGPROF was a separate database that records details of all regulated professions, providing information on how prospective professional service providers can access or begin practicing a regulated profession in different Member States, including Malta. The Migration of REGPROF was nearly completed in 2025 to the Internal market Information System (IMI). The Mutual Recognition Coordinator has supported the Competent Authorities with the entering and updating of statutory data on the database. Significant efforts were made to amend and update all profiles, which enabled the migration of REGPROF to the IMI in July 2025.

The unit has also maintained a crucial and direct link with the public through the European Assistance Centre. In 2025 a significant number of queries were received from EU and third-country nationals, requesting information about the necessary requirements to access specific regulated professions in Malta. Every effort was made to provide a timely response, made possible through the cooperation of the relevant Competent Authorities. Additionally, the Unit acknowledges the strong performance of the Assistance Centre for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Malta within the Single Digital Gateway (SDG) tool by ensuring that all statistical data requirements were accurately recorded with the SDG standards in full conformity of the set legal obligations.

• Proportionality Test Directive

The year 2025 was marked by intensive efforts to ensure the full and accurate application of the Proportionality Test requirements. Malta carried out and formally submitted the three conclusions of proportionality tests according to the established criteria. Simultaneously, the Unit worked closely with various Competent Authorities on various new proportionality tests. Every effort was made to ensure that all partners and Competent Authorities acquired the necessary knowledge and capabilities to meet all legal requirements within the prescribed timeframes and standards.

International participation

The unit actively participated in various meetings throughout the year. Officers attended and followed up on the information provided at all Group of Coordinators (GOC) meetings organised by the European Commission. The meeting played a key role in enabling the Unit to directly participate in and contribute to ongoing initiatives in partnership with the European Commission.

It is worth highlighting the ongoing initiative aimed at upgrading the basic training of the seven sectoral professions listed in Annex V. The unit worked with the European Commission in preparation for amending the basic training for the first three sectoral professions. Other topics included the development of Common Training Frameworks (CTF) concerning a number of identified regulated professions such as Physiotherapy, as well as enforcement measures and reporting obligations. Meetings on the CTF for Physiotherapists continued throughout 2025.

The Unit held several individual meetings with the European Commission aimed at improving the implementation of the current regulatory framework. In addition to these meetings, the unit provided technical expertise to various public entities, enabling them to effectively participate at various European and international meetings.

ETINED

The year of 2025 was a milestone for the Unit's involvement in the cooperation under the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED). In May 2025 the MRC and EU Affairs Unit's representative presented ETINED's work during the 32nd ENIC NARIC Annual Joint meeting in Tirana, Albania. Six months later the MRC and EU Affairs Unit played a pivotal role in organising the 9th ETINED Plenary. The meeting of the 5-6 November 2025 hosted at Aula Magna, University of Malta brought together delegates from States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, as well as observers and experts, all focused on addressing the pressing issue of education fraud. A day earlier, the ETINED Bureau members visited the MFHEA premises and held a meeting before the Plenary.

The ETINED Plenary serves as a platform for in-depth discussions and deliberations focused on combating fraud in education. Participants engaged in conversations ranging from policy formulation to practical implementation, exploring innovative solutions and strategies to safeguard the integrity of education systems. Some key agenda items included:

ETINED Platform's priorities for the next two years within the broader implementation of the Council of Europe's "Learners First" Education Strategy 2024–2030 and the Reykjavik Principles, where transparency is a central pillar. The forthcoming ETINED work includes the development of Open School Data (OSD) policy guidelines, practical tools, peer-learning activities and pilot initiatives to support member states in advancing open data for schools. Further, participants were presented with the Education Department's new Knowledge Hub, a digital library hosting a multimedia of resources which address evolving challenges and opportunities in the field of education and are tailored to the specific needs and interests of education professionals.

The establishment of the Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and CIMEA (Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence).

Across the different experiences, participants highlighted common concerns, including the risks of stigma, the potential for data to be misinterpreted and the challenge many families face in understanding school-level information. Participants identified two main user groups for OSD: public authorities and civic users such as parents, students, school leaders, teachers and community organisations. It was noted that engagement with authorities should follow structured procedures, while consultations with teachers, parents and students can remain more flexible. Delegates emphasised several shared principles: trustworthiness, high data quality and clarity, user-oriented value and strong safeguards for data protection.

The MRC and EU Affairs involvement in the ETINED mission underlines the MFHEA commitment in fostering ethics and integrity in the further and higher education in Malta.

¹ Report of the Plenary meeting, Council of Europe, DGII/EDU/ETINED(2025)19, 15th December 2025

² Ibidem

³ Ibidem

Bologna Follow-Up Group Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility

The MRC and EU Affairs Unit was represented at the 3rd meeting of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility held on 30-31 October 2025 in the Hague, the Netherlands.

The main goal of the Working Group is to develop an EHEA Action Plan on Internationalisation and Mobility that:

- Supports the EHEA members in developing and implementing internationalisation policies that enable all learners to acquire international and intercultural competencies;
- Fosters a discussion of EHEA mobility targets, in light of greatly varying mobility numbers in different countries, between credit and degree mobility and different cycles and identifies the barriers to mobility as well as offering recommendations for the removal of these barriers;
- Provide concrete recommendations for member countries to develop or enhance policies that collectively strive for more inclusive, more balanced and greener mobility;
- Includes a glossary of the key terms in the area of internationalisation and mobility to ensure a common understanding of terminology.

Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Designated Authorities Conference

The annual conference, as per Art 451 of the Laws of Malta, was held on the 28th October 2025, at the Salini Resort, where the Competent Authorities gathered. The conference featured a comprehensive agenda designed to provide essential information, instructions and updates. It addressed the most pressing and relevant issues concerning the implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive. Topics covered included briefings on the latest developments from the European Commission such as possible extension of the Directive 2005/36/EC to Third Country Nationals (TCNs) and third country qualifications, the proposed amendments of the Alert system, the ongoing work through the sub-group of the Common Training Framework for physiotherapy, latest amendments to Annex V, the latest SDG commitments and the latest updates on the Proportionality Test training obligations. The Conference facilitated a productive exchange of information and discussions, setting the needs and objectives for the year ahead.



Another key item focused on providing detailed information and instructions regarding the ongoing contentions and infringements with the European Commission. The Unit addressed all outstanding issues as quickly as possible. In 2025, the Unit was pleased to report that another infringement was formally closed. This was once again positively reflected in the Annual report of the Single Market Score Board for Malta.

The Way Forward

As long as the Professional Qualifications Directive remains in force, the unit's work will continue and no effort will be spared to optimise the performance in the implementation of the current regulatory framework. The internal reorganisation of the European Commission, with the transfer of the entire policy from DG GROW to DG Employment, presented several challenges. However, the Unit is committed to maintaining a steady pace. Efforts will be intensified to ensure the correct implementation of all the legal provisions and the effective functioning of the latest tools.

The Unit is determined to keep up the good work by Malta in implementing the various provisions of the Professional Qualifications Directive as certified by various European Commission led initiatives and implementation reports.

All relevant Ministries and Competent Authorities will be central to our activities, helping us to address challenges head-on and find solutions where necessary. The Unit will invest more time and resources in enhancing capacity building and knowledge among all concerned partners to ensure optimal performance.

Licensing, Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Validation Department

1 Departmental Restructuring

In 2025, the Licensing, Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Validation Department started its process of a comprehensive restructuring in response to the findings and recommendations of the ENQA external review conducted in 2023. This process reflects the Authority's firm commitment to compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as to the principles of effectiveness, proportionality, transparency and continuous improvement.

One of the key recommendations arising from the ENQA review concerned the internal organisation of the Department, particularly the need to ensure a clear distinction between quality assurance processes applicable to Higher Education and those applicable to Further Education. In line with the ESG and the regulatory framework of the EHEA, the ESG applies in full to the Higher Education sector. However, through the ENQA review, MFHEA acknowledged that the full and uniform application of the ESG to the Further Education sector would be neither proportionate nor appropriate.

Further Education institutions are generally smaller in scale, operate with more limited human and administrative capacity and are subject to distinct European frameworks, including the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Requiring full alignment with the ESG would therefore impose an unnecessary administrative and regulatory burden and would not be consistent with the principle of fitness for purpose underpinning the ESG.

In response and in line with ENQA's recommendations, the Department initiated its restructuring into two distinct sector-specific units: the Higher Education Unit and the Further Education Unit. This structural separation is intended to strengthen sectoral expertise, enhance procedural clarity and ensure that quality assurance processes are appropriately tailored to the legal, academic and operational realities of each sector.

As part of the completed restructuring framework, the Validation Unit will fall under the Further Education Unit, reflecting the close alignment of validation processes with vocational and further education pathways.

Accordingly, the information presented in this Annual Report is structured by reference to the respective units. This approach ensures transparency, improves the readability of reporting and accurately reflects the Authority's organisational framework as it evolves in line with ENQA recommendations and the ESG.

2 Higher Education Unit

The year 2025 proved to be a particularly demanding and strategically significant period for the Higher Education Unit. Upon the appointment of the new Head of Department, immediate priority was given to the systematic implementation of the recommendations arising from the ENQA external review. This work was undertaken alongside the Unit's core statutory responsibilities, including the accreditation of programmes and awards, as well as the initial accreditation and periodic re-accreditation of higher education institutions.

Despite the operational intensity of these ongoing functions, the Unit advanced several major quality assurance initiatives of strategic importance. Two key projects were prioritised during the reporting period. The first concerned the development of a dedicated regulatory framework governing Higher Education institutions delivering programmes through online and distance-learning modalities (see 2.1), expected to be fully implemented in the beginning of 2027. The second focused on the revision and enhancement of programme accreditation standards (see 2.2), with the aim of strengthening academic integrity, consistency and comparability across the sector, with its expected implementation towards the end of 2026 and beginning of 2027.

In parallel, substantial progress was made on the review and updating of the National Quality Assurance Framework, which is expected to be finalised in 2026. This exercise seeks to ensure that the framework remains fit for purpose and fully responsive to developments within the EHEA, while further strengthening alignment with the ESG.

Beyond these major policy and regulatory initiatives, the Higher Education Unit started working on a range of complementary actions to reinforce quality assurance capacity and stakeholder engagement. These include the ongoing work on the development of a dedicated quality assurance landing page on the Authority's website to serve as a centralised and authoritative source of information for institutions, reviewers and the wider public. The Unit also started delivering targeted training sessions to relevant stakeholders, the development and formalisation of an internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enhance consistency and efficiency and initiated the engagement of peer reviewers who specialise in online teaching and learning to support the modernisation and resilience of quality assurance processes throughout this mode of provision.

Collectively, these efforts reflect the Unit's commitment to continuous improvement, transparency and accountability, while ensuring that Malta's higher education quality assurance system remains robust, credible and fully aligned with European and international standards.

2.1 Regulations for Quality Assurance: Higher Education Online Learning

In 2025, the Higher Education Unit finalised the Regulations for Quality Assurance: Higher Education Online Learning (2025). These regulations apply to higher education institutions and qualifications delivered fully or partially through online learning modalities and referenced at MQF Levels 5 to 8.

The regulations were developed to complement and operate alongside the External Quality Assurance Provider Accreditation Manual for Higher Education Institutions (2024) and the Programme Accreditation Standards for Higher Education (2025), thereby strengthening coherence across the Authority's quality assurance framework.

While the initial scope of this work was intended to update existing guidelines for online education, the review process identified the need for a more robust regulatory approach. As a result, the guidelines were replaced with regulations, accompanied by the refinement of key definitions and requirements related to governance, delivery, assessment, learner support and quality assurance of online provision. The regulations were explicitly mapped to the ESG, ensuring that quality assurance arrangements for online learning are consistent with European standards and expectations.

2.2 Programme Accreditation Standards for Higher Education

During 2025, the Higher Education Unit concluded the development and formally published the Programme Accreditation Standards for Higher Education. The standards form part of a broader revision of the Authority's programme accreditation framework at higher education level and are applicable to qualifications referenced at MQF Levels 5 to 8.

The development of the standards followed a structured public consultation process. Following the consultation, the document underwent further revision and refinement in collaboration with external experts appointed by the Authority. These revisions focused on enhancing clarity, consistency and alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), while ensuring that the standards remain proportionate and applicable across different types of higher education provision.

In order to support effective implementation, the Authority determined that the revised programme accreditation procedure would initially be introduced through a piloting phase. A call for participation was issued in summer 2025, inviting licensed higher education providers to submit expressions of interest. Following an internal selection process, four programmes were selected to participate in the pilot. These comprised:

- two programmes undergoing re-accreditation, and
- two programmes applying for initial accreditation, with one programme selected at each applicable MQF level (Levels 5, 6, 7, and 8).

The piloting phase is scheduled to continue throughout 2026 and is intended to enable the Authority to assess the practical application of the standards, the effectiveness of the procedures and the consistency of outcomes across different programme types and levels. Feedback arising from the pilot will inform any further refinements prior to the full implementation of the revised procedure. It is worth noting that training was provided to both providers and peer review experts as explained in further detail in section 2.3.

2.3 Training on Higher Education Programme Accreditation Standards

Following the launch of the Higher Education Programme Accreditation Standards (MQF 5-8) on the 16th July 2025, six training sessions were held for both providers and peer reviewers. The training for providers was offered in person on the 22nd of September 2025 and covered three sessions: an introduction to the Standards and Procedures, an exercise on envisioning the self-assessment process and guidance on preparing the accreditation visit.

The training for peer reviewers was conducted online on the 2nd December 2025. A total of 49 experts from 22 different countries registered for the three workshops, which expanded on the core themes of the new Manual and included breakout-room discussions and group-work presentations. With both theoretical and practical elements included, the workshops addressed a broad spectrum of questions.

2.4 Programme Accreditation Activity

Throughout 2025, the Higher Education Unit continued to implement programme accreditation processes for higher education provision across MQF Levels 5 to 8, in accordance with national legislation and the Authority's quality assurance procedures. The Unit remained actively engaged in the evaluation of both initial accreditation and re-accreditation applications, supporting the ongoing monitoring of programme quality within the higher education sector.

During the reporting period, a total of 140 programmes were accredited. Of these, six programmes did not meet the required accreditation criteria. Two of the resulting negative decisions were subject to appeal in accordance with established procedures. In addition, six programmes were withdrawn during the accreditation process. A further 64 programmes were carried forward to 2026 for continued evaluation.

Table 1 - Programme Accreditation Outcomes by MQF level

MQF Level	Programmes Accredited	Programmes Failed	Appeals Submitted	Programmes Withdrawn	Programmes Carried Over to 2026
8	8	0	0	0	6
7	54	1	1	0	29
6	37	3	0	3	23
5	41	2	1	3	6
Total	140	6	2	6	64

Table 2 – Provider Accreditation

Provider Accreditation	Totals
New Licenses Issued in 2025	2
Licence Renewal (External Quality Assurance Audits)	13
External Quality Assurance Audits started	21
IQA documents assessed and concluded	2
IQA documents assessed and not concluded	3
Financial audits	23
Follow-ups with onsite visit	1 (Report published), 1 (post-audit), 1 started
Appeals	2
Applications carried over to 2026	24
Applications withdrawn	1
Applications failed	0

3 Further Education Unit

In 2025, the Further Education Unit initiated its separation from the Higher Education Unit. This structural reform was undertaken to allow for the development of dedicated standards, processes and procedures tailored specifically to the Further Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

The objective of this restructuring was twofold: to maintain high quality assurance standards aligned, as far as applicable, with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and relevant European frameworks, while ensuring that regulatory requirements remain proportionate, context-appropriate and operationally feasible for the Further Education level. The Unit has worked to ensure that standards are rigorous without being unnecessarily burdensome, thereby safeguarding quality while supporting sectoral sustainability and growth.

In a rapidly evolving economic environment characterised by technological transformation, skills shortages and shifting labour market demands, the Further Education Unit recognises the critical importance of ensuring that accredited VET provision remains relevant, responsive and future-oriented. Accreditation processes must therefore reflect national skills priorities, emerging occupational standards and the evolving needs of employers and industry.

Throughout 2025, significant work was initiated to modernise and strengthen the regulatory framework governing Further Education. A major milestone has been the ongoing development of new Programme Accreditation Standards for Further Education. These standards will aim to:

- Ensure alignment with labour market needs and economic development priorities;
- Promote competence-based and learning outcomes-oriented provision;
- Strengthen quality assurance mechanisms within VET institutions;
- Support employability, upskilling and reskilling pathways;
- Enhance transparency and comparability across qualifications.

The Unit has also undertaken substantial operational work in the areas of institutional accreditation and programme accreditation, as outlined in the table below. This reflects an ongoing commitment to regulatory effectiveness and sectoral oversight.

Looking ahead, the strategic aim is to further increase the Unit's capacity in order to enhance and consolidate standards within the Further Education sector. Strengthening internal expertise and resources will enable the Authority to implement more robust quality assurance mechanisms, reinforce compliance monitoring and contribute to the development of a resilient, skills-driven and economically responsive Further Education system.

The reform process remains guided by the principle that quality assurance must not only safeguard standards, but also actively support a dynamic VET ecosystem that contributes meaningfully to workforce development, productivity and long-term economic competitiveness.

Table 3 – Programme Accreditation Outcomes by MQF level

MQF Level	Total Programmes Accredited	Total Programmes Failed	Total Programmes Withdrawn	Total Programmes Carried Over to 2026
4	45	4	0	15
3	19	0	2	12
2	27	0	1	9
1	9	0	2	11
Total	100	4	5	47

Table 4 – Provider Accreditation

Provider Accreditation	Totals
Licenses Issued in 2025	11
Applications carried over to 2026	20
Applications withdrawn	2
Applications failed	2
Appeals	1
External Quality Assurance Audits	5
External Quality Assurance Audits ongoing	5
IQA documents concluded	12 passed, 1 failed, 2 withdrawn
IQA documents ongoing	14

3.1 CPD in VET QA project

The CPD in VET QA project is an Erasmus+ project aimed at strengthening quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training (VET) through the development of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme and an EQAVET website for Malta.

The primary objective of the project is the development of a CPD programme delivered through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The programme consists of seven modules, each comprising an introductory video and a set of learning resources designed to support effective learning and professional development in VET quality assurance.

During 2025, experts were selected to develop content for the VLE and commenced work on the preparation of learning resources. MFHEA held regular coordination meetings to discuss progress on the development of the modules and the VLE. These activities included the recording of video material and interviews with local experts, which will be incorporated into the VLE.

Two internal working group meetings were held within MFHEA, involving MFHEA staff, to support the development of the EQAVET website. As part of the project, MFHEA participated in peer review activities hosted by Lithuania and Finland.

Following an expression of interest addressed to local and international experts and VET providers, online focus group meetings were organised on 11 and 12 September 2025. These meetings focused on gathering structured feedback on the content and structure of the CPD modules.

As part of the project's dissemination and stakeholder engagement activities, three thematic workshops were organised for providers licensed with MFHEA. The workshops addressed the following themes:

- Quality Assurance of Work-Based Learning (WBL)
Format: On-site workshop
Date: 26 September 2025
- Synergies between EQAVET and the European Standards and ESG
Format: Online webinar
Date: 14 October 2025
- Strategy, Policies and Procedures in VET QA
Format: Online webinar
Date: 16 October 2025

This project has been ongoing since 2023 and is scheduled to conclude in August 2026.

3.2 National VET team project

In 2025, the Unit benefitted from EUPA funds through the National VET team project. Two major activities were the staff mobility to Lund University (see 3.2.1) and the new manual of standards and procedures for programme accreditation standards for programmes which fall under the Further Education Unit i.e. MQF levels 1-4.

3.2.1 Study visit to Lund University

The study visit to Lund University (6–10 October 2025) formed part of MFHEA’s strategy to strengthen institutional capacity, peer learning and international cooperation. Activities followed the planned programme, focusing on admissions processes, recognition of prior learning (RPL), VNFIL, micro-credentials and the application of artificial intelligence in higher education. The programme combined presentations, technical exchanges and interactive discussions.

The visit formally ran from 7 to 9 October, with an additional RPL-focused meeting on 10 October. Sessions covered Lund University’s admissions systems, alignment of MQF/EQF frameworks and RPL methodologies. A keynote by Professor Ebba Ossiannilsson addressed lifelong learning, digitalisation and AI in higher education, offering valuable international perspectives.

Participants included four MFHEA staff and four Lund University experts, supported by academic contributors. Preparatory materials were shared in advance, ensuring informed discussions. All planned activities were completed as intended, with no deviations and discussions on AI and EU-funded collaboration exceeded expectations.

The MFHEA delegation comprised staff responsible for validation, RPL, quality assurance and policy development, while Lund University was represented by admissions officers, RPL specialists and lifelong learning experts. The visit enhanced understanding of Swedish higher education practices, digital admissions tools and innovative RPL models. Overall, it strengthened professional capacity, fostered best-practice exchange and established a foundation for future collaboration.

3.2.2 Programme Accreditation Standards for Further Education

The Programme Accreditation Standards and Procedures for Further Education Institutions were developed with the engagement of two subject-matter experts as part of the National VET Team Project 2025.

The standards and indicators presented in this document have been drafted in alignment with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), as well as other relevant Maltese and European education and training frameworks. The Programme Accreditation Process conducted on the basis of this document aims to:

- certify the compliance of programmes of study with the standards and indicators set out in this document;
- consolidate internal quality assurance systems at programme level;
- support providers in the enhancement of programme delivery;
- improve the quality of learning outcomes across the Maltese further education sector; and
- enhance the student learning experience.

A webinar was organised on 9 December 2025, during which the experts presented and explained the Programme Accreditation Standards to Further Education Providers. The document will be made available for public consultation.

4 Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning (VNFIL) Unit

The importance to Europe of skilled and knowledgeable citizens extends beyond formal education to learning acquired in non-formal or informal ways. Citizens must be able to demonstrate what they have learned to use this learning in their career and for further education and training. Countries need to establish systems that allow individuals to identify, document, assess and certify (validate) all forms of learning to use this learning for advancing their career and for further education and training.

The 2012 Council Recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements will enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities.

VNFIL in Malta is regulated by Subsidiary Legislation 607.02, Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning regulations of September 2012. As from 1st January 2026 this legislation was superseded by Subsidiary Legislation 607.04. This new legislation establishes the National Skills Council as the competent body responsible for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. MFHEA is now the competent authority to classify validation at a level of the Malta Qualifications Framework.

During 2025, the validation unit with MFHEA continued to strengthen the process of validation through the following initiatives:

As from 1st January 2025, Quality Assurance guidelines of validation of non-formal and informal learning came into force binding all VNFIL centres with a set of guidelines and recommendations to give more credibility to the process of validation and recognition of skills, knowledge and competences. The guidelines focus on the 4 phases of VNFIL - identification, documentation, assessment and certification. The assessment component is the most important and a rigorous procedure has been set up by the Validation Unit to make the assessment process more transparent and fit for purpose.

New MOUs for VNFIL centre. Currently there are 9 VNFIL centres around Malta which all have a new or renewed MOU. During the first quarter of 2025, the validation unit conducted initial visits to all VNFIL centres to offer assistance, support and to see that standards are maintained as per guidelines and new procedures. The validation unit is very pleased with the outcome of these visits and with the support it manages to give to centres which require assistance. The 9 VNFIL centres are the following:

Jobsplus, ITS, TCTC, Learning Works, Astoria, MFMAC, AME, MISCO and PDTM

The validation unit is also in charge of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and during 2025 the unit approved 11 new applications. This is very encouraging since as a unit we would like to encourage more use of RPL to be able to offer learners different learning pathways. At the same time these different learning pathways must be transparent, trustworthy and measurable.

In June 2025, the validation unit launched the Recognition of Prior Learning principles and practices for providers. These were prepared by the Scottish Credit Qualifications Partnership in full collaboration with MFHEA. The new RPL applications must now follow these principles and practices and are also being evaluated by our external experts.

The validation unit continued with its participation and involvement at an international and European level. During 2025 the unit conducted 3 study visits in the form of peer learning activity. These were held in Scotland (March 2025), Finland (September 2025) and Sweden (October 2025). In Scotland we continued with our collaboration with the SCQF in relation to the updated guidelines related with principles and practices for RPL providers. We also had the opportunity to meet with industry to see how RPL is being implemented.

In Finland and Sweden, we continued with our collaboration in the field of VNFIL, RPL and micro-credentials. We also had the opportunity to meet with stakeholders involved in these areas and sectors. This collaboration was instrumental to form a consortium at a European level and apply for the Horizon Project.

The validation unit applied under the horizon project for funds to be able to implement a very ambitious project related to VNFIL, RPL and micro-credentials. A consortium of 8 entities was set up to present a common proposal. The consortium is made up of universities, QA agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

The unit actively participated in the events and activities of the European RPL network of which MFHEA is a member as from 2024. We actively participated in the November 2025 conference where we had the opportunity to give a presentation about the state of play of RPL in Malta.

Micro-credential course - VNFIL unit developed a micro-credential course to be implemented in Q1 2026, aligned with MFHEA Strategic Pillar 6: Social Dimension – Widening Participation and Adult Learning. The proposed AI micro-credential programme directly supports Pillar 6 of the MFHEA National Strategic Plan 2030 by promoting inclusive access to lifelong learning. It specifically targets migrants and vulnerable adult learners, aligning with national priorities to increase adult participation in education through flexible, modular learning pathways.

The Validation Unit is closely following the European skills agenda and the developments in the field of AI to continue promoting meaningful learning pathways for all. The digital and the green agenda are fundamental in addressing the issue of skills and the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce. During 2025, the validation unit continued to strengthen its internal structures to accelerate its function to promote lifelong and life-wide learning through the recognition of non-formal and informal teaching and learning.

Research and Policy

Educational policy and research continue to receive consistent and growing attention. The Research and Policy Unit (R&P) remains a central part of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority's efforts to support evidence-based planning and monitoring. The R&P Unit continuously carries out a broad range of interconnected functions that form the backbone of both the national and international further and higher education sectors.

The establishment and operations of the R&P Unit are regulated by the Education Act (Cap. 607, LEGIŻLAZZJONI MALTA). The unit consistently undertakes research to inform policy development and to set standards that guide growth and transformation within the further and higher education sector. Alongside its research efforts, the R&P Unit also plays a continuing and essential role in supporting policy implementation.

International representation:

R&P Unit, MFHEA was actively strengthening its international engagement by seeking representation in key international groups and forums broadening its network to enhance collaboration, knowledge exchange, and alignment with best practices in education policies:

- European Higher Education Area, Thematic Peer Group D (Social Dimension), Co-chair
- Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) National Representative
- Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and Education for Sustainable Development (RFCDC-ESD), National Representative, Council of Europe
- Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN), National Representative, Council of Europe
- Working Group on 'Tracking Mobile Graduates', European Network of Graduate Tracking
- Working Group on 'GDPR and Data Protection Issues', European Network of Graduate Tracking
- Advisory Board on EUROGRADUATE 2026
- Research and Innovation Careers Observatory (ReICO) NCP

Annual Further and Higher Education Statistics

As per Cap. 586, 5 (1) the R&P, MFHEA has access to all relevant information available within educational institutions. R&P, MFHEA collects essential information and statistics necessary to support the effective fulfilment of its responsibilities. Both public and private providers are expected to supply the requested information within a reasonable timeframe.

Ongoing collaboration with the National Statistics Office (NSO) supports the initiative, with both entities working together to consistently collect data from licensed education providers on further and higher education students and graduates for each academic year. An Active Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on collaborative exchange of statistical information on education data is aimed at streamlining processes and reducing the administrative burden on institutions.

The Research and Policy Unit has two annual calls for data collection: annual student enrolment and graduate headcount from further and higher education providers, obliging MFHEA-licensed institutions to provide this information. In 2025, the call for graduate data spanned students completing their programmes of study in the preceding academic year and was initiated at the onset of the year.

The second annual survey focuses on student data, transpiring in Q2 and covering statistics for all students enrolled during the relevant academic year.

EUROSTUDENT

The EUROSTUDENT project focuses on gathering and comparing data on the social dimension of Higher Education (HE) across participating European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries. Every three years, a survey is conducted among higher education students in approximately 30 countries, collecting insights on their socio-economic backgrounds, living conditions, and mobility experiences during their studies.

In 2025 Malta successfully completed the field phase for EUROSTUDENT 9 round.

Within the EUROSTUDENT project, the MFHEA's Research and Policy Unit has a dual role:

- It acts as Malta's national research team, responsible for executing the national student survey in adherence to EUROSTUDENT international standards and offering national insights into the gathered data. In 2025 Malta continued the participation in the EUROSTUDENT 9 round.
- Holds a position as a member of the EUROSTUDENT consortium, a central coordination team comprising seven member organizations. In this capacity, the MFHEA has the role of coordinating policy and communication. In 2025 the R&P unit hosted the Preparatory Seminars for EUROSTUDENT countries in February 2025.

EUROGRADUATE:

The EUROGRADUATE 2022 survey represents the second pilot phase of a European initiative designed to track higher education graduates. Its primary objective is to generate data and analysis on the outcomes of higher education, enabling:

- International comparisons and national-level research,
- The linkage of graduates' background, educational experience, employment, mobility, and social outcomes,
- The differentiation of various levels and fields of higher education (Malta included collection of level 5 as well), and
- The comparison of short- and mid-term outcomes (1- and 5-years post-graduation).

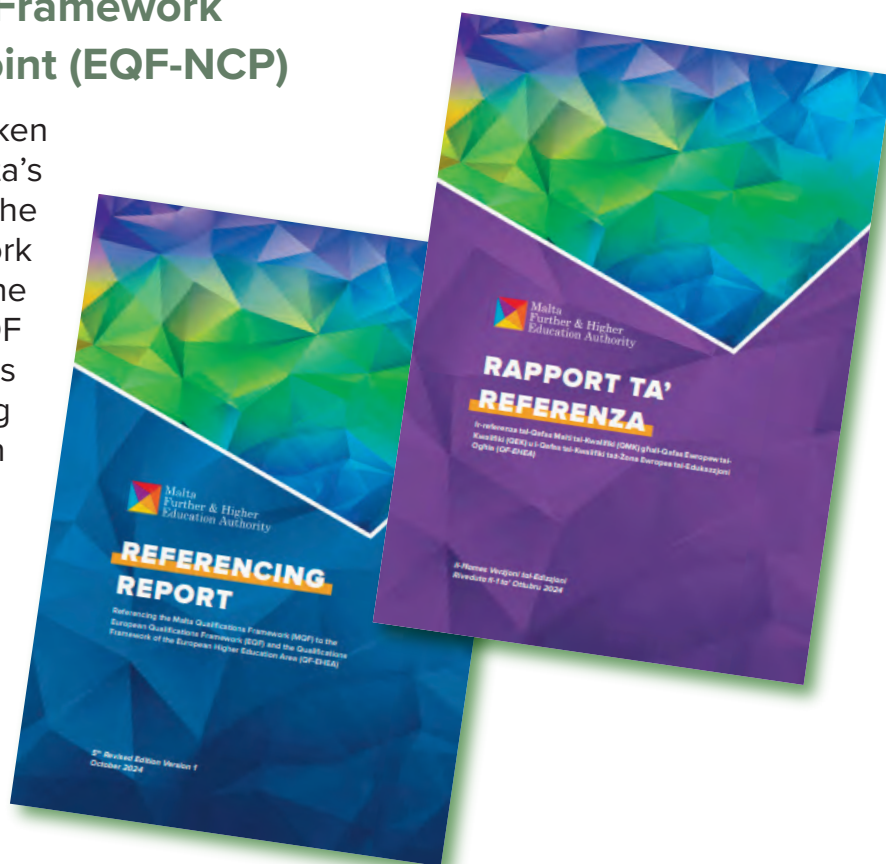
In 2025 the comparative report on the results of the EUROGRADUATE 2022 has been published and can be found here: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bef6111f-9371-11f0-97c8-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Moreover, In 2025 R&P, MFHEA has been approved by the European Commission to implement the new round of the EUROGRADUATE 2026 project.

European Qualifications Framework National Coordination Point (EQF-NCP)

From 2019, The R&P Unit has taken on the strategic role of Malta's National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Its core mission is to drive the seamless integration of the EQF within the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), strengthening alignment with European standards and promoting greater transparency and mobility in education and training.

The most updated Referencing Report (RR, mini and full version) can be found online. here: Referencing Report - Malta Further & Higher Education Authority.



Moreover, in 2025, the Research and Policy Unit, MFHEA has been successfully implementing the the EQF National Coordination Point work programme, which covers the period from 2024 to 2026: with a strong focus on collaboration and cooperation, the initiative is carried out in close partnership with international peer organisations and local government entities.

In 2025 the continuous updating of the Referencing Report has been continued, fostering the utilization of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) among both public and private stakeholders, enhancing MQF accessibility for learners, workers, and employers through a series of strategic activities.

Policy Implementation - 2022-2030 National Further and Higher Education Strategic Action Plan

In 2025 Working Groups (WG) to be aligned with the Strategy's recommendations, ensuring coordinated and focused action across key priority areas were established. The meetings of the WGs were executed in Q1 2025 with ToRs being approved by the corresponding members.

Communications

To advance the Authority's mission, vision, and values, we place a strong emphasis on clear and effective communication, fostering transparency, building trust, and promoting engagement. The Communications Unit is central to achieving these objectives, ensuring the timely and accurate delivery of information across multiple channels. Within the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), effective communication with key stakeholders and the public is sustained through close collaboration across departments. This approach guarantees a clear understanding of the Authority's operations and the precise dissemination of information to its audiences. The Communications Unit engages with a wide range of audiences, each with distinct needs and priorities, yet all united by the common goal of providing and receiving the highest quality learning experience. The unit is dedicated to developing and implementing tailored strategies to meet the specific requirements of each audience effectively.

Structure

In 2025, the Communications Unit consisted of a Manager, an Executive and an Officer, and was further strengthened with the addition of a new Officer. Recognising that effective teamwork is essential for success across all areas of communication, including internal communications, stakeholder engagement and branding, the team has established clear goals and objectives to enhance collaboration within the unit.

Media and Advertising

Throughout 2025, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) actively implemented a comprehensive advertising and communications strategy, using a diverse mix of digital, broadcast and outdoor media to raise awareness of the Authority's role and services. These efforts were designed to enhance public understanding of further and higher education quality assurance and strengthen engagement with key stakeholders.

Building on previous activity, MFHEA continued to partner with prominent advertising agencies to publish digital content that showcased its work. In addition, the Authority expanded its outreach through collaboration with FreeHour, Malta's top youth platform, producing a series



FreeHour

Malta's Largest Student Platform

of five short video episodes focused on explaining key aspects of MFHEA's mandate and contributions. These videos aimed to engage younger audiences with accessible and informative content.

Alongside these, MFHEA worked closely with TVM Malta, where a series of targeted articles were published to inform the broader public about the Authority's functions, responsibilities and impact on the further and higher education landscape.

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Understanding the Role of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

July 1, 2025



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June 15, 2026

To further enhance visibility, the Authority launched an outdoor advertising campaign featuring prominent placements on bus shelters and billboards across Malta. This initiative complemented online and broadcast activities, reinforcing MFHEA's presence in both physical and digital environments and ensuring widespread exposure of its messaging.

Additional collaborations with another leading advertising agency in May and October, further promoted MFHEA's core services, ensuring consistent and clear communication about the organisation's role and priorities.

Complementing these efforts, we maintained an active presence on our social media platforms throughout the year. Regular posts were disseminated on a weekly basis to keep our followers informed about our ongoing activities. This consistent online engagement served as an additional method to reinforce our corporate message and maintain a transparent line of communication with our audience.

In summary, the 2025 communications and advertising strategy combined digital articles, broadcast outreach, youth-focused video content, outdoor advertising and social media engagement. Collectively, these efforts broadened awareness of MFHEA's services, strengthened its brand visibility and fostered meaningful engagement with diverse audiences.

Branding and Visibility

Branding and visibility are central to MFHEA's identity, encompassing a range of activities including content creation, print materials, digital content development, design, supplier coordination, copywriting and advertising. Each of these elements plays a vital role in establishing a strong brand presence and enhancing the Authority's visibility.

Effective content creation focuses on producing engaging and informative materials that resonate with the Further and Higher Education (FHE) community. Print and digital resources, such as flyers, social media posts and website updates, serve as key channels for showcasing MFHEA's services. Meanwhile, design and collaboration with suppliers ensure consistency across all marketing materials, maintaining uniformity in key brand elements such as the logo, colour palette and typography.

The Communications Unit is responsible for coordinating these efforts, working collaboratively to strengthen MFHEA's visibility and support organisational growth. In addition, the Unit oversees the management of the MFHEA website, playing a pivotal role in creating, updating and disseminating a variety of content to internal and external audiences.



These include:

Employment opportunities	The Unit posts job vacancies and related information on the website to attract potential candidates.
Announcements	The Unit posts announcements regarding new developments, changes or other news related to the MFHEA on the website.
Communications for providers	The Unit provides updates and information to providers, such as guidelines, policy changes and other important official communications.
Latest news and categorised posts	The website features posts organised by categories to help visitors easily find information that interests them.
Publications	The Communications Unit also publishes articles, reports or other publications on the website.
Events	The website features information on past and upcoming events, such as conferences, workshops or training sessions.
Projects and activities	The Communications Unit also shares information about ongoing projects and activities related to the MFHEA.

In addition to maintaining the MFHEA website, the Communications Unit disseminates information through various other means and portals. These include:

- Direct email: The Communications Unit sends information directly to licensed providers via email.
- Social media: The Communications Unit uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and X to reach a wider audience and promote the MFHEA.
- Presentations: The Communications Unit prepares and supports presentations at events or conferences to promote the MFHEA and provide information to stakeholders.

Creating content for multiple channels requires a combination of design and copywriting expertise. To ensure high-quality output, the Communications Unit collaborates with suppliers, including graphic designers, web developers and copywriters, to produce engaging materials that effectively convey key messages. In 2025, the Unit has further strengthened its capacity to carry out much of this work in-house, building on previous investments in equipment and expanding its capabilities to improve efficiency and streamline content production.

The Unit continues to work closely with other departments and stakeholders to facilitate clear communication and ensure the accuracy of disseminated information. Proactively, MFHEA's Communications Unit has implemented measures to maintain and update branded collateral in both physical and digital formats. This ongoing commitment reinforces consistency in messaging and design across all communications issued by the Authority.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Annual Report

The Communications Unit was responsible for the creation and distribution of the 2025 Annual Report. This process involved collecting and compiling data in collaboration with other MFHEA units to ensure the inclusion of accurate and relevant information. In line with established procurement procedures, the Unit appointed a designer and supplier for the report's design and printing.

Following the completion of the design and printing stages, the Communications Unit distributed the report to the Authority's stakeholders, including Members of Parliament. At the same time, a digital version was published online to ensure wider accessibility.

The Communications Unit played a key role in the development and dissemination of the Annual Report, helping to keep stakeholders informed about MFHEA's activities and progress. Through close coordination with designers, suppliers and internal departments, the Unit ensured that the report met high quality standards and reached a broad audience.

Support and Participation

Throughout 2025, the Communications Unit supported various projects and events by providing communication assistance both internally within MFHEA and externally with stakeholders and the public.





In 2025, the Communications Unit played a significant role in organising, hosting and supporting key national and international events. Among these was the hosting of the 9th Plenary of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) in November 2025. This important gathering brought together representatives and experts from across Europe to discuss ethics, transparency and integrity within education systems, reinforcing Malta's commitment to strengthening governance and quality assurance in the sector.

The Communications Unit supported Your Skills Matter: Validate and Fill the Gap for Enhanced Success, an event hosted by MFHEA that marked the launch of the updated Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) guidance for education and training providers in Malta. The event featured insightful discussions and international perspectives on the validation of skills and competencies, showcasing MFHEA's commitment to promoting skills recognition and lifelong learning as key elements in workforce development and individual success.



The Unit also supported the Final Webinar of the National VET Team Project 2025, which focused on developments in vocational education and training, accreditation updates and future regulatory priorities. Moreover, the Communications Unit assisted in the organisation and promotion of the Online Introduction to the New Programme Accreditation Process for Further Education Institutions, ensuring clear communication of updated standards and procedures to education providers and stakeholders.

At international level, MFHEA participated in the EQAVET Peer Review held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in April 2025. This engagement facilitated knowledge exchange and collaboration in vocational education quality assurance, strengthening MFHEA's international partnerships and contribution to European quality frameworks.

The Communications Unit also supported the Certificate Ceremony for New Providers 2025, welcoming newly licensed institutions and recognising their successful compliance with MFHEA's regulatory standards. This event further strengthened stakeholder engagement and highlighted the Authority's commitment to maintaining high standards within the further and higher education sector.

Through its efforts, the Communications Unit ensured the successful coordination, promotion and execution of these key events, reinforcing MFHEA's commitment to effective communication, stakeholder engagement and the continuous development of education and quality assurance at both national and international levels.

Furthermore, the Communications Unit actively supported MFHEA's participation in various initiatives throughout the year, including workshops, webinars, career expos, annual conferences and professional development training sessions. By assisting in the planning, promotion and execution of these activities, the Unit played a crucial role in enhancing engagement with stakeholders and increasing awareness of MFHEA's services and initiatives. In 2025, the Communications Unit maintained its central role in supporting events and activities by drafting speeches, assisting in event coordination, creating content and promotional materials and providing strategic communication input across a range of topics. Through these endeavours, the Unit ensured the seamless organisation and clear communication of events and initiatives to stakeholders.

Providing a wide range of support services, the Communications Unit remains integral to promoting effective communication and organisational visibility. By delivering these essential services, the Unit helps ensure that information is accessible, structured and effectively disseminated, thereby facilitating informed decision-making and transparent communication processes.

These services include:

Media monitoring	This includes monitoring media coverage and industry trends, keeping management informed of public opinion and emerging issues, while identifying opportunities for engagement and outreach.
Maintaining personal and generic inboxes	This involves managing email inboxes within the organisation; this ensures that communications are received and responded to in a timely and organised manner.
Maintaining lists	This involves maintaining updated lists of projects, representatives, measures and tasks within the organisation, ensuring that information remains accessible and current.
Data filing	This involves managing and organising data and information within the organisation to ensure that information is easily accessible and well-organised.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, the Unit remains dedicated to broadening public and community engagement across multiple platforms, fostering stronger trust and understanding among stakeholders. It will continue to play a central role in supporting international events hosted in Malta, providing a platform to showcase the Authority’s initiatives, strengthen global partnerships, and cultivate new collaborations. The Unit also plans to develop and implement impactful campaigns that highlight key educational initiatives, raise awareness of the Authority’s services and encourage active stakeholder participation. These initiatives reflect the Unit’s forward-looking strategy, reinforcing the Authority’s reputation as a trusted and influential presence both nationally and internationally.

INNOVATE COLLABORATE SUCCEED

Driving growth
together

VISION
STRATEGY
GROWTH



Corporate Unit

Primary Functions

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)'s Corporate Department is a composite unit which attends to the Authority's administration and back-office support functions such as Human Resources, Logistics and Procurement, Contract Management, and Financial Management and Administration. The Authority's Front Office is also assigned to this unit.

Composition

Throughout the year the unit was composed of a Head of Department, a Finance Manager, and eight other employees in different grades. Another two employees were assigned to this unit towards the latter end of the year.

Administration-Human Resources

All HRM functions are assigned to the Corporate Department. This includes responsibility for:

Recruitment

The Corporate Unit facilitated timely recruitment in line with organisational requirements. All vacancies due to either turnover or revised establishment (approved head count) were filled subject to initial internal calls. During the year there were 14 recruitment calls to fill 22 posts. Additionally, 3 student workers (under the Government's IPS scheme) were engaged over this period. All administrative aspects related to the recruitment, engagement and induction of these employees were undertaken by the Department's staff, including liaising with all external entities.

Promotions

During the period under review, the Department fulfilled all the administrative processes for 21 promotions at various grades within the Authority.

MFHEA Policies and Procedures

The unit also revised existing staff policies and introduced 8 new staff policies to address identified gaps. Organisational Procedures were also revised and updated and two new SOP's introduced.

Attendance and timekeeping

During the year, MFHEA monitored attendance and timekeeping through its dedicated hardware and software.

Staff Training

The Corporate Department also organised training for all employees as follows:

- An online course in Maltese Language for its foreign employees. This course remains ongoing and is being attended by 10 employees,
- A Fire Awareness and Fire Fighting course was organised for all MFHEA employees, who attended on 4 different course dates,

- 3 x employees from the Corporate Department were nominated and attended Gender Mainstreaming training to remain abreast with ongoing developments,
- 2 x employees attended a course in employee relations,
- First Aid training was also organised for 6 x MFHEA employees,
- Automated External Defibrillator training was also organised for the same 6 employees,
- 1 x employee also attended Payroll training,
- 2 x Corporate employees were nominated and attended the Equality and Human Rights in the Maltese Public Service,
- A 2-day training session (Leadership) was organised for all management at MFHEA,
- Additionally, a two-day long training in Interpersonal Skills Development was organised for all MFHEA Staff,
- 1 x employee from Corporate Department was nominated and attended the Health and Safety Representative course,
- 2 x Corporate Department employees undertook training in HR trends,
- Moreover, the Corporate Department organised two induction training days for new employees at the Authority.

In addition, Corporate Department staff kept abreast on pertinent developments in their respective fields through various conferences, seminars and webinars.

Collective Bargaining

Throughout the year the Corporate Department was directly and consistently involved in the collective bargaining process which concluded in the 4th quarter with the Collective Agreement for several grades at the Authority. Collective bargaining remained ongoing for managerial grades.

Internal HR Data and Records, and External Reporting

The Corporate Department is responsible for all internal HR related data, staff records and documentation. Moreover, it fulfils all external reporting on HR related matters on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

Performance Appraisals

Furthermore, the department coordinates all the Authority's performance appraisals, related record keeping, and performance-based remunerations.

Jobs Permits

In addition, the department liaised with external entities and attended to all administration related to third country employees' job permits.

Student Workers

During the year, this Department was also responsible for the engagement, assignment, records and remuneration of three students under the government's IPS scheme.

Committees and Working Groups

The Department also instituted the Health and Safety committee, composed of a Management representative, the Health and Safety representative, and the Workers' union representative. Additionally, the Corporate Department was also responsible for the Gender Equality Working Group. This is composed of 9 employees representing their respective department/unit. During the year, the Corporate Department with the support of the Research and Policy Unit authored and published the Annual Gender Equality Report which is available on the Authority's website.

Teambuilding Events

The Department also organised 7 teambuilding events and activities for all MFHEA staff.

Administration - EU Funds

The Corporate Unit was responsible for the administration of funds from various EU projects.

Administration - National Funds

The total revenue from government funds for 2025 was €1,200,000. The Licensing and Accreditation Unit generated €926,726 in income, marking a notable increase from €853,250 in 2024. Income from the Quality Assurance Unit, which included External Quality Audits, reached €154,754 an increase from €27,449 in 2024. The MQRIC generated €559,132 in 2025, up from €432,923 in 2024. Overall, total income for 2025 amounted to €3,073,256, compared to €2,832,811 in 2024.



SUPPLY

Vendor management



CONTRACT

Negotiation/Agreements



SOURCING

Strategic Sourcing



SUPPLIER SELECTION



LOGISTICS

Supply Chain/Delivery

Administration- Financial Management

Financial Reporting

Monthly and quarterly FDRS Financial Reports were submitted during the year. These reports assisted in a tighter budgetary control. Regular reconciliations were also carried out for the daily transactions posted into SAGE. The Quarterly Management Accounts were also presented to the MFHEA Board. FDRS reports were also submitted to the MFHEA Board monthly.

Payments

Throughout the year, the unit processed over 2,363 transactions, totalling more than €3,308,528 in payments. These payments covered various services provided to MFHEA, including the evaluation of national qualifications, other professional services, and the procurement of supplies and services needed for daily operations at MFHEA's offices. Some of the transactions were also related to international projects, such as the National Vet Team and Eurostudent 9 projects, among others. Payments were made in accordance with procurement and financial procedures, and efforts were made to ensure that evaluators submitted invoices promptly to prevent payment delays. The Corporate Unit adhered strictly to the 30-day requirement outlined in the Late Payments Directive and worked towards achieving SEPA compliance.

VAT Compliance

The Corporate Unit ensured that all business processes were compliant with VAT regulations. For example, evaluation services and as well as those related to research were scrutinised to ensure that VAT receipts for their payments were duly submitted.

Financial Audit

The work for the Financial Audit commenced in February 2026 and the Audit was completed in April 2026. The Audit of the Financial Statements included the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2025, the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Accumulated Fund and the Statement of Cash Flows for the end of 2025. This section was assisted in this work by the external Accountant.

Procurement and Logistical Support

During the year, the Corporate Department was responsible for all logistical procurement and vetted all decentralised services and works' procurement to ensure compliance with the

Government's public procurement regulations. The Corporate Department remains furthermore responsible for administrative processing of all procurement at the Authority.

In 2025, the Corporate Department was directly responsible for, or oversaw a total of 243 procurement processes. These included the sourcing and purchasing of various movables like furniture and IT equipment. The Department was furthermore responsible for all routine supplies like office stationery, toiletries, and cleaning detergents and materials. Moreover, Corporate employees logistically and administratively supported various Authority events.

The Department was also responsible for the procurement and servicing of fire extinguishers at the premises.

Property Management, Repairs and Upkeep

Throughout the year, the Corporate Department managed the Authority's premises and attended to all routine and extraordinary repairs, maintenance and upkeep requirements to sustain the quality of the workplace environment.

The routine obligations included regular servicing and maintenance of the fire alarm systems to ensure operational reliability and compliance with safety standards. Additionally, fire alarm repairs and system checks were carried out as necessary to address faults and maintain compliance.

Routine pest control services were also sourced and conducted. In addition, air conditioning and ventilation systems were also regularly serviced and cleaned. Likewise, all offices, general areas, sanitary facilities and the building's adjacent area were serviced and cleaned, thus ensuring workplace cleanliness and hygiene. Maintenance and repair of lift systems were also conducted routinely to guarantee safety and reliability for all users.

During the period under review, the Corporate Department also led refurbishment works on the three kitchenette facilities and amenities. Furthermore, repairs and maintenance works related to water supply, drainage, and electrical systems were sought and supported to safeguard infrastructural functionality.

Health and safety at MFHEA was also prioritised through apposite training and the installation of Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) on each of the premises' three floors to ensure rapid response capability in case of medical emergencies. Complementing this, first aid cabinets were installed and routinely stocked with essential first aid supplies in line with occupational health and safety standards.

Travel Management and Administration

In 2025, the Corporate Department oversaw and assisted all the Authority's international travel requirements to participate in a wide range of overseas commitments like meetings, conferences, seminars, and training events. A total of 21 employees were thus supported to attend 60 different events in several countries.

EU Projects

As in the previous years, the financial system ensured that direct costs related to EU projects were correctly accounted for and that EU reimbursements related to such projects were allocated to the correct project. This achievement greatly facilitated the project reports which are needed to close off the projects. Separate project files were set up for each project. Project files of projects which had been closed off were archived. The MFHEA Board was presented with a quarterly report on the current status of the projects.

Contract Management

During 2025, the Corporate Department also retained all centralised contract management and archiving tasks.

Archiving Policy

Corporate Unit periodically retrieves obsolescent files (which are being stored in third-party premises) and destroys them as per the Data retention and GDPR policies. These periodic exercises also decrease archiving costs.

Parliamentary Questions

This unit supported the collection and collation of data to entertain 31 Parliamentary Questions in 2025.

Generic E-Mail Address

Throughout the year, the Unit also maintained the generic email addresses admin@mfhea.mt and corporate.mfhea@mfhea.mt. These email addresses are mainly utilised for Calls for Quotations and recruitment purposes. For financial management purposes, Corporate Unit oversees the generic email address finance.mfhea@mfhea.mt.

Cost-Cutting Achievements in 2025

Electronic Payments

As in previous years, the Corporate Unit endeavoured to ensure that payments were made electronically. This measure continued to substantially reduce postage costs whilst also facilitating timely payments of invoices. Collection of revenue for the services of Licensing and Accreditation is primarily carried out electronically via bank transfer. Most evaluators of the home-grown qualifications are also paid electronically.

Bulk Payments

Whenever possible, multiple payments to the same supplier were processed together. This approach reduces bank charges and increases efficiency.

Postage

Whenever possible, a bulk postage system was adopted. Postage stamps were purchased and retained within the Corporate Unit and available upon request. This measure was necessary due to the incremental increases in the postage rates.

Office Equipment

The leased photocopiers were monitored monthly to supervise costs of usage. Staff were reminded to minimise colour prints especially for internal usage. Staff were also encouraged to use these printers rather than any desk printers available for large print jobs.

E-Invoices

All invoices for the collection of revenue related to the processing of the Licensing and Accreditation fees were communicated electronically and subsequently followed up to ensure timely collection of revenue. Receipts were also issued electronically. Hard copies of all documents were kept in the financial files.

IT

The IT strategy within MFHEA is largely focused on promulgating the enabling nature of IT amongst all our staff. At MFHEA, technology is a resource at our fingertips that is making us more proactive, more responsive, and more effective at doing the right things the right way, and as rapidly as possible. For this to happen, the IT function within MFHEA shields our employees from the complexities that technology carries with it while actively encouraging staff to make the most of the liberating functionality of modern-day equipment and systems.

Thanks to solid security and other state-of-the-art infrastructure provided by MITA, we are now able to host all our key data within a cloud environment, thereby giving us instant accessibility to our information irrespective of our physical location. Staff have embraced video-conferencing technologies to the extent that MFHEA now organises very high-quality virtual events on a regular basis. Understandably, this necessitated an extensive overhaul of the computing resources at our staff's disposal, moving towards equipment well-g geared to provide the quality, continuity, and speed of access that modern technology demands.

In keeping with our status as the leading authority in Further and Higher Education and in acknowledgement of the transformational impact technology is having on the educational environment across the board, we are continuing to explore new functional boundaries such as the use of e-signatures and automated business process flows, to celebrate the fact that physical location is becoming largely irrelevant in the pursuit of effective productivity.

In 2025, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority also invested in new hardware and software for its workforce. It also carried out an extensive exercise to dispose of obsolete items as per MFHEA policy.

In the absence of the Manager IT, the Head of the Corporate Unit held monthly meetings with the IT support providers to ensure that any issues were resolved in as short a time span as possible. Throughout the year, records of all IT assets were also kept updated as per the Fixed Asset Inventory held in the accounting software. Various procurements for IT hardware and software were also carried out as per the procurement regulations and policy of MFHEA. This included the purchase of new laptops, printers, and external hard drives.



Legal and Compliance

The Legal and Compliance Unit strives to assist Further and Higher Education institutions to be in line with regulations and guidelines. It also attends to reports or complaints by students or the general public in relation to issues with educational institutions not related to Quality Assurance. The Unit's main aim is to act as the critical friend of providers. On the other hand, the legal arm deals with any legal issues and assists all units within the Authority.

The Unit continued its previous work to highlight any misinformation by providers to students or prospective students. The Unit followed several reports on such material and in general the Unit is very satisfied with the cooperation found and proud to say that in most cases providers collaborated and rectified any incorrect information.

As per law, the Legal and Compliance Unit also monitors providers who have not operated for several months or years. This exercise will continue on a regular basis to ensure a healthy register.

The Unit increased its regular monitoring through online reviews and physical checks. The main aim of the Unit is to protect students and at the same time help providers be in line with laws and guidelines. This will ultimately help during the institutional audit and ensure the best provision possible. In 2025 the Unit conducted 15 spot checks and 50 online reviews.

The Unit receives reports of alleged breaches, suspected unfair advertising or information, lack of students agreements etc, which the Unit investigates and tries to assist complaints. In 2025 the Unit dealt with 204 such cases. It also handled 366 queries from the general public.

The Legal Unit is also engaged in an ongoing process of updating the processes of MFHEA. The Legal and Compliance Unit continues to assist the governance structures of the Authority through its advice to the Quality Assurance Committee and Board of the Authority. The Unit also assists all other units in their daily work such as the MRC & EU section with Mutual recognition Qualification or EU issues and the Research and Policy section when it comes to data collection issues from providers who refuse to pass on data. The Unit also handles Data Protection issues and Freedom of Information requests.

The Unit also is involved in court litigations which the Authority may find itself in after taking its decisions. Also, it represents the Authority in appeals lodged by licensees who may feel aggrieved by the decisions of the Authority.

The Unit strives to continue the work which has been done over the past years to the best of its abilities and with the resources available, and where possible improve through better efficiency.

Annual Financial Statements

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Members' Report For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (the "Authority") presents this report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Principal Activities

The Authority was formerly established under the Education Act, Chapter 327, Laws of Malta. Subsidiary Legislation 327.433 has been transposed to Cap. 607.03. The Authority was officially launched on 8 January 2021 and is legislated by the Further and Higher Education Act, 2020, Laws of Malta which came into force on 1 January 2021. MFHEA is engaged in promoting furtherance and higher education to empower all students with knowledge and skills to meet education requirements as requested by Government.

Business Review

The Authority is reporting a deficit for the year of €281,315 (2024: surplus of €181,957) on income of €3,073,256 (2024: €2,832,811). During the year, revenue from the Authority's own operations has increased from previous year, amounting to €1,681,393 (2024: €1,367,287). The financial support received from the government, which is used to cover payroll costs, amounted to €1,200,000 (2024: €1,200,000). The Authority will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and that adequate support will continue to be made available by the Government of Malta through the subventions to enable the Authority to meet its commitments as and when they fall due.

Reserves

The Authority proposes to transfer the deficit for the year to accumulated funds, which amount to €33,111 as at 31 December 2025 (2024: €314,426).

Future Developments

The Authority is not envisaging any changes in operating activities for the forthcoming year.

Results

The result for the year ended 31 December 2025 is shown on the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income on page 5. The deficit for the year is €281,315 (2024: surplus of €181,957).

Authority

The Members of the Authority who held office were:

Dr Desiree Cassar
Mr Anatole Baldacchino
Dr Alicia Agius
Dr Edward Woods
Mr Anthony Borg
Mr Paul Gauci
Mr Edgar Francis Borg
Ms Allison Zammit
Ms Nicola Cuschieri

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Members' Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025 (continued)

The Authority's responsibilities

The Authority is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Authority and of the profit or loss of the Authority for that year, in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the EU. In preparing these the Authority is required to:

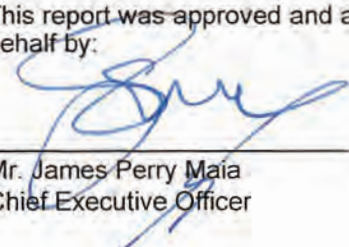
- adopt the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Authority will continue in business;
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- account for income and charges relating to the accounting period on the accruals basis;
- value separately the components of asset and liability items; and
- report comparative figures corresponding to those of the preceding accounting period.

The Authority is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the Authority and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the International Financial Reporting Standards. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Authority and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities, and for designing, implementing and maintaining such internal control as the Authority determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatements, whether due to fraud or error.

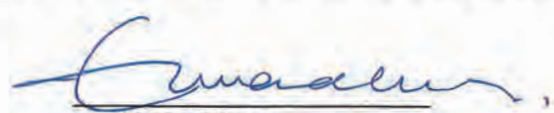
Auditors

Forvis Mazars, Registered Auditors, have expressed their willingness to continue in office and a resolution for their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

This report was approved and authorized for issue by the Authority on 14 April 2026 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr. James Perry Maia
Chief Executive Officer



Dr Edward Woods
Chairman

Registered Address:

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)
J. Abela Sclararo Street
Hamrun HMR 1304
Malta

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Revenue	3	3,073,256	2,832,811
Direct costs	5	(287,290)	(211,529)
Gross surplus		2,785,966	2,621,282
Administrative expenses	5	(3,086,695)	(2,505,605)
Other operating income	4	60,714	66,280
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	5	(240,015)	181,957

The notes on pages 7 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

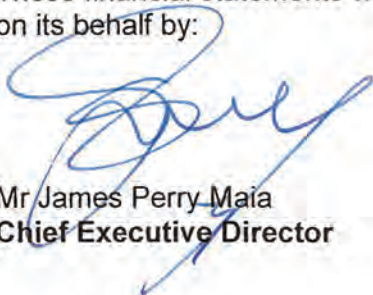
Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Statement of Financial Position As at 31 December 2025

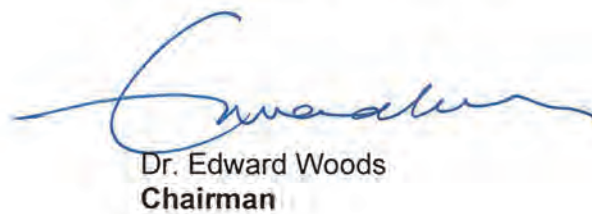
	Notes	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Assets			
Non current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	67,739	56,256
Total non-current assets		67,739	56,256
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	9	157,026	126,746
Cash and cash equivalents	10	422,822	525,766
Total current assets		579,848	652,512
Total assets		647,587	708,768
Funds and liabilities			
Fund			
Accumulated fund		74,411	314,426
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	573,176	394,342
Total current liabilities		573,176	394,342
Total funds and liabilities		647,587	708,768

The notes on pages 7 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

These financial statements were approved by the Authority on 14 April 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:



Mr James Perry Maia
Chief Executive Director



Dr. Edward Woods
Chairman

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Statement of accumulated fund For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Accumulated Fund EUR
Balance as at 1 January 2024	132,469
<i>Changes for 2024</i>	
Surplus for the year	181,957
Balance as at 31 December 2024	314,426
<i>Changes for 2025</i>	
Surplus for the year	(240,015)
Balance as at 31 December 2025	74,411

The notes on pages 7 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Statement of cash flows For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Cash from operating activities:			
Deficit/(surplus) for the year		(240,015)	181,957
Depreciation and amortisation		17,225	16,733
Provision for bad debts		5,923	-
Gain on disposal of fixed asset		(346)	-
Deferred income released		(3,551)	(153,174)
Deficit from operations		(220,764)	45,516
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables		(36,203)	25,992
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables		69,226	(40,354)
Net cash flows used in operating activities		(187,741)	(31,154)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(30,362)	(18,889)
Receipts from sales of assets		2,000	-
Net cash flows generated from/used in investing activities		(28,362)	(18,889)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Net project funds received		113,159	51,461
Net cash flows generated from financing activities		113,159	51,461
Net cash movement		(102,944)	63,726
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		525,766	462,040
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	10	422,822	525,766

The notes on pages 7 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Basis of preparation

a. Relevant Act

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (the "Authority") was formerly established under the Education Act, Chapter 327, Laws of Malta. The Authority was officially launched on 8 January 2021 and is legislated by the Further and Higher Education Act, 2020, Laws of Malta which came into force on 1 January 2021.

b. Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, ("the Authority"), have been prepared and presented in accordance with the requirements of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as adopted by the European Union.

c. Basis of measurement

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis.

d. Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in Euro (€), which is the Authority's functional currency.

e. Use of estimates and assumptions

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS as adopted by the EU requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimates are revised and in any future periods affected.

f. Changes in accounting policies and disclosures **Initial Application of an International Financial Reporting Standard**

The Authority has adopted the following new and amended IFRS and IFRIC interpretations as of 1 January 2025:

- Amendments to IAS 21, The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates: Lack of Exchangeability (issued 15 August 2023) (effective on 1 January 2025)

The amendments specifies when a currency is exchangeable into another currency and when not. It also specifies how an entity can determine the exchange rate to apply when a currency is not exchangeable and requires additional disclosures when a currency is not exchangeable.

The application of this amendment did not have a material effect on the Authority's financial statements.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Basis of preparation (continued)

f. Changes in accounting policies and disclosures (continued)

Standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards as adopted by the EU in issue but not yet effective for financial periods beginning on 1 January 2025:

- Contracts Referencing Nature-dependent Electricity – Amendment to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7 (issued on 18 December 2024) (effective on 1 January 2026)

The amendments relate to the own-use requirements and hedge accounting requirements together with related disclosures. The scope of the amendments is narrow and apply only if contracts meet the specified scoping characteristics.

- Annual improvements Volume 11 (issued on 18 July 2024) (effective on 1 January 2026). These improvements include:
 - IFRS 1 First Time Adoption of international Financial Reporting Standards – Hedge accounting by a first time adopter.

The amendment addresses a potential confusion arising from an inconsistency in wording between paragraph B6 of IFRS 1 and requirements for hedge accounting in IFRS 9 Financial Instruments.

- IFRS 7 Financial Instruments Disclosures.
 - Gain or loss on derecognition: The amendment addresses a potential confusion arising from an obsolete reference to a paragraph that was deleted from the standard when IFRS 13 *Fair Value Measurement* was issued.
 - Disclosure of deferred difference between fair value and transaction price: The amendment addresses an inconsistency between IFRS 7 and its accompanying implementation guidance that arose when a consequential amendment resulting from the issuance of IFRS 13 was made but not to the corresponding paragraph in the implementation guidance.
 - Introduction and credit risk disclosures The amendment addresses a potential confusion by clarifying that the guidance does not necessarily illustrate all the requirements in the referenced paragraphs of IFRS 7 and by simplifying some explanations.
- IFRS 9 Financial Instruments
 - Lessee derecognition of lease liabilities: The amendment addresses a potential lack of clarity in the application of the requirements in IFRS 9 to account for an extinguishment of a lessee's lease liability that arises because of cross-referencing.
 - Transaction price: The amendment addresses a potential confusion arising from a reference in Appendix A to IFRS 9 to the definition of 'transaction price' in IFRS 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* while term 'transaction price' is used in particular paragraphs of IFRS 9 with a meaning that is not necessarily consistent with the definition of that term in IFRS 15.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Basis of preparation (continued)

f. Changes in accounting policies and disclosures (continued)

Standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards as adopted by the EU in issue but not yet effective for financial periods beginning on 1 January 2025 (continued):

- **IFRS 10 Consolidated Financial Statements – Determination of a ‘de -Facto agent’**
The amendment addresses a potential confusion arising from an inconsistency in IFRS 10 related to an investor determining whether another party is acting on its behalf by aligning the language in two paragraphs.

- **IAS 7 Statements of Cash Flows – Cost Method**

The amendment addresses a potential confusion that arises from the use of the term ‘cost method’ that is no longer defined in IFRS Accounting Standards.

- **Amendments to the Classification and Measurement of Financial Instruments (Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7) (issued on 30 May 2024) (effective on 1 January 2026).**

These amendments aim to clarify and improve the requirements for how financial assets and liabilities are classified and measured, as well as how related information is disclosed.

- **IFRS 9:**
 - **Clarification of Contractual Cash Flow Characteristics:** The amendments clarify how to assess whether the contractual cash flows of a financial asset are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI). Guidance is also provided on the treatment of non-recourse features and contractually linked instruments, helping entities determine appropriate classification.
 - **Assessment of financial assets with ESG features:** New guidance addresses financial assets with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) features, clarifying when such features are consistent with SPPI criteria.
 - **Derecognition of Financial Liabilities:** Clarifications are made regarding the accounting for modifications or exchanges of financial liabilities that do not result in derecognition.
 - **Measurement for Investments in Equity Instruments:** The amendments provide additional guidance on the application of the fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) election for certain equity investments.
- **IFRS 7:**
 - **Enhanced Disclosure Requirements:** The amendments introduce new and improved disclosure requirements to help users of financial statements better understand the classification and measurement of financial instruments.
 - **Transition Disclosures:** Entities are required to provide more detailed information about the impact of these amendments during the transition period.

The directors are of the opinion that these amendments will not have a material impact on the financial statements of the Authority.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Basis of preparation (continued)

f. Changes in accounting policies and disclosures (continued)

Standards, interpretations and amendments issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) but not yet adopted by the European Union:

- IFRS 19 Subsidiaries without Public Accountability: Disclosures (issued on 9 May 2024)
- IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements (issued on 9 April 2024)
- Amendments to IAS 21, The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates: Translation to a Hyperinflationary Presentation Currency (issued on 13 November 2025)
- Amendments to IFRS 19, Subsidiaries Without Public Accountability: Disclosures (issued on 21 August 2025)

The Directors are assessing the impact that the adoption of these Financial Reporting Standards will have in the financial statements of the Authority in the period of initial application.

Standards, interpretations and amendments issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) but not adopted by the European Union:

IFRS 14 Regulatory Deferral Accounts: (issued on 30 January 2014). The European Commission has decided not to launch the endorsement process of this interim standard and wait for the final IFRS standard.

2. Material Accounting Policies

a. Overall considerations

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Authority's accounting policies.

The financial statements have been prepared using the significant accounting policies and measurement bases summarised below.

The accounting policies have been consistently applied by the Authority and are consistent with those used in previous years.

b. Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis which assumes that the Government of Malta will continue to provide the necessary funding to the authority to enable it to continue with its activities.

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis which assumes that the Authority will continue its operational activity for the foreseeable future.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

c. Property, plant and equipment

i. Value method

Items of property, plant and equipment, comprising of Furniture and Fittings, Office Equipment, Motor Vehicles and Computer Equipment, are initially measured at cost. They are subsequently stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the asset and any other costs directly attributable to bringing the assets to a working condition for their intended use, and the costs of dismantling and removing the items and restoring the site on which they are located.

ii. Depreciation

Depreciation is charged to the statement of comprehensive income on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of items of property, plant and equipment, and major components are accounted for separately. The estimated useful lives are as follows:

Furniture and fittings	10%
Office equipment	10%
Motor vehicles	20%
Computer equipment	25%

Gains and losses on the disposal or retirement of an item of property, plant and equipment are determined as the difference between the net disposal proceeds and the carrying amount at the date of disposal. The gains or losses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income as other operating income or other operating costs, respectively.

An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if greater than its estimated recovery amount (Accounting policy 2g).

d. Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. If collection is expected in one year or less (or in the normal operating cycle of the business if longer), they are classified as current assets. If not, they are presented as non-current assets.

Trade receivables are carried at original invoice amount less provisions made for impairment of these receivables. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the Authority will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the set original terms. Bad debts are written off during the year in which they are identified.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

e. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash comprises cash on hand and demand deposits. Cash equivalents are short-term investments that are held to meet short-term cash commitments rather than for investment or other purposes. Bank overdrafts, which are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Authority's cash and management, are a component of cash and cash equivalents.

f. Trade and other payables

Trade payables are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less (or in the normal operating cycle of the business if longer). If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

g. Impairment of non-financial assets

The carrying amount of the Authority's non-financial assets are reviewed at each reporting date to determine whether there is any indication of impairment. If such indication exists, then the asset's recoverable amount is estimated.

An impairment loss is recognised if the carrying amount of an asset or its cash-generating unit exceeds its recoverable amount. A cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group that generates cash flows that largely are independent from other assets and groups. Impairment losses are recognised in profit or loss.

The recoverable amount of an asset or cash-generating unit is the greater of its value in use and its fair value less cost to sell. In assessing value in use, the estimated future cash flows are discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the asset.

Impairment losses recognised in prior periods are assessed at each reporting date for any indications that the loss has decreased or no longer exists. An impairment loss is reversed if there has been a change in the estimates used to determine the recoverable amount. An impairment loss is reversed only to the extent that the asset's carrying amount does not exceed the carrying amount that would have been determined, net of depreciation or amortisation, if no impairment loss had been recognised.

h. Financial Instruments

i. Recognition and derecognition

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire, or when the financial asset and substantially all the risks and rewards are transferred. A financial liability is derecognised when it is extinguished, discharged, cancelled or expires.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

h. Financial Instruments (continued)

ii. Classification and initial measurement of financial assets

Except for those trade receivables that do not contain a significant financing component and are measured at the transaction price in accordance with IFRS 15, all financial assets are initially measured at fair value adjusted for transaction costs (where applicable).

Financial assets, other than those designated and effective as hedging instruments, are classified into the following categories:

- amortised cost;
- fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL); or
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

In the period presented, the Authority does not have any financial assets categorised as FVTPL and FVOCI.

The classification is determined by both:

- the entity's business model for managing the financial asset; and
- the contractual cash flow characteristics of the financial asset.

iii. Subsequent measurement of financial assets

Financial assets are measured at amortised cost if the assets meet the following conditions (and are not designated as FVTPL):

they are held within a business model whose objective is to hold the financial assets and collect its contractual cash flows; and
the contractual terms of the financial assets give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

After initial recognition, these are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Discounting is omitted where the effect of discounting is immaterial. The Authority's cash and cash equivalents and receivables fall into this category of financial instruments.

iv. Impairment of financial assets

IFRS 9's impairment requirements use more forward-looking information to recognise expected credit losses - the 'expected credit loss (ECL) model'. This replaces IAS 39's 'incurred loss model'. Instruments within the scope of the new requirements included loans and other debt-type financial assets measured at amortised cost and FVOCI, trade receivables, contract assets recognised and measured under IFRS 15 and loan commitments and some financial guarantee contracts (for the issuer) that are not measured at fair value through profit or loss.

Recognition of credit losses is no longer dependent on the Authority first identifying a credit loss event. Instead the Authority considers a broader range of information when assessing credit risk and measuring expected credit losses, including past events, current conditions, reasonable and supportable forecasts that affect the expected collectability of the future cash flows of the instrument.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

h. Financial Instruments (continued)

iv. Impairment of financial assets (continued)

In applying this forward-looking approach, a distinction is made between:

- i. financial instruments that have not deteriorated significantly in credit quality since initial recognition or that have low credit risk ('Stage 1') and
- ii. financial instruments that have deteriorated significantly in credit quality since initial recognition and whose credit risk is not low ('Stage 2').

'Stage 3' would cover financial assets that have objective evidence of impairment at the reporting date.

'12-month expected credit losses' are recognised for the first category while 'lifetime expected credit losses' are recognised for the second category.

Measurement of the expected credit losses is determined by a probability-weighted estimate of credit losses over the expected life of the financial instrument. An assessment of the expected credit loss on financial assets has not been carried out by the Authority during the year under review.

v. Classification and measurement of financial liabilities

As the accounting for financial liabilities remains largely the same under IFRS 9 compared to IAS 39, the Authority's financial liabilities were not impacted by the adoption of IFRS 9. However, for completeness, the accounting policy is disclosed below.

The Authority's financial liabilities include trade and other payables. Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, and, where applicable, adjusted for transaction costs unless the Authority designated a financial liability at FVTPL.

Subsequently, financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, except for derivatives and financial liabilities designated at FVTPL, which are carried subsequently at fair value with gains or losses recognised in profit or loss (other than derivative financial instruments that are designated and effective as hedging instruments).

Interest-related charges and changes in an instrument's fair value (if applicable) are recognised as finance costs in the statement of comprehensive income.

i. Revenue recognition

Revenue represents Government tranches received during the year, EU reimbursements, income from the Authority's own operations and interest income. Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for services provided in the normal course of the business. Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Authority and these can be measured reliably.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

i. Revenue recognition (continued)

i. Government funds

The Authority is funded by a Government contribution which is voted separately for recurring expenditure. These funds are provided annually in order to cover the payroll costs of the Authority. Funds from the government are recognised at their fair value where there is reasonable assurance that the funds will be received and that the Authority will comply with all attached conditions. Government funds of a revenue nature are recognised when approved in the annual government budget.

ii. EU grants

The Authority receives financial assistance from the European Commission as a reimbursement for costs incurred on EU projects. The amount of grants received for each project is dependent on the agreements entered into between the Authority and the European Commission. Grants are recognised at their fair value where there is reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and that the Authority will comply with all attached conditions. Government grants relating to costs are deferred and recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income over the period necessary to match them with the costs that they are intended to compensate.

iii. Income from own operations

The Authority's business operations include licensing and accreditation of educational institutions, the conduct of external quality assurance among the public further and higher education institutions in Malta, and the provision of recognition and comparability of both academic and vocational qualifications, using both the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to provide recognition advice on both local and international qualifications.

j. Taxation

In November 2025, the Minister for Finance has authorised that the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority be exempt from payment of Income Tax in terms of Article 12(2) of the Income Tax Act (Cap.123) of the laws of Malta. The exemption order was applied with a retrospective effect.

k. Financial risk management

The Authority's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks: credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk. The Authority's overall risk management program focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the Authority's financial performance.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

2. Material Accounting Policies (continued)

k. Financial risk management (continued)

i. Credit risk

The Authority's credit risk is limited to the carrying amount of financial assets recognised at the date of the Statement of Financial Position, which are disclosed in notes 9 and 10.

The Authority continuously monitors defaults of customers and other counterparts, and incorporates this information into its credit risk controls. The Authority's policy is to deal only with creditworthy counterparties.

None of the Authority's financial assets is secured by collateral or other credit enhancements. The credit risk for liquid funds is considered to be negligible, since the counterparties are reputable institutions with high quality external credit ratings.

ii. Liquidity risk

The Authority's exposure to liquidity risk arises from its obligations to meet financial liabilities, which comprise trade and other payables (see note 11). Prudent liquidity risk management includes maintaining sufficient cash and committed credit facilities to ensure the availability of an adequate amount of funding to meet the Authority's obligations when they become due.

At 31 December 2025 and 30 December 2024, there were no contractual maturities on the financial liabilities of the Authority. Contractual maturities reflect gross cash flows, which may differ from the carrying values of financial liabilities at the date of the Statement of Financial Position.

iii. Foreign currency risk

Most of the Authority's transactions are carried out in Euro. Exposure to currency exchange rates arises from the Authority's transactions in foreign currencies.

The Authority's financial assets face minimal foreign currency risk since all sales are made receivable in Euro.

iv. Interest rate risk

The Authority's exposure to interest rate risk is limited as it does not have any borrowings bearing variable interest rates.

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

3. Revenue

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Government funds	1,200,000	1,200,000
EU reimbursements	191,863	265,524
Income from own operations	1,640,612	1,318,622
Miscellaneous other revenue	40,781	48,665
Total	3,073,256	2,832,811

4. Other operating income

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Reimbursable staff costs relating to projects	51,271	43,890
Reimbursement of travel expenses	9,443	22,390
	60,714	66,280

5. Defecit for the year

a. Auditor's remuneration

Total remuneration paid to the Authority's auditor during the year amounted to:

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Audit fees	5,500	5,000

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

5. Deficit for the year (continued)

b. Deficit for the year

Surplus is stated after charging the following:

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Direct costs related to projects	188,312	116,448
Honoraria for Board, Q.A Comm., CIMQAM & Sector Skills Unit	149,516	114,735
Staff salaries	2,089,086	1,655,794
Depreciation and amortisation	17,225	16,733
Auditor's remuneration	5,500	5,000
Accreditation services	222,360	165,008
Advertising	25,566	9,370
Clerical services	42,645	36,909
Hospitality	41,102	87,760
IT related expenses	935	6,051
Other support services	211,077	192,046
Printing, postage and stationary	30,636	37,476
Subscriptions	154,905	79,080
Travelling expenses	63,824	82,845
Other administrative expenses	131,296	111,879
	3,373,985	2,717,134

6. Wages and salaries

a. Wages and salaries

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Wages and salaries	1,948,441	1,537,940
Social security costs	140,645	117,854
	2,089,086	1,655,794

b. Average number of employees

The average number of persons employed by the Authority during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Operations	47	40
Administration	12	10
	59	50

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

7. Intangible Assets

	Computer software EUR
Cost	
At 1 January 2024, 31 December 2024 & 31 December 2025	23,782
Accumulated Amortisation	
At 1 January 2024	23,720
Amortisation charge for the year	62
At 31 December 2024 and 2025	23,782
Net Book Value	
At 31 December 2024 and 2025	-

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

8. Property, plant and equipment

	Furniture and fittings EUR	Motor Vehicles EUR	Office equipment EUR	Computer equipment EUR	Total EUR
Cost					
At 1 January 2024	33,584	19,005	12,985	117,004	182,578
Additions	1,031	-	487	17,371	18,889
Disposals	-	-	-	(32,445)	(32,445)
At 31 December 2024	34,615	19,005	13,472	101,930	169,022
Additions	11,236	-	8,881	10,245	30,362
Disposals	(721)	-	-	(5,433)	(6,154)
Balance at 31 December 2025	45,130	19,005	22,353	106,742	193,230
Depreciation and impairment losses					
At 1 January 2024	11,887	19,005	5,026	92,622	128,540
Depreciation charge for the year	3,385	-	1,341	11,945	16,671
Released on disposal	-	-	-	(32,445)	(32,445)
At 31 December 2024	15,272	19,005	6,367	72,122	112,766
Depreciation charge for the year	3,761	-	1,972	11,492	17,225
Released on disposal	(667)	-	-	(3,833)	(4,500)
Balance at 31 December 2025	18,366	19,005	8,339	79,781	125,491
At 31 December 2024	19,343	-	7,105	29,808	56,256
At 31 December 2025	26,764	-	14,014	26,961	67,739

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

9. Trade and other receivables

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Trade receivables	83,847	58,091
Amounts owed by related parties	15,641	26,376
Prepayments	31,663	12,906
Accrued income	25,875	29,373
Total	157,026	126,746

Trade receivables are stated net of a provision amounting to EUR5,923 (2024: Nil)
Amounts owed by related parties are unsecured, interest-free and repayable on demand.

10. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents for the purpose of the cash flow statement are as follows:

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Cash on hand	1,783	286
Bank balances	421,039	525,480
Total cash and cash equivalents	422,822	525,766

11. Trade and other payables

a. Trade and other payables

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Trade payables	30,629	25,922
Accruals	152,170	87,109
FSS, NI and payroll	45,371	4,613
Deferred income (Note 11 b.)	345,006	276,698
Total	573,176	394,342

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

11. Trade and other payables (continued)

b. Deferred Income

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
At 1 January	276,698	378,411
Increase in year	71,859	51,461
	348,557	429,872
Released in year	(3,551)	(153,174)
At 31 December	345,006	276,698

Deferred income relates to projects whose timing of approval and finalization is uncertain. All deferred income is classified as a current liability since most deferred income normally crystallizes within the following year.

12. Related Party Transactions

During the year, the Authority entered into the following trading transactions with its major stakeholder, the Government of Malta through Government controlled entities, and conducted business with Government controlled utility entities. Refer to Government Funds listed in Note 3.

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Government subvention	1,200,000	1,200,000
Services provided to government-controlled entities	269,487	129,993

Year end balances receivable from related parties are disclosed in note 9.

13. Capital management policies and procedures

The Authority's capital management objectives are to ensure its ability to continue as a going concern. The Authority monitors the level of debt, which includes borrowings and trade and other payables less cash and cash equivalents, against total capital on an ongoing basis.

14. Contingent liabilities

At the financial position date, there were two proceedings that were initiated against the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority. Whereas these cases may result in financial damages against the Authority, the Authority is not yet in a position to determine the probability and extent of such damages, if any. A provision has not been recognised in these financial statements in relation to these cases.

15. Events after the reporting period

There were no material events affecting the Authority which occurred after the reporting date.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (the Authority), set out on pages 3 to 22 which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of accumulated fund and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements:

- a. present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 31 December 2025, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the EU (EU IFRSs)
- b. have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act, Cap. 607 of the Laws of Malta.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders) Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap. 281) in Malta, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

The Authority is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Authority's report and Schedules. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union, and for such internal control as the Authority determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (continued)

Responsibilities of the Authority (continued)

In preparing the financial statements, the Authority is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Members either intend to liquidate the Authority or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Authority.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (continued)

Use of audit report

This report is made solely to the Authority's members as a body in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act, Cap. 607 of the Laws of Malta. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters that we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the full extent permitted by law we do not assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority's members as a body for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "ER", written over a horizontal line.

*This copy of the audit report has been signed by
Ernestino Riolo (Partner) for and on behalf of*

Forvis Mazars

Certified Public Accountants
Birkirkara,
Malta

14 April 2026

The schedules on the pages that follow do not form part of the financial statements

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Schedule I

Detailed Statement of profit or loss and other Comprehensive Income For the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025 EUR	2024 EUR
Revenue		
Government funds	1,200,000	1,200,000
EU reimbursements	191,863	265,524
Income from own operations	1,640,612	1,318,622
Miscellaneous other revenue	40,781	48,665
	<u>3,073,256</u>	<u>2,832,811</u>
Direct costs		
Direct costs related to EU reimbursements	(188,312)	(116,448)
Direct wages related to EU reimbursements	(98,978)	(95,081)
	<u>(287,290)</u>	<u>(211,529)</u>
Gross surplus	2,785,966	2,621,282
Administrative expenses		
Administrative expenses	(3,086,695)	(2,505,605)
	<u>(300,729)</u>	<u>115,677</u>
Other operating income		
Reimbursement of salaries and other expenses	60,714	66,280
Defecit/surplus for the year	<u>(240,015)</u>	<u>181,957</u>

Malta Further and Higher Education Authority

Schedule II

Administrative expenses

For the year ended 31 December 2025

Administrative expenses

	2025	2024
	EUR	EUR
Accountancy	5,513	5,500
Accreditation services	222,360	165,008
Advertising	25,566	9,370
Auditor's remuneration	5,500	5,000
Bank charges	11,195	9,547
Board Honoraria	95,000	85,972
Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) Honoraria	33,806	28,763
SSU Board Honoraria	9,160	-
CIMQAM Board Honoraria	11,550	-
Cleaning	37,628	33,020
Clerical services	42,645	36,909
Consultancy fees	-	600
Depreciation and amortisation	17,225	16,733
Donations	-	7
Gain on disposal	(346)	-
General expenses	2,959	1,760
Hire of equipment	8,810	7,421
Hospitality	41,102	87,760
Information Services	18,856	26,061
Insurance	1,036	1,169
IT related expenses	935	6,051
Materials and Supplies	506	435
Motor expenses	6,681	11,716
Other support services	211,077	192,046
Printing, postage and stationery	31,921	37,476
Provision for bad debts	5,923	-
Repairs and maintenance	7,084	9,844
Salaries and wages	1,990,108	1,560,713
Staff training	24,166	2,875
Staff welfare	-	1,924
Subscriptions	154,905	79,080
Travelling expenses	63,824	82,845
Total	3,086,695	2,505,605

Groups and Representations

(as of December 2025)

ELT Council

The ELT Council board plays a vital role in advancing the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession, with a focus on a national level. It prioritises enhancing standards in teacher qualifications, implementing quality assurance systems and positioning Malta as a premier ELT destination. Additionally, it fosters collaboration between ELT and tourism sectors, ensuring sustained growth and resource allocation for effective management.

Get Qualified Scheme Committee

The Get Qualified Scheme Committee plays a crucial role in facilitating access to education and supporting the growth of a skilled and qualified workforce in Malta. The Get Qualified scheme has been established as part of Malta's ongoing efforts to enhance educational opportunities and support individuals in their pursuit of qualifications and certifications required by industry.

National Lifelong Learning Strategy & Upskilling Pathways Working Group

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy & Upskilling Pathways Working Group is a collaborative initiative dedicated to advancing education, training and skill development opportunities for individuals of all ages in Malta. Composed of representatives from government agencies, educational institutions, industry stakeholders and community organisations, the working group aims to formulate comprehensive strategies and actionable plans to address the evolving needs of Malta's workforce and society.

MFHEA Advisory Committee – Board Secretary

The Advisory Committee provides a forum for consultation with stakeholders, which meets at least twice a year and which is chaired by the Chairperson or the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority. The Advisory Committee is composed of representatives of private and public



further education institutions, representatives of private and public higher education institutions, representatives of students, representatives of civil society, representatives of the business community and representatives of trade unions which represent the majority of employees in the further and higher education sector.

National Curriculum Framework Review Board

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is the backbone of the national curriculum, the assessment of which serves as a measure of national indicators of where the students are in terms of knowledge, skills and competences throughout their entire journey of compulsory learning. The role of the NCF Review Board is to provide strategic direction, create strategic priorities for the implementation of the NCF, offer solutions to problems that arise during implementation and to ensure effective communication with all interested parties.

MFHEA Gender Equality Plan Working Group

The MFHEA Gender Equality Plan Working Group is a collaborative team formed to discuss and implement the Gender Equality Plan introduced by the MFHEA. Comprising representatives from all units within the Authority, its primary objective is to drive gender equality initiatives in the workplace.

The working group's actions focus on implementing the strategic measures outlined in the plan, such as addressing unconscious bias, fostering an inclusive work culture and promoting diversity.

Additionally, the group facilitates collaboration with relevant stakeholders to exchange best practices and strategies. Through these efforts, the working group actively supports and promotes gender equality within the MFHEA, ensuring that all employees feel secure, respected and valued, regardless of gender.

Freedom of Information Officer

The Freedom of Information Act (Chapter 496 of the Laws of Malta) gives the general public the right of access to documents held by public authorities in the interests of transparency and accountability.

Every public authority has appointed an FOI Officer who is responsible for handling requests for documents submitted by the public and representing the public authority on all matters related to the FOI Act.

Data Protection Officer

The primary law governing data protection is the Data Protection Act (Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta). Malta has established the Office of the Information and Data Protection Commissioner, which is responsible for overseeing and enforcing data protection laws in the country. The Commissioner ensures that organisations comply with the Data Protection Act and investigates complaints related to breaches of data protection principles.

The primary role of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) is to ensure that their organisation processes the personal data of staff, customers, providers or any other individuals (referred to as data subjects) in compliance with applicable data protection rules.

EQAVET Representative

EQAVET, the European Quality Assurance Vocational Education and Training framework, supports quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe. As the EQAVET National Reference Point, MFHEA collaborates with other NRPs and experts to enhance quality assurance in VET systems.

Through an online CPD course in VET Quality Assurance, we aim to boost the attractiveness of VET nationally and across Europe. This initiative fosters European collaboration and enhances institutional capacity through ongoing professional development. Participants gain new knowledge and refine management and leadership skills, improving their employability.

The Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)

The Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) is a platform that brings together specialists from the 50 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention to work on ethics, transparency and integrity in education. It was officially launched on the occasion of the 7th Session of the Prague Forum on 1-2 October 2015.

ETINED proposes a new approach based on the idea that quality education will only be achieved, and corruption effectively addressed, if all relevant sectors of s[1]ociety commit fully to fundamental positive ethical principles for public and professional life, rather than relying only upon top-down mechanistic regulatory measures.

[1]https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/Mobility_and_Internationalisation/08/0/120443_614080.pdf

European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group (under the Erasmus+ programme)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory Group serves as a platform under the Erasmus+ programme to provide guidance and advice on matters related to the implementation and development of the European Qualifications Framework. The EQF is a common European reference framework designed to promote transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications across Europe.

The EQF Advisory Group consists of experts and stakeholders from various fields, including education, training, employment and policymaking. Its role involves discussing policies, sharing best practices and providing recommendations to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the EQF in supporting lifelong learning, mobility and the recognition of qualifications within the European Union and beyond.

European Qualifications Framework – National Coordination Points

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common reference framework designed to help compare and understand the qualifications of different European countries. It acts as a translation tool to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems.

National Coordination Points (NCPs) are entities established within each European country to facilitate the implementation of the EQF at the national level. These NCPs serve as contact points for information about the EQF within their respective countries. They also play a crucial role in ensuring consistency and transparency in the implementation of the EQF across different education and training systems.

EQA Validation

VNFIL providers must follow the guidelines published by MFHEA and must fill in a detailed application form which is in line both with these guidelines as well as with the European Inventory of validation of non-formal and informal learning, together with other documents published by CEDEFOP.

The aim of all this is to make the VNFIL process more accessible and better organised. It is also meant to provide an opportunity to all learners to have their skills, knowledge and competences assessed in a serious, transparent, trustworthy and reliable manner.

National Reference Point on Graduate Tracking

The European Network of Graduate Tracking, established by the European Commission following the recommendations of its expert group on graduate tracking, aims to facilitate collaboration among EU Member States in implementing the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates. Through promoting cooperation and mutual learning, the Network offers opportunities for peer exchange in designing and executing graduate tracking systems.

Comprising national reference points, Commission representatives and stakeholders from various sectors, the Network fosters discussion, analysis and the sharing of expertise. Supported by the European Commission, its activities include annual meetings, peer learning sessions, thematic working groups, webinars and newsletters, all geared towards advancing common approaches and best practices in tracking graduate outcomes across Europe. Operated on a voluntary basis, the Network encourages active participation and ownership from its members in shaping its agenda and initiatives.

BFUG Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process Working Group (Co-Chair)

The BFUG Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process Working Group plays a pivotal role in overseeing the execution of the Bologna Process objectives. It is one of the long-standing working structures of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, first established in 2003 to assess the main developments in the Bologna Process and the extent to which commitments agreed upon by ministers are implemented in the national higher education systems. Through regular evaluations, data analysis and collaborative efforts, the working group ensures accountability and transparency in the adhering to Bologna Process principles and commitments.

BFUG Global Policy Dialogue

The Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue aims to develop a continuous dialogue with other regions and international organisations on matters of common concern and relevance for higher education for which cooperation and sharing of ideas and policies can mutually benefit.

BFUG TPG-A on Qualifications Framework

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established the Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF). The group specifically focuses on the implementation of the first key commitment, which focuses on a three-cycle system of programmes and degrees, based on learning outcomes and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), compatible with the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA (QF-EHEA).

Specific thematic indications include topics such as:

- self-certification of national qualification frameworks to the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA
- complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide
- short-cycle higher education
- multiple purposes and uses of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders
- study programmes outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure
- the relationship between the qualifications frameworks and quality assurance

BFUG TPG-B on Recognition

The Tirana Communiqué confirmed the continuation of the peer support approach through the thematic peer groups and, in the case of recognition, through the Thematic Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, as established by the 2018 Paris Communiqué.

The key commitment 2, as reaffirmed in the Tirana Communiqué, calls for the recognition of qualifications throughout the EHEA by implementing the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) and its principles, while working towards automatic recognition in the EHEA.

BFUG TPG-C on Quality Assurance

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established the Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA) to support the implementation of the key commitment within the European Higher Education Area on quality assurance. As reaffirmed by the ministers in the Tirana Communiqué, the key commitment to quality assurance focuses on promoting a quality culture in higher education, fostered by fit-for-purpose quality assurance processes in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Overall, TPG-C serves as a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and policy development aimed at continuously improving the quality of higher education across Europe.

BFUG TPG-D on Social Dimension Working Group (Co-Chair)

The Thematic Peer Group D on Social Dimension supports the effective implementation and monitoring of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, adopted by the ministers in 2020. It plays a key role in measuring progress towards these commitments, promotes peer learning among member states and consultative members, and contributes to reporting on their implementation.

BFUG Fundamental Values Working Group (Co-Chair)

The WG aimed to foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue, and peer learning while also creating a means to assess the extent to which the fundamental values are upheld across EHEA member states.

BFUG Observer

The MFHEA serves as an observer within the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), contributing valuable insights and perspectives to the ongoing implementation of the Bologna Process. In this role, MFHEA actively participates in discussions, provides feedback and offers recommendations aimed at promoting the harmonisation and enhancement of higher education systems across Europe. By closely monitoring developments and initiatives within the BFUG, MFHEA helps ensure that the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process are effectively realised, fostering greater collaboration and cooperation among European higher education institutions and stakeholders.

BFUG Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility

The Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility is the BFUG structure for the 2024-2027 work cycle tasked with providing policy recommendations to enhance mobility while making sure the EHEA members strive for more inclusive, more balanced, and greener mobility in line with the commitments taken in the Tirana Communiqué.

The purposes/outcomes are:

- To contribute to the implementation of the EHEA Strategy “Mobility for better Learning” at national and European level and to assist in the reporting to Ministers in 2015 on the progress made,
- To support countries in their national implementation efforts regarding the mobility strategy,
- To contribute to the evaluation of the strategy “EHEA in a Global Setting” and to the further internationalisation of the EHEA,
- To review the Bologna Policy concept with the aim of further improving policy dialogue with non-EHEA countries.

BFUG Task Force on Future of Bologna

In the Tirana Communiqué, the ministers asked the BFUG to submit in 2027 proposals for the main priorities for the next decade, in close cooperation with higher education institutions, staff and students, and 'mandated the BFUG to work on the future-proof development, dissemination and possible expansion of key commitments.

Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

BICG is a small coordination group responsible for coordinating the work of the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs). The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the four identified topics: the three key commitments (ECTS and Qualifications Frameworks; Recognition; and Quality Assurance) and the social dimension of higher education.

Centres nationaux d'information pour la reconnaissance académique – National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC)

The ENIC-NARIC Networks are collaborative platforms involving 55 countries under the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997). These networks facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications across borders.

Their joint website, an initiative by the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) in the EU, aims to streamline access to pertinent online resources.

This platform assists organisations and individuals in navigating international academic and professional mobility issues, including recognition procedures for foreign qualifications. It supports ENIC-NARIC member organisations by directing them to updated information provided by competent bodies in each member country.

Supported by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, the website offers insights into the role and responsibilities of national information centres, governance under the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the ENIC-NARIC Networks.

EPAN

Established in 2018, the Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN) serves as a pivotal platform within the Council of Europe member states, dedicated to fostering democracy and human rights in education. Anchored by the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), EPAN collaborates with education authorities across member states to tailor strategies promoting democratic values in educational policies and practices. Comprising representatives appointed by member state governments, EPAN operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe (CoE) Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU).

Key objectives include aligning with the Council of Europe Education Strategy, advocating for the integration of the RFCDC in education systems, facilitating knowledge exchange on effective practices, nurturing conducive learning environments and contributing to the UN 2030 Agenda. EPAN's dynamic contributions encompass the ongoing refinement of the RFCDC, including tailored descriptors for young learners, teacher resources and recommendations for enhancing teacher education programmes. By bridging expertise and resources, EPAN plays a vital role in advancing country-specific capacity building initiatives, emblematic of its commitment to promoting democratic values in education across diverse contexts.

RFCDC

The RFCDC, as a set of materials, can be used by education systems to equip young people with all of the competences that are needed to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, to act as active citizens, to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies.

It is intended for use by education policy-makers, especially those working within ministries of education and by education practitioners in all sectors of education (pre-school, primary and secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education). The RFCDC provides a systematic approach to designing the teaching, the learning and the assessment of competences for democratic culture.

European Wergeland Centre

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) is an organisation based in Oslo, Norway, focused on promoting democracy, human rights and intercultural understanding in education across Europe. It was established in 2008 and named after the Norwegian poet and politician Henrik Wergeland, who was known for his advocacy of democratic values and human rights.

The EWC collaborates with governments, educational institutions and civil society organisations to develop educational resources, provide training for teachers and educators, and facilitate dialogue and exchange programmes aimed at fostering inclusive and democratic societies. Its work encompasses various areas such as citizenship education, human rights education, intercultural dialogue and education for democratic citizenship.

The Centre is supported by several European governments, including Norway, Austria, Germany and the Council of Europe. Its activities contribute to the broader efforts to promote democratic values and respect for human rights in Europe's diverse societies.

Steering Committee for Education Practice and Policy (Council of Europe) (CDEDU) (Formerly CDPPE)

The Steering Committee for Education Practice and Policy (CDEDU), formerly known as the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE), is a body within the Council of Europe dedicated to promoting cooperation and exchange of information among member states in the field of education.



The committee focuses on policy development, sharing best practices and addressing challenges in education across Europe. It serves as a platform for member states to discuss and collaborate on various educational issues, ranging from curriculum development to teacher training and lifelong learning initiatives. Through its work, CDEDU aims to support the development of inclusive, equitable and high-quality education systems throughout Europe.

Eurostudent consortium member

MFHEA is a consortium member of the Eurostudent project. The EUROSTUDENT project collects and analyses comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education. A wide range of topics related to students' social and economic conditions are covered. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. It does this through combining a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. The central coordination team is made up of a consortium with seven member organisations; each of these partners is assigned specific tasks.

Group of Coordinators (GOC)

This group is a statutory formation stemming from the Professional Qualifications Directive bringing together all mutual recognition coordinators in a permanent forum/dialogue with the European Commission. The GOC convenes at a monthly/bi-monthly interval, where each coordinator shall attend to present all information as requested by the European Commission and receive instructions that are promptly disseminated to local Competent Authorities. The entire ethos of the meeting revolves around the correct implementation of the Directive and the subsequent tools in their entirety and it serves also as a forum to share best practices.

Joint Meeting of the GOC and the Services Expert Group

This group brings together mutual recognition coordinators within the GOC formation and the Services Directive Experts Meeting attended by the national coordinators. Both Directives are intertwined with several shared tools, mechanisms and legal obligations. Thus, the joint meeting serves as a coordination point where synergies between ongoing and new initiatives can be strengthened.

ASEM (Asian European Meeting)

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), founded in Bangkok in 1996, serves as a pivotal platform fostering dialogue and collaboration across a spectrum of domains encompassing politics, economics, social issues, culture and education between 53 partner entities as of 2022. Comprising 51 partner nations from Asia and Europe alongside two institutional partners, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEM orchestrates biennial summits where leaders convene to deliberate on shared concerns, with the most recent gathering, ASEM13, themed "Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth," taking place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in November 2021. Complementing these summits are ministerial and senior officials' meetings spanning various political arenas, including the ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEM ME), which have been held in diverse locations such as Berlin, Hanoi, Copenhagen, Kuala Lumpur, Riga, Seoul and Bucharest, with the most recent gathering in Bangkok in 2021, albeit virtually, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to nurturing the ASEM Education Process (AEP) and fostering an ASEM Education Area.

ASEM Expert Group on SDGs and Education (EG1)

The MFHEA ASEM Expert Group on SDGs and Education (EG1) is a specialised body within the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) framework. ASEM is an intergovernmental process that promotes dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. EG1 specifically focuses on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to education.

EG1 aims to facilitate exchanges of best practices, policies and experiences among ASEM partners in the field of education, with a particular emphasis on advancing the SDGs related to education. It brings together experts, policymakers and stakeholders from both Asia and Europe to discuss challenges, share knowledge and explore collaborative initiatives to achieve the SDGs in the education sector.

The group typically holds meetings, workshops and other events to promote dialogue and collaboration and it may also produce reports or recommendations to inform policymaking and action in ASEM member countries regarding education and sustainable development.

ASEM Expert Group 2 on Recognition and Balanced Mobility (EG 2)

The ASEM Expert Group 2 on Recognition and Balanced Mobility (EG2) is a specialized working group within the ASEM Education Process. Its main objective is to promote mutual understanding and support transparent, automatic recognition of qualifications between higher education institutions in Asia and Europe, thereby encouraging more balanced and reciprocal mobility of students and academic staff.

ASEM Expert Group 4 on Digitalisation

The ASEM Expert Group on Digitalisation (EG4) is a dedicated working group under the ASEM Education Process that promotes cooperation and dialogue between Europe and Asia on digital learning, educational technologies, and artificial intelligence in education.

AE4AI (Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence)

The AE4AI Network (Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence) is a collaborative platform that brings together experts from across Asia and Europe to advance the responsible development of AI, with a focus on education, governance, and sustainability.

Group on History Teaching (CoE)

History and history teaching have been a focus of the Council of Europe's work on education since its inception. In a time of democratic backsliding, where history is susceptible to distortion, including the denial of certain historical facts and political manipulation, it is crucial to provide platforms for open discussions regarding the role of history in the 21st century. It is imperative to strive to establish guidelines that promote the cultivation of peaceful collective memories, rooted in a multi-perspectival approach to history. The annual Forums for History Education provide a platform for various stakeholders to exchange their perspectives and practices in history education and collaboratively develop guidelines for improving history education.

This year, an MFHEA officer attended the 3rd History Forum at the University of Bologna, where during various presentations, debates and discussions, the following were addressed:

- The importance of intergovernmental programmes on history education, drawing upon extensive knowledge;
- The promotion of dialogue and collaboration among the various stakeholders, including public authorities, academics, teachers, curriculum developers and students;
- Sharing and disseminating best practices and insights from diverse aspects of European history.

This year's forum focused mostly on the threats and challenges facing the teaching of history in universities, which is often questioned or even cut in favour of other subjects that seem closer to the immediate needs of the economy.

This series will conclude in 2025, as part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the Cultural Convention. This final Forum will present the various recommendations from the previous Forums and reaffirm the role of history in the construction of a Europe founded on principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Democratic Mission of Higher Education (CoE) WG

The Council of Europe has been concerned about the decline of democracy, leading to an erosion of trust in institutions and major societal establishments, including higher education. This has led to economic, political, social and educational inequalities, increased intolerance, discrimination and hate speech, and threats to freedom of expression and association. To respond to these challenges, a WG has been set up to study and implement strategies that help revitalise the CoE's democratic and civic mission by preparing citizens to become active participants in democracy, while also contributing to the democratic transformation of schools, universities and societies.

ENQA

ENQA was first established in 2000 as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education. In 2004, it became the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education with the aim of contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education and to acting as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries.

EUROGRADUATE 2026 Advisory Board

The Eurograduate Advisory Board (est. in 2025) is a group of experts and stakeholders that provides strategic advice and feedback to support the development, quality, and relevance of the Eurograduate survey and its outputs.

MMM Working Group

The MED9 countries promote mobility through regional initiatives such as the Mediterranean Mobility Mechanism (MMM) and digital urban mobility frameworks, complementing EU programmes and addressing the specific needs of the Mediterranean region.

ERA policy 2025-2027 (Structural Policy: Research Careers)

Led in part by Xjenza Malta and supported by MFHEA, The ERA Policy Agenda (2025–2027) includes a dedicated structural policy aimed at making research careers more attractive, sustainable, and competitive

MEYR Technical Working Group on the European Degree

MFHEA provided technical support and expert guidance to the group, offering feedback and contributing to the refinement of drafts and reports to ensure they met their intended purpose.

Under Malta's National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030 following Working Groups (WGs) were launched in 2025:

WG1 on Educational Attainment, Retention, and Completion

A dedicated working group tasked with leading the co-design of a strategic approach to educational attainment, retention, and completion in collaboration with key stakeholders. Its primary objective is to ensure that policies are coherent, effectively implemented, regularly monitored, and continuously reviewed to remain relevant and up to date.

WG2 on Quality Assurance and Transparency in Further and Higher Education

A dedicated working group tasked with co-designing and overseeing a quality assurance policy in consultation with key stakeholders. Its role is to strengthen policy coordination, implementation, monitoring, and review, while identifying priorities, resource needs, and measures to support effective quality assurance and compliance across the sector.

WG3 on Relevance of Teaching, Learning and Research

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a forward-looking approach to anticipate future teaching and learning needs and ensure that education and research remain aligned with current and emerging national priorities.

WG4 on Social Dimension

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a comprehensive policy on the social dimension of FHE, with the aim of promoting wider, more equitable, and inclusive participation in higher education and adult learning in line with national and EU priorities.

WG 5 on Internalisation & Mobility

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a strategic approach to internationalisation and mobility in consultation with key stakeholders, ensuring coordinated policy implementation, effective monitoring, and regular review.

WG 6 on Policy Intelligence & Monitoring

A dedicated working group responsible for developing and coordinating the collection of data and evidence to inform FHE policy development, establish targets, and assess performance. Its key objectives are to strengthen the evidence base for policymaking, facilitate integrated and coherent policy design, and support the monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of FHE policies.

Glossary and Abbreviations

EQF

EQF stands for the European Qualifications Framework, which is a meta-framework to support translation and communication between national qualifications systems and Frameworks.

Further Education

All non-compulsory formal, non-formal and informal learning that serves to obtain a national qualification or award classified up to and including level 4 of the Malta Qualifications Framework or a foreign qualification at a comparable level. Only the Further Education Centres, Further Education Institutions and Further and Higher Education Institutions may offer further education programmes.

Higher Education

All non-compulsory formal, non-formal and informal learning or research that serves to obtain a national qualification or award classified at level 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework or higher or a foreign qualification at a comparable level. Only Further and Higher Education Institutions, Higher Education Institutions and Universities may offer higher education programmes.

MQF

MQF stands for the Malta Qualifications Framework. The MQF is very similar to the EQF from levels 1–8; however, it also includes introductory level A and introductory level B which are lower than MQF level 1.

NQF

A National Qualifications Framework is a common reference point for all nationally recognised qualifications and awards, indicating level of education and training and progression from one level to another. The Malta Qualifications Framework is Malta's NQF.

QA

The main aim of quality assurance (QA) is to safeguard the quality of Further and Higher Education. Quality assurance is a set of processes and checks carried out by the education institution to ensure the use of appropriate measures as a means of improving the quality of teaching, learning, training and research. The outcomes of these processes are then communicated through the internal quality assurance policy and the external quality assurance audit carried out by MFHEA.

EQA

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SSU

A sector skills unit is a sector-specific board including several representatives from a number of industry-relevant stakeholders, such as the economic sector, education and training, government and social partners and workers' representatives within the specific sector. The SSU is a key factor in the validation of non-formal and informal learning, as they set up national occupational standards, amongst other things.

VET

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VNFIL

Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning, which is the process of assessing and recognising a wide range of knowledge, skills and competences which people develop throughout their lives within different environments.

EQA Validation

VNFIL providers must follow the guidelines published by MFHEA and must fill in a detailed application form which is in line both with these guidelines as well as with the European Inventory of validation of non-formal and informal learning, together with other documents published by CEDEFOP.

The aim of all this is to make the VNFIL process more accessible and better organised. It is also meant to provide an opportunity to all learners to have their skills, knowledge and competences assessed in a serious, transparent, trustworthy and reliable manner.

National Reference Point on Graduate Tracking

The European Network of Graduate Tracking, established by the European Commission following the recommendations of its expert group on graduate tracking, aims to facilitate collaboration among EU Member States in implementing the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates. Through promoting cooperation and mutual learning, the Network offers opportunities for peer exchange in designing and executing graduate tracking systems.

Comprising national reference points, Commission representatives and stakeholders from various sectors, the Network fosters discussion, analysis and the sharing of expertise. Supported by the European Commission, its activities include annual meetings, peer learning sessions, thematic working groups, webinars and newsletters, all geared towards advancing common approaches and best practices in tracking graduate outcomes across Europe. Operated on a voluntary basis, the Network encourages active participation and ownership from its members in shaping its agenda and initiatives.

BFUG Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process Working Group (Co-Chair)

The BFUG Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process Working Group plays a pivotal role in overseeing the execution of the Bologna Process objectives. It is one of the long-standing working structures of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, first established in 2003 to assess the main developments in the Bologna Process and the extent to which commitments agreed upon by ministers are implemented in the national higher education systems. Through regular evaluations, data analysis and collaborative efforts, the working group ensures accountability and transparency in the adhering to Bologna Process principles and commitments.

BFUG Global Policy Dialogue

The Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue aims to develop a continuous dialogue with other regions and international organisations on matters of common concern and relevance for higher education for which cooperation and sharing of ideas and policies can mutually benefit.

BFUG TPG-A on Qualifications Framework

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established the Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF). The group specifically focuses on the implementation of the first key commitment, which focuses on a three-cycle system of programmes and degrees, based on learning outcomes and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), compatible with the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA (QF-EHEA).

Specific thematic indications include topics such as:

- self-certification of national qualification frameworks to the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA
- complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide
- short-cycle higher education
- multiple purposes and uses of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders
- study programmes outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure
- the relationship between the qualifications frameworks and quality assurance

BFUG TPG-B on Recognition

The Tirana Communiqué confirmed the continuation of the peer support approach through the thematic peer groups and, in the case of recognition, through the Thematic Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, as established by the 2018 Paris Communiqué.

The key commitment 2, as reaffirmed in the Tirana Communiqué, calls for the recognition of qualifications throughout the EHEA by implementing the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) and its principles, while working towards automatic recognition in the EHEA.

BFUG TPG-C on Quality Assurance

In September 2018, the BFUG formally established the Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA) to support the implementation of the key commitment within the European Higher Education Area on quality assurance. As reaffirmed by the ministers in the Tirana Communiqué, the key commitment to quality assurance focuses on promoting a quality culture in higher education, fostered by fit-for-purpose quality assurance processes in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Overall, TPG-C serves as a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and policy development aimed at continuously improving the quality of higher education across Europe.

BFUG TPG-D on Social Dimension Working Group (Co-Chair)

The Thematic Peer Group D on Social Dimension supports the effective implementation and monitoring of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, adopted by the ministers in 2020. It plays a key role in measuring progress towards these commitments, promotes peer learning among member states and consultative members, and contributes to reporting on their implementation.

BFUG Fundamental Values Working Group (Co-Chair)

The WG aimed to foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue, and peer learning while also creating a means to assess the extent to which the fundamental values are upheld across EHEA member states.

BFUG Observer

The MFHEA serves as an observer within the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), contributing valuable insights and perspectives to the ongoing implementation of the Bologna Process. In this role, MFHEA actively participates in discussions, provides feedback and offers recommendations aimed at promoting the harmonisation and enhancement of higher education systems across Europe. By closely monitoring developments and initiatives within the BFUG, MFHEA helps ensure that the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process are effectively realised, fostering greater collaboration and cooperation among European higher education institutions and stakeholders.

BFUG Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility

The Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility is the BFUG structure for the 2024-2027 work cycle tasked with providing policy recommendations to enhance mobility while making sure the EHEA members strive for more inclusive, more balanced, and greener mobility in line with the commitments taken in the Tirana Communiqué.

The purposes/outcomes are:

- To contribute to the implementation of the EHEA Strategy “Mobility for better Learning” at national and European level and to assist in the reporting to Ministers in 2015 on the progress made,
- To support countries in their national implementation efforts regarding the mobility strategy,
- To contribute to the evaluation of the strategy “EHEA in a Global Setting” and to the further internationalisation of the EHEA,
- To review the Bologna Policy concept with the aim of further improving policy dialogue with non-EHEA countries.

BFUG Task Force on Future of Bologna

In the Tirana Communiqué, the ministers asked the BFUG to submit in 2027 proposals for the main priorities for the next decade, in close cooperation with higher education institutions, staff and students, and 'mandated the BFUG to work on the future-proof development, dissemination and possible expansion of key commitments.

Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

BICG is a small coordination group responsible for coordinating the work of the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs). The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the four identified topics: the three key commitments (ECTS and Qualifications Frameworks; Recognition; and Quality Assurance) and the social dimension of higher education.

Centres nationaux d'information pour la reconnaissance académique – National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC)

The ENIC-NARIC Networks are collaborative platforms involving 55 countries under the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997). These networks facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications across borders.

Their joint website, an initiative by the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) in the EU, aims to streamline access to pertinent online resources.

This platform assists organisations and individuals in navigating international academic and professional mobility issues, including recognition procedures for foreign qualifications. It supports ENIC-NARIC member organisations by directing them to updated information provided by competent bodies in each member country.

Supported by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, the website offers insights into the role and responsibilities of national information centres, governance under the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the ENIC-NARIC Networks.

EPAN

Established in 2018, the Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN) serves as a pivotal platform within the Council of Europe member states, dedicated to fostering democracy and human rights in education. Anchored by the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), EPAN collaborates with education authorities across member states to tailor strategies promoting democratic values in educational policies and practices. Comprising representatives appointed by member state governments, EPAN operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe (CoE) Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU).

Key objectives include aligning with the Council of Europe Education Strategy, advocating for the integration of the RFCDC in education systems, facilitating knowledge exchange on effective practices, nurturing conducive learning environments and contributing to the UN 2030 Agenda. EPAN's dynamic contributions encompass the ongoing refinement of the RFCDC, including tailored descriptors for young learners, teacher resources and recommendations for enhancing teacher education programmes. By bridging expertise and resources, EPAN plays a vital role in advancing country-specific capacity building initiatives, emblematic of its commitment to promoting democratic values in education across diverse contexts.

RF CDC

The RF CDC, as a set of materials, can be used by education systems to equip young people with all of the competences that are needed to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, to act as active citizens, to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies.

It is intended for use by education policy-makers, especially those working within ministries of education and by education practitioners in all sectors of education (pre-school, primary and secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education). The RF CDC provides a systematic approach to designing the teaching, the learning and the assessment of competences for democratic culture.

European Wergeland Centre

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) is an organisation based in Oslo, Norway, focused on promoting democracy, human rights and intercultural understanding in education across Europe. It was established in 2008 and named after the Norwegian poet and politician Henrik Wergeland, who was known for his advocacy of democratic values and human rights.

The EWC collaborates with governments, educational institutions and civil society organisations to develop educational resources, provide training for teachers and educators, and facilitate dialogue and exchange programmes aimed at fostering inclusive and democratic societies. Its work encompasses various areas such as citizenship education, human rights education, intercultural dialogue and education for democratic citizenship.

The Centre is supported by several European governments, including Norway, Austria, Germany and the Council of Europe. Its activities contribute to the broader efforts to promote democratic values and respect for human rights in Europe's diverse societies.

Steering Committee for Education Practice and Policy (Council of Europe) (CDEDU) (Formerly CDPPE)

The Steering Committee for Education Practice and Policy (CDEDU), formerly known as the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE), is a body within the Council of Europe dedicated to promoting cooperation and exchange of information among member states in the field of education.



The committee focuses on policy development, sharing best practices and addressing challenges in education across Europe. It serves as a platform for member states to discuss and collaborate on various educational issues, ranging from curriculum development to teacher training and lifelong learning initiatives. Through its work, CDEDU aims to support the development of inclusive, equitable and high-quality education systems throughout Europe.

Eurostudent consortium member

MFHEA is a consortium member of the Eurostudent project. The EUROSTUDENT project collects and analyses comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education. A wide range of topics related to students' social and economic conditions are covered. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. It does this through combining a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. The central coordination team is made up of a consortium with seven member organisations; each of these partners is assigned specific tasks.

Group of Coordinators (GOC)

This group is a statutory formation stemming from the Professional Qualifications Directive bringing together all mutual recognition coordinators in a permanent forum/dialogue with the European Commission. The GOC convenes at a monthly/bi-monthly interval, where each coordinator shall attend to present all information as requested by the European Commission and receive instructions that are promptly disseminated to local Competent Authorities. The entire ethos of the meeting revolves around the correct implementation of the Directive and the subsequent tools in their entirety and it serves also as a forum to share best practices.

Joint Meeting of the GOC and the Services Expert Group

This group brings together mutual recognition coordinators within the GOC formation and the Services Directive Experts Meeting attended by the national coordinators. Both Directives are intertwined with several shared tools, mechanisms and legal obligations. Thus, the joint meeting serves as a coordination point where synergies between ongoing and new initiatives can be strengthened.

ASEM (Asian European Meeting)

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), founded in Bangkok in 1996, serves as a pivotal platform fostering dialogue and collaboration across a spectrum of domains encompassing politics, economics, social issues, culture and education between 53 partner entities as of 2022. Comprising 51 partner nations from Asia and Europe alongside two institutional partners, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEM orchestrates biennial summits where leaders convene to deliberate on shared concerns, with the most recent gathering, ASEM13, themed "Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth," taking place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in November 2021. Complementing these summits are ministerial and senior officials' meetings spanning various political arenas, including the ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEM ME), which have been held in diverse locations such as Berlin, Hanoi, Copenhagen, Kuala Lumpur, Riga, Seoul and Bucharest, with the most recent gathering in Bangkok in 2021, albeit virtually, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to nurturing the ASEM Education Process (AEP) and fostering an ASEM Education Area.

ASEM Expert Group on SDGs and Education (EG1)

The MFHEA ASEM Expert Group on SDGs and Education (EG1) is a specialised body within the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) framework. ASEM is an intergovernmental process that promotes dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. EG1 specifically focuses on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to education.

EG1 aims to facilitate exchanges of best practices, policies and experiences among ASEM partners in the field of education, with a particular emphasis on advancing the SDGs related to education. It brings together experts, policymakers and stakeholders from both Asia and Europe to discuss challenges, share knowledge and explore collaborative initiatives to achieve the SDGs in the education sector.

The group typically holds meetings, workshops and other events to promote dialogue and collaboration and it may also produce reports or recommendations to inform policymaking and action in ASEM member countries regarding education and sustainable development.

ASEM Expert Group 2 on Recognition and Balanced Mobility (EG 2)

The ASEM Expert Group 2 on Recognition and Balanced Mobility (EG2) is a specialized working group within the ASEM Education Process. Its main objective is to promote mutual understanding and support transparent, automatic recognition of qualifications between higher education institutions in Asia and Europe, thereby encouraging more balanced and reciprocal mobility of students and academic staff.

ASEM Expert Group 4 on Digitalisation

The ASEM Expert Group on Digitalisation (EG4) is a dedicated working group under the ASEM Education Process that promotes cooperation and dialogue between Europe and Asia on digital learning, educational technologies, and artificial intelligence in education.

AE4AI (Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence)

The AE4AI Network (Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence) is a collaborative platform that brings together experts from across Asia and Europe to advance the responsible development of AI, with a focus on education, governance, and sustainability.

Group on History Teaching (CoE)

History and history teaching have been a focus of the Council of Europe's work on education since its inception. In a time of democratic backsliding, where history is susceptible to distortion, including the denial of certain historical facts and political manipulation, it is crucial to provide platforms for open discussions regarding the role of history in the 21st century. It is imperative to strive to establish guidelines that promote the cultivation of peaceful collective memories, rooted in a multi-perspectival approach to history. The annual Forums for History Education provide a platform for various stakeholders to exchange their perspectives and practices in history education and collaboratively develop guidelines for improving history education.

This year, an MFHEA officer attended the 3rd History Forum at the University of Bologna, where during various presentations, debates and discussions, the following were addressed:

- The importance of intergovernmental programmes on history education, drawing upon extensive knowledge;
- The promotion of dialogue and collaboration among the various stakeholders, including public authorities, academics, teachers, curriculum developers and students;
- Sharing and disseminating best practices and insights from diverse aspects of European history.

This year's forum focused mostly on the threats and challenges facing the teaching of history in universities, which is often questioned or even cut in favour of other subjects that seem closer to the immediate needs of the economy.

This series will conclude in 2025, as part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the Cultural Convention. This final Forum will present the various recommendations from the previous Forums and reaffirm the role of history in the construction of a Europe founded on principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Democratic Mission of Higher Education (CoE) WG

The Council of Europe has been concerned about the decline of democracy, leading to an erosion of trust in institutions and major societal establishments, including higher education. This has led to economic, political, social and educational inequalities, increased intolerance, discrimination and hate speech, and threats to freedom of expression and association. To respond to these challenges, a WG has been set up to study and implement strategies that help revitalise the CoE's democratic and civic mission by preparing citizens to become active participants in democracy, while also contributing to the democratic transformation of schools, universities and societies.

ENQA

ENQA was first established in 2000 as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education. In 2004, it became the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education with the aim of contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education and to acting as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries.

EUROGRADUATE 2026 Advisory Board

The Eurograduate Advisory Board (est. in 2025) is a group of experts and stakeholders that provides strategic advice and feedback to support the development, quality, and relevance of the Eurograduate survey and its outputs.

MMM Working Group

The MED9 countries promote mobility through regional initiatives such as the Mediterranean Mobility Mechanism (MMM) and digital urban mobility frameworks, complementing EU programmes and addressing the specific needs of the Mediterranean region.

ERA policy 2025-2027 (Structural Policy: Research Careers)

Led in part by Xjenza Malta and supported by MFHEA, The ERA Policy Agenda (2025–2027) includes a dedicated structural policy aimed at making research careers more attractive, sustainable, and competitive

MEYR Technical Working Group on the European Degree

MFHEA provided technical support and expert guidance to the group, offering feedback and contributing to the refinement of drafts and reports to ensure they met their intended purpose.

Under Malta's National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030 following Working Groups (WGs) were launched in 2025:

WG1 on Educational Attainment, Retention, and Completion

A dedicated working group tasked with leading the co-design of a strategic approach to educational attainment, retention, and completion in collaboration with key stakeholders. Its primary objective is to ensure that policies are coherent, effectively implemented, regularly monitored, and continuously reviewed to remain relevant and up to date.

WG2 on Quality Assurance and Transparency in Further and Higher Education

A dedicated working group tasked with co-designing and overseeing a quality assurance policy in consultation with key stakeholders. Its role is to strengthen policy coordination, implementation, monitoring, and review, while identifying priorities, resource needs, and measures to support effective quality assurance and compliance across the sector.

WG3 on Relevance of Teaching, Learning and Research

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a forward-looking approach to anticipate future teaching and learning needs and ensure that education and research remain aligned with current and emerging national priorities.

WG4 on Social Dimension

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a comprehensive policy on the social dimension of FHE, with the aim of promoting wider, more equitable, and inclusive participation in higher education and adult learning in line with national and EU priorities.

WG 5 on Internalisation & Mobility

A dedicated working group responsible for co-designing a strategic approach to internationalisation and mobility in consultation with key stakeholders, ensuring coordinated policy implementation, effective monitoring, and regular review.

WG 6 on Policy Intelligence & Monitoring

A dedicated working group responsible for developing and coordinating the collection of data and evidence to inform FHE policy development, establish targets, and assess performance. Its key objectives are to strengthen the evidence base for policymaking, facilitate integrated and coherent policy design, and support the monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of FHE policies.

Glossary and Abbreviations

EQF

EQF stands for the European Qualifications Framework, which is a meta-framework to support translation and communication between national qualifications systems and Frameworks.

Further Education

All non-compulsory formal, non-formal and informal learning that serves to obtain a national qualification or award classified up to and including level 4 of the Malta Qualifications Framework or a foreign qualification at a comparable level. Only the Further Education Centres, Further Education Institutions and Further and Higher Education Institutions may offer further education programmes.

Higher Education

All non-compulsory formal, non-formal and informal learning or research that serves to obtain a national qualification or award classified at level 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework or higher or a foreign qualification at a comparable level. Only Further and Higher Education Institutions, Higher Education Institutions and Universities may offer higher education programmes.

MQF

MQF stands for the Malta Qualifications Framework. The MQF is very similar to the EQF from levels 1–8; however, it also includes introductory level A and introductory level B which are lower than MQF level 1.

NQF

A National Qualifications Framework is a common reference point for all nationally recognised qualifications and awards, indicating level of education and training and progression from one level to another. The Malta Qualifications Framework is Malta's NQF.

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