

Higher Education

Policy on the Use of Additional Languages of Instruction for Accredited Programmes

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a structured regulatory framework governing the use of languages of instruction other than Maltese and English in accredited Higher Education programmes (MQF Levels 5–8).

This policy aims to:

- Support the accessibility of education provision.
- Safeguard academic standards and student protection.
- Ensure comparability, transparency, and quality assurance across all accredited provision.

2. Legal Status

In accordance with its statutory quality assurance functions, MFHEA (henceforth the Authority) regulates language of instruction where necessary to safeguard quality assurance, student protection, and qualification comparability.

This policy shall be interpreted and applied in conjunction with all of the Authority's applicable regulations, policies and accreditation requirements governing Higher Education.

Additional languages of instruction may include languages commonly used within Higher Education systems forming part of the European Higher Education Area and other languages where the provider demonstrates that the proposed delivery serves a legitimate educational, academic, professional, societal, strategic or public interest needed within the Maltese context.

3. Scope

Applies to homegrown Higher Education programmes (MQF Levels 5–8), including Qualifications and Awards/ (micro-credentials) delivered in additional languages. This policy does not apply to programmes where the primary objective is the teaching of the language itself.

Where programmes are delivered through online/blended/hybrid modality, approval of additional language delivery shall be contingent upon compliance with accredited programme requirements and full alignment with all of the Authority's applicable regulations, standards, and quality assurance frameworks governing higher education provision.

4. Core Regulatory Principles

The Authority shall assess each request for the use of an additional language of instruction on a case-by-case basis. The Authority will consider whether the proposed language supports effective teaching and learning and whether its use is appropriate to the programme's educational context.

Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the introduction of an additional language does not unintentionally limit student inclusion by restricting students to instruction solely in their native or regional language.

The Authority will also consider the disciplinary suitability of translating the programme, particularly in vocational or technical fields where specialised terminology may make translation impractical or pedagogically inappropriate.

For the purposes of quality assurance, accreditation of an additional language version requires a separate comparability based-accreditation process. Such approval authorises a language-specific delivery variant of the accredited programme and does not constitute approval of a separate programme.

5. Baseline Accreditation Language

All programmes must first be accredited in Maltese or English prior to approval of delivery in any additional language.

The Maltese or English language version must remain operationally deliverable, adequately staffed, and supported by sufficient learning resources throughout its operational period.

Providers shall not advertise, market, enrol students in, or commence delivery of, a programme in an additional language version prior to formal approval by THE AUTHORITY, in accordance with the applicable [MFHEA communication](#), and publication of that approved language version on the Malta Qualifications Registry.

6. Higher Education Requirements

6.1. Application

Where a provider intends to offer an accredited programme in an additional language of instruction, the request shall be considered only after the main programme accreditation has been finalised. The approval of an additional language version shall constitute a secondary but separate process, based on the accredited Maltese or English version of the programme.

Providers shall request the relevant application form from the Higher Education Unit by contacting higher.education@MFHEA.mt. The application shall include the required programme information in the proposed additional language of instruction.

The submitted translation shall demonstrate comparability with the accredited programme, including:

- equivalence of learning outcomes;
- appropriate use of MQF terminology; and
- accurate and consistent assessment language.
- student experience must remain equivalent.

The institution shall demonstrate via a formal written declaration that both the application and programme have been translated by a certified translator. The declaration shall include:

- translator name and credentials
- signed declaration of accuracy
- contact details for verification

The translator shall be a graduate in translation, linguistics, or the target language **OR** a sworn/authorised translator in an EU/EEA jurisdiction.

The Authority retains the right to ask for further documentation and verification.

The academic learning environment, including teaching methodologies, academic interaction, supervision, and assessment practices, must remain equivalent across all approved language versions.

The application and supporting evidence shall be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). The Committee shall recommend whether the application may proceed to the comparability-based accreditation process or whether further action is required.

6.2. Comparability based-accreditation Process

The additional language version of the programme shall be subject to a comparability-based accreditation process. This process shall verify that the proposed additional language version is equivalent to, and aligned with, the already accredited Maltese or English version of the programme.

As part of this process, the provider shall ensure that the additional language version:

- is officially translated by a certified translator, in accordance with section 6.1;
- includes all programme documentation and supporting evidence required by the Authority;
- demonstrates linguistic and academic equivalence with the accredited Maltese or English version;
- provides evidence of the availability of learning materials, academic resources, and student support services in the proposed additional language of instruction; and
- demonstrates mechanisms for cross-language assessment moderation to ensure consistency of academic standards across all approved language versions.

The Authority's verification shall consist of a full review of the additional language version submitted by the provider. The review shall assess whether the translated programme documentation is linguistically accurate, academically equivalent, and fully aligned with the accredited Maltese or English programme documentation.

The review will include the appointment of an independent language expert with appropriate linguistic competence, and, where required, subject-matter expertise relevant to the programme under review.

Approval of delivery in an additional language shall be contingent upon the Authority's ability to secure the linguistic and subject-matter expertise necessary to conduct accreditation, monitoring, and quality assurance activities.

The Authority retains the right to request further documentation, clarification, or verification where this is considered necessary to determine comparability and safeguard academic standards.

6.3. Institutional Audit

Higher Education providers must ensure that all student-related policies, procedures, and support documentation are available in all approved languages of delivery and shall be verified during institutional audits.

7. Fees

The fees for programme accreditation apply for every additional language to be added.

8. Staffing and Language Competence

Providers must demonstrate that:

- In addition to the usual teaching staff requirements:
 - (Vocational courses at MQF Levels 5 and 6 as well as academic courses at Levels 6 and 7 require tutors who have a full relevant qualification at least one Level up from the course being provided)
- Teaching staff delivering programmes in additional languages possess:
 - Minimum CEFR Level C1 proficiency or equivalent.
- Students enrolling in programmes delivered in additional languages possess:
 - Minimum CEFR Level B2 proficiency or equivalent.

The Authority reserves the right to request evidence of language proficiency at any stage. Documented language admission verification procedures are subject to review during a compliance check and/or programme accreditation.

9. Learning Resources

Providers must demonstrate sufficient learning resources to enable completion of the programme without reliance on Maltese or English-language materials unless explicitly approved.

All the information on the institution's website is also available in the additional language of instruction.

Core instructional and assessment resources required for successful completion must be available in the approved language.

Providers shall notify the Authority of any material changes affecting language delivery, staffing, or learning resources.

Providers must demonstrate that sufficient academic and scholarly resources exist in the approved language to support achievement of the MQF level of the programme, including access to subject-appropriate academic literature, research materials, and disciplinary terminology.

10. Malta Qualifications Registry

The Authority shall record all approved additional language versions of accredited programmes within the official Malta Qualification Database.

The database shall clearly specify:

- The accredited English/Maltese language version
- Approved additional language(s) of delivery
- The accredited programme title in language
- Accreditation status and validity period
- Any specific approval conditions where applicable

11. Transitional Arrangements

Programmes previously approved by the Authority for delivery in languages other than Maltese or English shall remain valid.

Providers offering such programmes shall be required to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of this policy with the implementation onset of the new programme accreditation standards or earlier upon the Authority's request.

The Authority may request additional documentation where necessary to verify continued compliance with quality assurance, student protection, and equivalence requirements under this policy.

12. Withdrawal or Suspension

12.1. Grounds for Withdrawal

The Authority may suspend or withdraw approval for delivery in an additional language where:

- Required language quality assurance mechanisms are not maintained.
- Student protection measures are compromised.
- Programme standards are no longer demonstrably equivalent.
- Non-compliance with the licence conditions

12.2. Student Protection Measures

Where language approval is withdrawn:

- Providers shall ensure programme completion arrangements for affected students in the approved language where feasible.
- Transfer to English delivery may occur only where appropriate.
- The Authority retains discretion to determine student protection arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Withdrawal of language approval does not automatically revoke programme accreditation in Maltese or English. Responsibility for student protection and associated costs remains with the licensed provider.

Any change, withdrawal, or revocation of a programme delivered in Maltese or English shall apply equally to the equivalent programme delivered in any other language.

13. Appeals

Providers may appeal the outcome of the programme accreditation in additional language as per the Authority's appeals procedure for Higher Education.

14. Validity

Approval for delivery in additional languages shall align with the programme it applies to once that programme cyclical reviews by the Authority are implemented.

15. Entry into Force

This policy shall enter into force upon its publication.

This policy supersedes MFHEA Circular 10/2025 titled *"Policy update on language of instruction"* and replaces any previous restrictions relating to the approval of additional languages of instruction.

All applications submitted following the entry into force of this policy shall be assessed in accordance with its provisions.