



National Quality Standards in Education (3-16 years)

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GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION,
SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION



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FOREWORD BY MINISTER

Standards play a crucial role in ensuring a top-notch education system by establishing clear and measurable objectives. The shift towards an education system guided by agreed-upon standards will greatly impact the Maltese education system and marks a significant milestone in its development.

The document National Quality Standards in Education (3-16 Years) by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education goes beyond mere philosophical concepts. It provides concrete measures by defining success criteria and quality markers for three sets of standards. These standards are designed to enhance school effectiveness and guarantee high-quality educational outcomes.

As Malta's education system embraces a learner-centred approach, the standards aim to improve the quality of life of individuals. The first set of standards focuses on Educational Leadership and Management, emphasizing the importance of fostering a shared vision among stakeholders and promoting schools as professional learning communities. The second set of standards targets Learning and Teaching, highlighting the fulfilment of learners' educational entitlement as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework. The third set of standards revolves around School Ethos, emphasizing learner support, school climate and culture, and parental engagement.

These standards will serve as a guiding framework for schools for both internal and external quality assurance, aiding in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of their school development plans. By increasing their capacity for improvement, schools will contribute to a more efficient and equitable education system. Ultimately, these standards are expected to pave the way for a high-quality education system and foster quality development at the individual, classroom, and school levels.



Dr Clifton Grima

Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation

FOREWORD BY PERMANENT SECRETARY

Standards are an essential component to ensure an education system which is geared towards quality as a common core of standards providing clear, tangible and measurable goals. A standards-based education system plays a key role in achieving those targets which the Maltese education system has set-up to achieve.

The National Quality Standards in Education (3-16 Years) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education does not rest on the philosophical concept but provides tangible measures by putting forward clear success criteria and indicators. The three sets of standards, namely, Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching and Ethos are aimed at improving schools' effectiveness, thus ensuring high-quality outcomes in education.

Bearing in mind that the Maltese education system is moving towards a person-centred approach, these standards aim to improve the quality of life of individuals. The first set of these standards targets Leadership and Management, and the success criteria highlight the importance of promoting a shared vision with different stakeholders and schools as professional learning communities. The second set of standards targets Learning and Teaching, and the focuses on the importance of ensuring learners' entitlement as outlined by the National Curriculum Framework. The third set of standards evolves around the School Ethos and the support which schools provide to learners in various forms but also on the climate and culture pertaining to the educational institution. The engagement of parents in the school life is also emphasised in this standard.

Hence, the standards will serve as a guidepost for schools when carrying out their internal review, in their planning, implementation and monitoring of their school development plans to increase their capacity and ability for improvement. Eventually, the Maltese education system will become more efficient and equitable.

I believe that these standards will lead towards a high-quality education system and sustain quality development across an individual, classroom and school level.



Matthew Vella

Permanent Secretary

Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation

RATIONALE ON STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Standards in education establish a means which enables the evaluation of schools' effectiveness and their capacity for improvement. These standards set clear and measurable goals on what is considered as quality education. Standards are a signpost for schools when carrying out their internal review and in the planning, implementation and monitoring of their school development plans. Establishing national standards in education contribute towards raising the level of expectations for all learners. These standards also allow for the setting of clear targets towards achieving a quality education which is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 focusing on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all (*United Nations, 2015*).



The national standards in education which include clear success criteria aim to define an understanding of school quality and therefore provide a basis for aligning internal and external review processes as outlined in the *National Curriculum Framework for All (NCF, 2012: 32)*: “Quality Assurance is to be realised through a system of ongoing self-evaluation, monitoring and review within schools complemented by an external review system that together foster school improvement.” This alignment aims to create a balance between autonomy and accountability and between a centralised and decentralised system of quality assurance mechanisms (*A Quality Assurance Framework for Education in Malta 0–16 years*).

The standards and their corresponding criteria reflect national frameworks (*NCF, 2012; Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, 2014; A National Inclusive Education Framework, 2022; Learning Outcomes Framework, 2018*) and policies in education, international literature (*Education Development Trust, 2016; European Commission: Quality assurance for school development, 2018; Hattie, 2012*) and good practices observed in schools. They focus on three equally important areas that lead to quality education: Educational Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, and Ethos. The order of presentation of these three areas is not indicative of any particular emphasis. Each standard includes a set of success criteria and quality markers which identify desirable targets. Supporting these standards is a set of handbooks explaining the key quality assurance processes. These are available on the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) website.



**Educational
Leadership and
Management**



**Learning
and Teaching**



Ethos

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1.1

Standard 1.1

The Head of School embraces the school's vision and in collaboration with the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, fosters and supports a professional learning community.

1.2

Standard 1.2

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are embedded in the school's culture and in its capacity for improvement.

1.3

Standard 1.3

Appropriate organisational, financial, and human resources management ensure effective school administration as well as continuity and consistency in all actions.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.1

Standard 2.1

The school's curriculum ensures learners' entitlement as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework.

2.2

Standard 2.2

The school fosters a positive learning culture in which learners thrive holistically. Educators sustain this culture by cultivating learner motivation, encouraging engagement and celebrating differences and abilities through a learner-centred approach.

2.3

Standard 2.3

The school's assessment policy and practices, which embrace both formative and summative assessment, sustain quality development at individual, classroom and school level.

ETHOS

3.1

Standard 3.1

A sense of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders prevails, promoting positive behaviour and fostering a sense of belonging.

3.2

Standard 3.2

The school community embraces diversity and fosters an inclusive and supportive ethos in which all learners feel safe to express themselves and reach their full potential.

3.3

Standard 3.3

Parents take an active part in the life of the school.



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The emphasis of the first set of standards is on Educational Leadership and Management. Success criteria highlight the importance of promoting a shared vision with the different stakeholders (educators, parents, learners, and the external community) as well as encouraging a professional learning community. They also target the effectiveness of the school's internal review process, development planning, and the appropriateness of the school's organisational structures.

1.1

Standard 1.1

The Head of School embraces the school's vision and in collaboration with the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, fosters and supports a professional learning community.

1.2

Standard 1.2

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are embedded in the school's culture and in its capacity for improvement.

1.3

Standard 1.3

Appropriate organisational, financial, and human resources management ensure effective school administration as well as continuity and consistency in all actions.



Standard 1.1

The Head of School embraces the school’s vision and in collaboration with the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, fosters and supports a professional learning community.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>1.1.1 The Head of School is aware of the strengths, needs and challenges of the school. This inspires commitment to promote and share the school’s vision and implement meaningful changes towards clear educational goals.</p>	<p>Shared vision</p>
<p>1.1.2 The Head of School nurtures and supports distributed leadership, broadening participation in decision-making across the school community.</p>	<p>Distributed leadership</p>
<p>1.1.3 By modelling ethical values and practices, the Head of School together with the Senior Leadership Team nurtures a positive and inclusive school culture, one based on trust, empathy, and respect. They also enhance motivation, commitment and collective responsibility to foster improvement and promote success.</p>	<p>Inspirational leadership</p>
<p>1.1.4 The Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team invest in their own professional development, and provide opportunities for educators to work collaboratively and grow professionally.</p>	<p>Professional development</p>

<p>1.1.5 The Head of School together with the Senior Leadership Team prioritises curricular and pedagogical matters. They are committed towards initiating and maintaining sound pedagogical discourse, as well as promoting good and inclusive practices.</p>	<p>Pedagogical discourse</p>
<p>1.1.6 The Head of School together with the Senior Leadership Team adopts a system of regular monitoring, evaluation and support that promotes quality learning and teaching.</p>	<p>Monitoring, evaluation and support</p>
<p>1.1.7 The Head of School together with the Senior Leadership Team considers parents as important stakeholders and facilitates an effective home-school link.</p>	<p>Parents as stakeholders</p>
<p>1.1.8 The Senior Leadership Team fosters collaborative partnerships with the college network or equivalent, professionals and the wider community. This collaboration sustains the school community.</p>	<p>Collaborative partnerships</p>

1.2

Standard 1.2

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are embedded in the school's culture and in its capacity for improvement.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>1.2.1 The school's culture is one that is open to constructive review and improvement opportunities. The Senior Leadership Team and educators own the internal review and the school development process.</p>	<p>School development processes</p>
<p>1.2.2 The internal review process focuses on the school's vision and goals, the school's effectiveness as a learning community, and improvement processes.</p>	<p>Internal review</p>
<p>1.2.3 The internal review process follows the principles of transparency and accountability. This reflects the school's context, involves various stakeholders, refers to national priorities, policies and initiatives, and employs different methods and tools for collecting data.</p>	<p>Data collection</p>
<p>1.2.4 The Senior Leadership Team employs an effective data analysis exercise to interpret the data and understand trends. Together with educators they identify priority targets.</p>	<p>Data analysis</p>
<p>1.2.5 The chosen priorities for development indicate the way forward for the school community. Staff professional development linked to the chosen priorities forms an integral part of development planning.</p>	<p>Development planning</p>

<p>1.2.6 The school development planning document has appropriate structure and content. It includes SMART action plans that are formulated by educators. These action plans clearly indicate the steps to be taken to address agreed-upon priorities.</p>	<p>Action plans</p>
<p>1.2.7 Through appropriate monitoring, guidance and support, educators implement action plans. Led by the Senior Leadership Team, educators periodically evaluate action plans and modify them where and as necessary, to ensure successful implementation and achievement of targets.</p>	<p>Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation</p>

1.3

Standard 1.3

Appropriate organisational, financial, and human resources management ensure effective school administration as well as continuity and consistency in all actions.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>1.3.1 The duties of the different members of staff are clearly defined to reflect the school's educational and organisational goals.</p>	<p>Responsibilities</p>
<p>1.3.2 The school has open, transparent and effective tools and procedures that facilitate two-way communication within the school community and beyond.</p>	<p>Communication</p>
<p>1.3.3 The school has clear, effective and updated policies and procedures that are shared with, and owned by, the school community. These enable the provision of a meaningful educational experience to learners and ensure consistency in all actions and procedures.</p>	<p>Ownership of school policies</p>
<p>1.3.4 The Senior Leadership Team works in synergy for the benefit of the school community.</p>	<p>Effective administration</p>
<p>1.3.5 The Senior Leadership Team works proactively to find timely solutions to potential issues and adapts to unforeseeable and challenging situations.</p>	<p>Proactiveness</p>

<p>1.3.6 The Senior Leadership Team maximises the effectiveness of human resources by taking into account qualities, aptitudes and availability while identifying and addressing needs through continuous professional development and support. New members of staff benefit from an effective induction.</p>	<p>Human resource management</p>
<p>1.3.7 The school has the necessary structures that safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all employees. Support strategies offered help the Senior Leadership Team and educators reach a sense of professional fulfilment.</p>	<p>Professional fulfilment and wellbeing</p>
<p>1.3.8 The school's infrastructure is regularly maintained and upgraded to support effective administrative structures, quality conditions for learning and teaching, the overall wellbeing of the school community and enhanced learner achievements.</p>	<p>School Infrastructure</p>
<p>1.3.9 The Senior Leadership Team manages appropriately the school's physical and financial resources. The provision of resources follows a plan and is in line with the school's educational and organisational goals.</p>	<p>Resource optimisation</p>



LEARNING AND TEACHING

The second set of standards relates to the quality of Learning and Teaching. The success criteria highlight the importance that learners' entitlement is satisfied as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework. The standards promote the provision of a positive learning experience that motivates learners by respecting their different needs, abilities and learning preferences. They also direct the evaluation of learning by encouraging both formative and summative forms of assessment.

2.1

Standard 2.1

The school's curriculum ensures learners' entitlement as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework.

2.2

Standard 2.2

The school fosters a positive learning culture in which learners thrive holistically. Educators sustain this culture by cultivating learner motivation, encouraging engagement and celebrating differences and abilities through an approach that is learner-centred.

2.3

Standard 2.3

The school's assessment practices, which embrace both formative and summative assessment, sustain quality development at individual, classroom and school level.



Standard 2.1

The school's curriculum ensures learners' entitlement as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>2.1.1 The school curriculum reflects the vision and principles of the National Curriculum Framework, particularly with regards to entitlement, learning areas and cross-curricular themes, and is aligned with national policies and strategies.</p>	<p>Curriculum entitlement</p>
<p>2.1.2 The school provides flexible learning programmes to address the needs of learners in line with the principles outlined in the National Curriculum Framework.</p>	<p>Learning programmes</p>
<p>2.1.3 The school enhances learning through cross-curricular, thematic, interdisciplinary, and collaborative approaches that reflect real life situations.</p>	<p>Experiential learning</p>
<p>2.1.4 Learning is sustained through participation in preferably officially recognised projects, co-curricular activities (including nutrition and physical activities) and other initiatives. Learners make connections between different learning experiences and opportunities, take initiatives and design their own projects in collaboration with others.</p>	<p>Active participation in projects</p>

2.2

Standard 2.2

The school fosters a positive learning culture in which learners thrive holistically. Educators sustain this culture by cultivating learner motivation, encouraging engagement and celebrating differences and abilities through an approach that is learner-centred.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>2.2.1 Educators’ planning sustains lesson delivery. Planning includes clear learning outcomes as well as sequenced activities and contextualised tasks that are engaging, relevant, and target learners’ different learning needs and abilities.</p>	<p>Planning</p>
<p>2.2.2 Teachers and Learning Support Educators plan and work collaboratively to provide quality education by ensuring access to learning and equitable assessment for all learners.</p>	<p>Collaboration between Teacher and LSE</p>
<p>2.2.3 The positive relationships between the educators and learners, sustained by effective classroom management strategies, create an atmosphere in which learners can confidently participate in learning activities.</p>	<p>Classroom atmosphere</p>
<p>2.2.4 The learning environment created prioritises access for all, appeals to learners’ interests and allows for meaningful interaction among them as well as facilitates the learning and teaching process.</p>	<p>Learning environment</p>
<p>2.2.5 Teachers scaffold learning, taking into consideration learners’ prior experiences and adopt a clear lesson structure. They address learner variability by providing multiple means of representation and different options for action and expression.</p>	<p>Learner variability</p>

<p>2.2.6 Educators employ effective and multisensory learning and teaching approaches, strategies and resources to motivate and meaningfully engage all learners in the learning process by deepening their understanding, as well as helping learners develop effective learning strategies and problem-solving skills.</p>	<p>Learner-centred</p>
<p>2.2.7 Learners take charge of their own learning, demonstrating a sense of commitment and resilience. They develop 21st-century competencies, augmented when viable through digital technology.</p>	<p>21st century competencies</p>

2.3

Standard 2.3

The school's assessment policy and practices, which embrace both formative and summative assessment, sustain quality development at individual, classroom and school level.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>2.3.1 The school assessment policies guide educators in employing a variety of assessment strategies to monitor, record and report progress, support learners with their learning as well as gather evidence to inform teaching.</p>	<p>Assessment practices</p>
<p>2.3.2 Educators implement formative assessment, evaluating learner understanding and progress. Educators provide learners with effective feedback and opportunities to assess learning.</p>	<p>Formative assessment</p>
<p>2.3.3 Teachers record learners' progress, including the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills-based outcomes as outlined in the Learning Outcomes Framework, in various ways and throughout the scholastic year in a systematic manner. They provide parents with continuous, timely and qualitative feedback about their child's progress.</p>	<p>Recording and reporting progress</p>
<p>2.3.4 Teachers evaluate learners' progress and reflect on their own practices to inform planning.</p>	<p>Self-reflection</p>

<p>2.3.5 The school keeps record of learners' progress in non-formal activities organised by accredited or registered entities.</p>	<p>Recording of non-formal activities (SSQ&P)</p>
<p>2.3.6 Learners' attainment and progress is analysed to identify trends and inform development. The school is aware of its performance in sectoral and/or national assessments/examinations and seeks improvement while taking its context into consideration.</p>	<p>Evaluating assessment outcomes</p>



ETHOS

The third set of standards takes into account the School Ethos. The criteria here focus on the support given to learners to reach their full potential, as well as the respect and sense of belonging fostered in the school community. The active involvement of parents in the life of the school is also given its due importance.

3.1

Standard 3.1

A sense of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders prevails, promoting positive behaviour and fostering a sense of belonging.

3.2

Standard 3.2

The school community embraces diversity and fosters an inclusive and supportive ethos in which all learners feel safe to express themselves and reach their full potential.

3.3

Standard 3.3

Parents take an active part in the life of the school.

3.1

Standard 3.1

A sense of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders prevails, promoting positive behaviour and fostering a sense of belonging.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>3.1.1 There is a pronounced school identity and spirit as well as a sense of community. Stakeholders are happy to belong and are actively involved in school life.</p>	<p>Sense of belonging</p>
<p>3.1.2 The school atmosphere is welcoming. There is a positive school culture based on open communication and genuine relationships among the various members of the school community. The enhanced presence of school leaders contributes to establish and sustain relationships with the staff and learners. Through their awareness, empathy, and cultural competence, educators establish healthy relationships with learners.</p>	<p>School culture</p>
<p>3.1.3 The core values highlighted in national policy documents are actively promoted at school. Reciprocal respect prevails among the different members of its community. School leaders, educators and learners challenge instances of stereotypical assumptions in a respectful way.</p>	<p>Mutual respect</p>
<p>3.1.4 The school has a policy which provides direction for the effective management of behaviour, promotes high standards of positive behaviour, outlines rights and responsibilities, and ensures the creation of a safe environment where learning takes place. It also promotes the use of restorative practices and effective disciplinary measures. This policy, formulated through the involvement of the main stakeholders, is in line with national policies. Stakeholders are committed towards implementing and respecting the behaviour policy of the school.</p>	<p>Behaviour policy</p>

3.2

Standard 3.2

The school community embraces diversity and fosters an inclusive and supportive ethos in which all learners feel safe to express themselves and reach their full potential.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>3.2.1 The authorities who manage or govern the school continuously ensure that the school infrastructure is accessible, inclusive, and learner friendly.</p>	<p>Physical accessibility</p>
<p>3.2.2 Through appropriate structures and procedures, the school identifies and addresses the different needs of learners. The school celebrates learners' diverse efforts, strengths and abilities.</p>	<p>Diversity</p>
<p>3.2.3 Learner support structures and services, ranging from the pastoral to the curricular, are in place. The school organises meetings/sessions involving parents and support specialists for the benefit of learners as required.</p>	<p>Support structures and services</p>
<p>3.2.4 The school adopts an integrated approach towards the learner's holistic development and wellbeing, one that maximises opportunities for the learner to succeed. Learners with a statement of needs are supported through the implementation of a well-formulated and reviewed individual educational programme (IEP). Other learners, including the gifted and talented, are supported through tailor-made programmes/activities that effectively address their needs.</p>	<p>Holistic development</p>

<p>3.2.5 The school embraces equity by providing right resources, strategies and support to all learners to help them overcome challenges.</p>	<p>Equity</p>
<p>3.2.6 The school lays the foundation for smooth and effective transitions, creates an environment of trust and sets high expectations for all learners to reach their potential.</p>	<p>Transitioning</p>
<p>3.2.7 The school takes the necessary steps to secure strong learner attendance.</p>	<p>Attendance</p>
<p>3.2.8 Through various activities, the school provides learners with opportunities to develop competencies which enable them to become active citizens.</p>	<p>Civic responsibilities</p>
<p>3.2.9 The democratically elected members of the Student Council are proactive, voice their own as well as their peers' opinion, offer solutions and take initiatives on matters affecting their life at school. The SLT provides the Student Council appropriate and other learner-led organisations the necessary means and support to function at school.</p>	<p>Learner voice</p>

3.3

Standard 3.3

Parents take an active part in the life of the school.

Success Criteria	Quality Markers
<p>3.3.1 Parents feel welcomed at school, readily cooperate with educators , volunteer their support, and participate in school activities.</p>	<p>Willingness to cooperate</p>
<p>3.3.2 There is a strong and effective two-way communication between the school and parents.</p>	<p>Communication</p>
<p>3.3.3 Parents are actively and continuously engaged in their child’s educational development, both at home and at school. This includes but is not limited to participating in parents’ days, open days and educational meetings set by the school, and making good use of the school’s online portal.</p>	<p>Engagement</p>
<p>3.3.4 Parents inform themselves about school practices and policies, show a high level of interest in school improvement/development, voice concerns and contribute towards quality education, especially through their representatives on the School Council (or equivalent).</p>	<p>A proactive attitude</p>

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GLOSSARY

21st century competencies

Prominent 21st century competencies are associated with critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. These are seen as offering measurable benefits in multiple areas of life.

Active citizens

People who feel empowered and motivated to involve themselves in their communities at local, national, and global levels.

Administrative structures

The way the administration of the school is organised and managed.

Assessment

The process of collecting evidence of learning to evaluate learners and provide feedback towards improvement.

College network

A group of state primary, middle and secondary schools within a particular region in Malta and Gozo that collaborate together. Each college is led by a Head of College Network. Networking also takes place amongst colleges.

Curriculum

A broad term that refers to educational objectives, learning programmes, their outcomes, teaching, and learner experiences.

Digital technology

In an education context, digital technology refers to electronic devices, applications, and resources that enable interaction with individuals and content. It facilitates communication, collaboration, and engagement.

Distributed leadership

A leadership style in education that empowers leaders to distribute decision-making among individuals whose expertise helps contribute towards the school's vision and goals. Key principles underlying the distributed leadership style include autonomy, capacity and accountability.

Equity

The provision of the right resources, strategies and support that learners need in order to learn, both inside the classroom and outside, and which help them develop a unique educational experience.

Ethical values

Moral beliefs that guide people to act in certain ways.

Ethos

The character of the school that is determined by the principles, values, and beliefs that the school community upholds. This character is reflected in the school atmosphere, or climate, and underpins interactions and behaviour of the school members.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment, or assessment for learning, is the process of gathering evidence to identify where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (*Assessment Reform Group, 2002*).

Gifted learners

Learners whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains: intellectual, creative, social, and physical (*UNESCO: International Bureau of Education*).

Home-school link

The means of communication that the school makes use of to communicate with the parents of learners.

Individual Educational Programme (IEP)

The planning for individual learner needs and the process of planning, implementing and evaluating a curriculum programme as well as the holistic development of the learner (*A National Inclusive Education Framework, 2022, p.6*).

Induction

The process in which new members of staff and learners receive support from mentors to help them settle into their role.

Internal review

A self-evaluation exercise carried out by the school as part of its development planning process. It involves the gathering of data from different sources to identify priority targets, involving the school leadership, educators, learners, parents, and other stakeholders, and following analysis, written down in a School Development Plan.

Learner-centred approach

A pedagogical approach that places the learners at the centre of the learning and teaching process, taking into account their interests, needs and preferences, cultural identities, life experiences and personal challenges.

Learners

An all-encompassing term used to identify the children and young adults who attend an educational institution.

Learner entitlement

The right of learners to be provided with an education that enables them to achieve their potential and achieve personal excellence.

Learning Outcomes Framework

A curricular framework that presents learning outcomes for different learning areas in the early, junior, middle and secondary years. The learning outcomes entail what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do in the learning process.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts (family, school, the community, the workplace, and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal), which, together, meet a wide range of learning needs and demands (*UNESCO: Institute of Lifelong Learning*).

Means of representation

The multiple ways of how educators present information to learners to help them access and engage with the learning content.

Multisensory learning

An approach to learning and teaching that involves the use of more than one sense at a time.

National assessments

Assessments organised by the education authorities (e.g., annual and end-of-secondary school examinations).

National Curriculum Framework

A national framework published and made into law that provides a rationale for curricular-related matters in Malta, such as learning areas, assessment, support structures and parental involvement.

Non-formal activities

Accredited or registered programmes that middle and secondary school students enrol in outside the formal school context in community settings.

Parents

The term refers to the biological or legal guardian of the learner attending the school (*A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools, 2022, p.11*).

Professional development

The process of engaging in upskilling with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Professional learning community

A group of educators that meets to discuss and share expertise to improve practices.

School community

In its broadest term, the school community comprises the school leaders, educators, learners, parents, various stakeholders and ancillary staff who have a common interest in supporting the school vision and promoting an environment that encourages learning.

School Council

A body composed of educators, including the Head of School, and parents, led by a president nominated by the Ministry for Education, who are elected for a three-year calendar term. The School Council acts as a platform for its members to work together for the benefit of learners and the school community at large on such matters as funds, parental involvement, curriculum, and the school environment among others.

School Development Plan

The School Development Plan follows from the internal review process of a school. It includes priority areas for development, success criteria and implementation measures..

School infrastructure

The school buildings and facilities, including the digital technologies, that directly or indirectly impact the quality of the learning environment.

School policies

School policies document and articulate the way set procedures are carried out by the school. Such policies might concern attendance, behaviour, and assessment among others.

School vision

A school vision enshrines what the school community believes in and where it aspires to be: the values it upholds, the philosophy underpinning its endeavours, and aspirations.

Senior Leadership Team

The team of people responsible for leading and managing an educational institution. The SLT plays a key role in achieving the school's vision, overseeing the curriculum provision, and ensuring effective administration. The SLT is generally composed of the head of school, assistant heads of school and heads of department. The term also refers to Learning Support Centre co-ordinators. School leadership may also include personnel from the school's human resource and finance departments.

SMART action plans

Forming the basis of the school development plan, action plans are written in a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound way.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment, or assessment of learning, is carried out at the end of unit, a scholastic year, or a learning programme. The outcome of the assessment is intended to provide learners and teachers with an indication of the development of knowledge, skills competences, and attitudes achieved in different learning areas.

Support structures

The structures that the school has in place to support learners in their educational journey as well as the Senior Leadership Team and educators to reach a sense of professional fulfilment.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing concerns how the Senior Leadership Team, educators and learners feel psychologically, physically, cognitively, and socially to experience health and happiness as well as develop a sense of purpose and achievement.

Wider community

Organisations or groups having a religious, social, sport, cultural, and environmental interest or background among others, whose expertise and support may be sought by the school to contribute in various ways to the curriculum.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS IN EDUCATION (3-16 YEARS)



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION,
SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION