

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Malta 2016/2017
data background information**



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

Operational definition

“An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.”

Criteria for an official decision of SEN

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre)school
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

Educational assessment procedure in the country

Educational assessments are usually carried out by:

- an educational psychologist, as part of a multi-disciplinary team within the Child Development Assessment Unit (CDAU) that falls under the Ministry of Health;
- the School Psychological Service (SPS) from the National School Support Services (NSSS), within the Directorate for Educational Services (DES), which is assigned to colleges and assesses children/learners at school;
- private educational psychologists.

How the multi-disciplinary team is comprised in the country

The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's school. The multi-disciplinary team comprises the following members:

- Psychologist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech pathologist
- Physiotherapist
- Medical consultant
- Ear, nose and throat specialist
- Ophthalmology specialist



- Early intervention teacher (NSSS) for children under the age of five
- Professionals from the CDAU
- Psychiatrist
- Audiologist
- College psychosocial team, including social workers.

In fact, the multi-disciplinary team comprises all the practitioners, including those from the private sector or from other entities (such as health) or non-governmental organisations that support the child/learner. Other professionals from the NSSS that support students at school are the Head of Department (Inclusion) and members from the psychosocial team.

The legal document used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive

An official statement outlines the support that a child/learner is eligible to receive.

The Inclusion Policy 2000 document describes the role of the Statementing Moderating Panel and the support the child/learner is eligible to receive. Children/learners who are given an official Statement of Needs have a Statement of Needs Report, issued by the Statementing Moderating Panel. The Statement provides recommendations to the DES for the provision of a learning support educator. This includes whether the eligible children/learners are supported by a shared learning support educator in the same class or a full-time one-to-one learning support educator.

The Statement of Needs provides guidance to the school administration on initiating the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and on referrals for any other recommended services. In addition to the above, two draft documents have been compiled and will be launched during the next school year:

- The Statementing Operation Procedures (gives an overview of the operating procedures of the Statementing, Review and Appeals Board)
- The Statementing Process (gives guidelines to schools on when to refer children/learners and the application process).

A new Inclusion Policy and framework is about to be launched which also supports the Statementing Operations Procedures and the Statementing Process.

How the document is used as the basis for planning in the country

This document is used as the basis to help the children/learners who are eligible to receive support and for planning ahead in terms of educational resources, including a pool of learning support educators.

The formal, regular review process in the country

Since the establishment of a separate Review Panel, more often than not the Statementing Moderating Panel now recommends a review date for the Statement. The Review Panel may review a Statement based on the Statementing Moderating Panel's recommendation. The Review Panel usually sends an inclusion specialist to observe the



child/learner in school and issue a report on the current situation. The school is requested to provide any new assessments, teacher feedback, IEP reports and other documents.

Alternatively, the Review Panel may review a Statement when parents, the school or both so request. The parents, or the school together with the parents, have to fill in the Review Form, formally requesting a review of the Statement. They must also submit any new documentation, IEP report and other documents. Finally, the parents, together with the child/learner and the school, are invited for an interview with the Panel. The Panel evaluates all relevant documents and interview proceedings and issues a review of the Statement of Needs. The Review Panel may also review the support of any child/learner at any point during their time at school.

Proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. This is defined as:

“An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week.”

Proxy indicator used

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more.

Details on what the country proxy is

Children/learners with SEN in mainstream classes with non-disabled peers.

Why this proxy was used

Data on individual children/learners exists. However, it is not readily available as it is not held in a database.

Difficulties in using the proxy

As a rule, all children/learners who attend mainstream classes spend most of their time in mainstream classes. They may receive services from resource centres, but the amount of time is less than 20%.

Specific country issues in applying the proxy indicator

Not applicable.

Detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines ‘formal education’ as follows:



“[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).

Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?

No, Malta uses the same definitions as ISCED.

How specific cases – such as home-educated children/learners – are considered

In Malta, home tuition only exists in exceptional circumstances when children/learners may be absent from school for long periods, due to illness or other medical conditions which prevent them from attending school.

Children/learners who are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)

This may include newcomer children who are asylum seekers, refugees or economic migrants both from European Union (EU) countries and third countries. It may also include migrant citizens who settle in Malta, but do not register their children in schools. In the case of EU citizens, due to Schengen Area procedures, very limited data is available about their arrival.

A small number of Maltese children are not registered in a local school. However, this is negligible since during the calendar year the School Information System conducts the Good Shepherd Programme to cross-check the birth register with the school registers. Social support workers contact any parents who have not registered their children in a school in order to ensure that they do so.

How the population of children/learners who are out of formal education is defined

The definition of non-formal education is as follows:

“Non-formal learning is learning that has been acquired in addition or alternatively to formal learning. In some cases, it is also structured according to educational and training arrangements, but more flexible. It usually takes place in community-based settings, the workplace and through the activities of civil society organisations. Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process, non-formal learning can also lead to qualifications and other recognitions.”



([Overview of Non-Formal Certification](#)).

Malta's National Statistics Office (NSO) cannot provide any information regarding mandatory non-formal education (i.e. primary and secondary education). The NSO can only collect information on enrolled learners from administrative sources (state) and from schools (church and private). Therefore, it is only possible to provide information on the number of enrolled learners.

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in the private sector.

Private sector education in the country

The private sector includes church schools, which are grant-maintained schools, and independent schools.

Child/learner population counted for each relevant question

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in state and non-state sectors.

Specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection

No specific issues.

ISCED level age ranges

The following are the most common (pre)school entrance ages and (pre)school leaving ages for the different ISCED levels:

- Age range in the country at ISCED level 02 (pre-primary): 3 to 4
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 1: 5 to 11
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 2: 12 to 13
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 3: 14 to 16