

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

Malta



Policy Frameworks

Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?

Equity does feature in government-produced policy documents; however no information was available as of the writing of this report.

What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?

No information was available.

Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?

No information was available.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)

- Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
- Gender groups
- Older or mature learners
- Students with disability
- Members of the LGBT community
- Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

The main objectives of the education strategy contained within the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 aims, through its completion, for students to develop their personal and social potential and acquire the appropriate knowledge, key skills, competences and attitudes through a value-oriented formation including equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusivity.

In this regard, the University of Malta and the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) as higher education institutions highlight the importance of inclusive and accessible education indiscriminately for all. Particularly, the University of Malta, through their Strategic Plans for 2020 – 2025 recognise the importance of inclusivity and offer support to students coming from marginalised and vulnerable groups. Whereas MCAST recognise equity as one of their main strategic goal in their Strategy for 2019 - 2021 by creating and promoting an educational setting where personal and social circumstances do not hinder educational achievements.

Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

Malta's higher education institutions, the University of Malta (UM) and the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), have set up their own strategies. In the case of the University of Malta this is covered within their Strategic Plan 2020-2025, whereas for MCAST equity measures are issued through MCAST Strategic Plan 2019 – 2021.

Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

- ➔ Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- ➔ Civil society organisations
- ➔ Private sector organisations
- ➔ Student Organisations/Association

Achieving Policy Targets

Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

No.

Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

Financial instruments are used to promote access/success; however no information was available as of the writing of this report.

Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

Impact assessments are carried out internally within the Higher Education Institutions.

What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

These are determined internally within Higher Education Institutions, who enjoy ownership of their own strategies.

What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

The strategies are drawn up by Higher Education Institutions directly, who thus enjoy ownership.

How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Technical assistance and capacity building
1. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
1. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries
2. Policy setting

COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

While the effects of COVID-19 on these particular groups is still being quantified, since data is still being measured, at both University of Malta and MCAST education was transferred online offering uninterrupted access to education to everyone. Furthermore, new budgetary measures will be introducing free year-long access to internet services for all young people who decide to pursue higher education after 16. This initiative, along with stipends given to students in higher education, is set to make higher education further accessible for students from low-income and marginalized backgrounds.

Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the [“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”](#) report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

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