

THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE REFORM 2019  
MAPSSS FEEDBACK

JULY, 2019



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## MAPSSS FEEDBACK on the Matriculation Certificate Reform 2019.

As parents representatives of students attending state schools MAPSSS (Maltese Association of Parents of State School Students) would like to share the following insights on the proposed Matriculation Certificate Reform 2019 as published in the following link

[https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/403775/MATSEC\\_ReformBrochure\\_Digital.pdf?fbclid=IwAR01NDJl\\_eJG9SQPZc9KKlj2sSrbnkQ3ZeliNzjOhG3SOabu1s3-9ERNQ](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/403775/MATSEC_ReformBrochure_Digital.pdf?fbclid=IwAR01NDJl_eJG9SQPZc9KKlj2sSrbnkQ3ZeliNzjOhG3SOabu1s3-9ERNQ)

MAPSSS Committee appreciates that the current post-secondary set-up, that has been in place for the past 25 years is now being revisited to reflect the new realities and challenges that young people are facing.

We welcome that the proposed reform will enhance the students' 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and it recognises the students' engagement with co-curricular activities that provides a more holistic dimension to their education trajectory.

In view of this, we hope that the post-secondary institutions that prepare the students for the Matriculation Certificate will support and accommodate the students' needs to fulfil their commitments of the co-curricular programmes with informal education organisations as acknowledged in previous years of their schooling and even noted in the yearly annual examination report issued by the Department for Curriculum, Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning MEDE. In view of this we appreciate further clarification on how the additional 3 grade point as part of the Matriculation Certificate for the voluntary involvement in the co-curricular activities will be assigned. The *Matriculation Certificate Reform 2019* report states that the 3 points will be assigned for an involvement of a minimum 80 hours commitment. We feel that this is arbitrary depending on the co-curricular activity involved. We ask whether the 3 points will be assigned even to a cumulative participation of more than 80 hours in more than one informal organisation. Moreover, we ask whether the tutor following the students in the co-curricular activities will be assigned from the post-secondary institutions or will this scheme follow the same procedure adopted in secondary schools where the approved organisations will provide the necessary documentation?

We strongly believe that in the spirit of the acknowledgement of the students' voluntary involvement in co-curricular activities, the Talented Athletes Scheme should be extended to other co-curricular areas.

MAPSSS committee believes that it is positive that the reform considers extending continuous assessment from the secondary cycle to post-secondary education and to include this aspect in the Matriculation Certificate. As the Association had pointed out with the introduction of continuous assessment in compulsory schooling, the importance of moderation is imperative to allow for a fair judgement across subjects and institutions.

As with regards the proposal related to the consolidation of knowledge and proficiency in a foreign language, MAPSSS committee acknowledges the importance of proficiency in a foreign language, especially in view of the growing cosmopolitan Maltese society. However the intercultural dimension of the education experience of students cannot be limited to language proficiency. A broad understanding of 'intercultural education' is also to eliminate education barriers for students. We feel that the proposed reform is actually disadvantaging a large cohort of students – those attending State Schools. Currently, in state schools, students are offered to



study only one foreign language throughout the 5 years unless they choose a second foreign language as their Option subject. Children have to choose the foreign language they will study in secondary when they are in Year 6 of the Primary School, and they are not offered the possibility to change the language they study throughout the secondary schooling. The majority of church and independent schools expose students to at least 2 languages in their secondary schooling. Some schools prepare students for their Sec Certificate in both languages; others offer their students to drop one language in Year 9 instead of an Option subject. In both situations students attending church and independent schools would have been exposed to two languages and therefore their choice to broaden their language proficiency in post-secondary is definitely broader and more informed than the choice of Year 6 students in State Schools (10/11 years old) who, following the proposed reform will have to choose a foreign language to study up to MQF Level 4, without having any idea of what this will entail or without having had the possibility to explore their preference. We strongly suggest that this reform takes into consideration the realities of the largest cohort of secondary schools and that the importance of language proficiency is extended to compulsory schooling so as to avoid a piecemeal approach to the education experience of our children. Moreover, the set target dates of the reform do not allow enough time to adjust for these changes for students who are already in the Senior Schools.

We trust that our feedback is considered for the benefit of the students who plan to explore further their potential and extend their studies at tertiary level.

MAPSSS Committee

July 2019

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