



(ESF 1.225)

**This scheme is administered by the
Directorate for Lifelong Learning
Ministry for Education and Employment**

**Regulations
2014 – 3rd Call
(Closing Date: 30th May 2014
Noon – Local time)**

**Scholarships part-financed by the European Union
Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
European Social Fund**



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 MASTER it! supports an increase in the number of students following post-graduate courses at Masters level, and prepares students for employment in the priority sectors of the knowledge-based economy of Malta.
- 1.2 Postgraduate education forms an increasingly important part of any country's economic and social agenda. It supplies a key part of many people's continuing professional development.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The key objectives of the Master it! scheme are to:
 - assist people to pursue further levels of academic research;
 - improve the quality and relevance of the education system;
 - reduce skills mismatches particularly within the priority economic sectors;
 - support further research in science and technology; and
 - increase the capacity and level of research, innovation and development activity in Malta.

3 Explanatory Notes

- 3.1 **Academic Record** shall mean an official document issued by a Higher Educational Institution (HEI)/ University. The document shall show the marks/grades obtained by the Applicant and where it is the norm, the final grade/classification.
- 3.2 **Agreement** shall mean a legally binding document to be signed by the Scholarship Awardee as beneficiary of the Scholarship and the MASTER it! Project Leader. These Regulations shall be construed as forming part of the Agreement. The Agreement has to be signed by not later than three (3) months after the commencement of studies or the publication of rankings, whichever comes last unless otherwise justified. The monetary amounts shown in the Agreement shall be disbursed only if the proper documentation (invoices and receipts) are submitted and verified for eligibility and correctness. In the event of any inconsistency or discrepancy between the Agreement and these Regulations, these Regulations shall prevail in all cases and the Agreement shall be amended to the extent of the discrepancy or inconsistency with these Regulations is rectified.
- 3.3 **Appeals Board** shall mean a Board appointed by the Minister for Education, entrusted with assessing and delivering final decisions in respect of petitions submitted by Applicants and Awardees contesting decisions taken by the MASTER it! Board and/or the Project Leader as administrator of the MASTER it! scholarship scheme on the interpretation of these Regulations. Any decision taken by the Appeals Board shall be regarded as final and irrevocable for all intents and purposes of the MASTER it! Scholarship Scheme.
- 3.4 **Applicant** shall mean a person that submits a scholarship application.
- 3.5 **Awardee** shall mean a person who is awarded a scholarship.
- 3.6 **Awarding Body** refers to an organisation recognised by the National Regulatory Authorities whose purpose is awarding accredited qualifications
- 3.7 **Bench Fees** shall mean fees being educational costs related to the execution of studies or research activity, but which are not covered by the tuition fee, and not related (but not limited) to general maintenance, travel, conference attendance (including registration fees), buying of books, registration to access libraries, use/buying of computer, energy charges, sports' membership or living costs/personal salaries of the Scholarship Awardee. As part of the Agreement, the Project Leader reserves the right to ask the Scholarship Awardee to obtain a justification or breakdown of costs from the Higher Education Institution on the claim/s declared. All Bench Fees need to be declared in writing in the ULA. Any increase in, or any additional Bench Fees cannot be claimed by the Scholarship Awardee or the University if not included in the ULA submitted by the closing date.

When the Awardee pays the Bench Fee, he/she must produce an original invoice and an official receipt or equivalent (i.e. receipted invoices where applicable) from the HEI/University, in which case the payment will be made directly to the Awardee.
- 3.8 **Commencement Date** of scholarship shall mean the date as specified in the ULA being the start date of the course on which payments to the Awardee commences. The Commencement Date may be amended at Contract stage if the Project Leader has proof that the start date of the course is different from that included in the ULA submitted by the closing date.
- 3.9 **Completion Date** shall mean the date when the Studies (see definition 3.26) are completed and the final result is published.
- 3.10 **Course Duration** has to be established by the HEI/University. When it does not cover whole months, the funds disbursed will be pro rata to the nearest month. For further definition of how a month is calculated, please consult Clause 3.23 of these Regulations.

- 3.11 **ECTS** shall mean European Credit Transfer System
- 3.12 **End Date** shall mean the date as specified on the ULA or the date specified on the Transcript as issued by the HEI/University whichever date is the earliest. Payments are calculated to cover the period from the **Commencement Date** to the **End Date**.
- 3.13 **ESF** shall mean European Social Fund.
- 3.14 **Full-time studies** shall mean studying full-time on-campus at the HEI/University. For computation of study abroad allowance for full-time students please see Clauses 3.27 and 13.6.1 of these Regulations.
- 3.15 **Higher Education Institution (HEI)/University** shall mean an entity providing higher education and recognized by the competent national authority of a participating country as belonging to its system of higher education and is a recognised body with Degree awarding powers.
- 3.16 **ISCED** shall mean International Standard Classification of Education.
- 3.17 **Joint Degree** shall mean a single degree issued by at least two HEIs/Universities offering an integrated programme and recognized officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located. For the purpose of these Regulations, when an Applicant applies for a Joint Degree, a leading HEI/University has to be identified. The MASTER it! Board shall only recognise one HEI/University.
- 3.18 **Maintenance Grant** shall mean a grant which is awarded as part of the Scholarship and in accordance with all conditions laid in these Regulations and in the Agreement.
- 3.19 **MASTER it!** shall mean, for the purposes of these Regulations, and the Agreement, a Scholarship scheme administered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning within the Ministry for Education and Employment. The scheme is part-financed by the European Union Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 *Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life* - European Social Fund.
- 3.20 **MASTER it! Board** shall mean a Board appointed by the Minister responsible for Education, entrusted with the ranking of Applicants for the awarding of Scholarships and overseeing the scheme.
- 3.21 **Masters Programme** shall mean a second cycle higher education programme that:
- leads to a Masters level qualification offered by a HEI (Including a University) with a minimum of 60 ECTS,
 - leads to a full MQF Level 7¹ on an academic level, and
 - with a programme of studies whereby by 31 October, 2015, the Awardee has a confirmation from HEI/University that s/he will be awarded the Masters degree. The MASTER it! Board shall not consider any requests for extension beyond 31 October, 2015.
- 3.22 **MQF (Malta Qualifications Framework)** shall act as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.
- 3.23 **Per Annum** shall mean twelve (12) calendar months. This means that when a course is of a duration of for example nine (9) calendar months, the grant shall be awarded pro rata over that number of months. For avoidance of doubt in calculating the meaning of a month the Awardee must spend fifteen (15) or more consecutive days in order to be eligible for funds covering a month.
- 3.24 **Project Leader (PL)** shall mean the person who is entrusted with the overall financial and legal responsibility for the implementation of the project.
- 3.25 **Scholarship** shall mean a grant of financial aid to an Awardee to further his/her education. At the end of the Scholarship, the Awardee is to submit documentary proof that s/he has completed successfully the programme of studies for which the Awardee has been awarded a Scholarship. The proof is to be forwarded to the MASTER it! Board by not later than two (2) months from the conclusion of the course for which the scholarship has been granted and availed of.
- 3.26 **Studies** shall mean all work required to be undertaken and completed by the Awardee to the satisfaction of the HEI/University in which the Awardee is registered. The Studies shall be the same originally applied for in the Application Form, as awarded by the MASTER it! Board, and as agreed in the Agreement.
- 3.27 **Study Abroad Allowance** shall mean an additional allowance awarded to an Awardee who would be abroad (that is outside the Maltese territory) studying on campus at a HEI/University throughout a full-time course. A 'Confirmation of Residence Form' shall be completed by the Awardee to confirm the place where the studies and/or research are or will be taking place. When an Awardee spends part of his/her studies in Malta, the Study Abroad Allowance is paid on a pro rata basis. In such case, this allowance is paid at the end of the Academic Year at a maximum rate of two hundred euro (€200) per visit abroad (supported by boarding passes and a letter of confirmation from HEI/University up to a maximum of €2,400 over a 12-month period. For definition of how a month is calculated please consult Clause 3.23 of these Regulations.
- 3.28 **Transcript** same mean the same as **Academic Record**.
- 3.29 **Tuition Fee** shall mean enrolment, administration, registration and/or examination fees charged by a HEI/University so that the Applicant follows a Masters Degree programme. Tuition Fees covered shall be those charged directly by a HEI/University as approved by the MASTER it! Board. Any subsequent

¹ Post Graduate Diplomas and Certificates at MQF Level 7 are not eligible under this scheme.
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increase in Tuition Fees cannot be claimed by the Awardee or the HEI/University if not included in the ULA submitted by the closing date. Tuition Fees shall be paid upon presentation of an **original invoice and original receipt. Please refer also to Unconditional Letter of Acceptance** definition below.

3.30 **Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (ULA)** shall mean a letter issued to the Applicant by the Registrar (or a delegated high authority) of the HEI/University which shall have the following details:

- A clear statement by the HEI/University that it is **unconditionally** accepting the Applicant to follow a programme of studies.
- The **Commencement Date** of studies. Where the exact date is not specified, this is taken as the last day of the month mentioned on the ULA.
- The **End Date** of studies. Where the exact date is not specified, this is taken as the first day of the month mentioned in the ULA.
- The **Tuition Fee** (if applicable) shall be indicated on the ULA and not through an electronic link. Applicant shall note that the Agreement to be signed at a later stage shall include only the information on the ULA. The Project Leader shall not accept amendments to the Agreement other than those which reflect the information and/or data clearly stated in the original ULA. The fees paid as Tuition Fees is the amount shown on the ULA submitted.
- The **Bench Fee** (if applicable);
- Modality of study (that is whether it is distance learning or part time or full time studies); and
- Any other information required by the PL.

It is the duty of the Applicant to ensure that when s/he chooses a HEI/University, this institution is in a position to issue such an Unconditional Letter of Acceptance with all the above details. This has to be in the form of an original letter, signed by the Registrar of the HEI/University (or delegated high authority). Scanned, PDF copies or other electronically transmitted formats shall be accepted PROVISIONALLY in terms of Clause 8.2 unless the MASTER it! Office receives them directly from the HEI/University. If not the original copy of the ULA must be produced before the signing of the Agreement.

In the event where the HEI/University issues solely electronic copies of the ULA, the ULA shall be emailed directly by the HEI/University to the MASTER it! Office. Scanned or emailed copies of the ULA forwarded to the Applicant shall not be accepted. No additional costs shall be entered in the Agreement other than those stated in the ULA submitted by 9 September 2014, by 4.00 p.m. (local time).

4 Eligibility

4.1 In order to apply for MASTER it!, an Applicant shall:

- 4.1.1 (a) Be a Maltese citizen who has been residing in Malta for the past five (5) years. Provided that a Maltese citizen who has been residing outside Malta for study, health or work purposes or any other purpose which the MASTER it! Board may consider, will still be eligible to apply and this period of time during which the citizen was abroad **will not** be taken into consideration for the purpose of calculating the five (5) year requirement, **or**
- (b) Be a Maltese Citizen who is a worker or self-employed person in Malta, **or**
- (c) Be a national of an EU/EEA state or a family member of such EU/EEA national (as defined in LN 191 of 2007 and in LN 205 of 2004 respectively for EU and EEA nationals), provided that such person has obtained permanent residence in Malta in accordance with LN 191 of 2007 and in LN 205 of 2004 respectively for EU and EEA nationals, **or**
- (d) Be a national of an EU/EEA state who is in Malta exercising his/her Treaty rights as a worker, self-employed person or person retaining such status in accordance with LN 191 of 2007; **or**
- (e) Be a third country national who has been granted long-term residence status under LN 278 of 2006.
- 4.1.2. Be applying for Masters degree studies at MQF Level 7.²
- 4.1.3 Applicants shall start their course leading to Masters Degree (MQF Level 7) between 1 April 2014 and 31 October 2014.
- 4.1.4 Applicants already in possession of a Doctoral Degree (PhD – MQF Level 8) are not eligible to apply under this scheme. For avoidance of doubt, applicants with degrees from the Faculty of Laws and Faculty of Medicine and Surgery from the University of Malta are eligible to apply under this scheme.
- 4.1.5 Applicants already in possession of a Master degree (MQF Level 7) may apply provided that the applicant meets **ALL** the following conditions:
- (a) Applicant was not awarded a Malta Government and/or a Maltese/ESF co-funded scholarship during the period 2006 and 2014; and

² For further information about the National Qualification Framework, contact the National Council for Further and Higher Education or visit the website <http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/>. For comparative purposes, MQF level 7 is equivalent to ISCED Level 7. For more information on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), visit the link: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>.

- (b) Applicant is applying for a course leading to a Masters related to a Priority Area of Studies as indicated in Article 6; and
- (c) Applicant in possession of other degree/s at Masters at MQF Level 7 is in an area different from that applying for under this scholarship scheme.

4.1.6 The complete Application Form shall be submitted by **30 May 2014 at noon (Local Time)**. Transcript and Unconditional Letter of Acceptance shall be submitted by **9 September, 2014 at 4.00p.m. (Local Time)**.

4.1.7 It is the responsibility of Applicants, in possession of qualifications awarded by foreign HEIs/Universities, to produce an evaluation report on equivalence and comparability of qualifications issued by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) within the National Council for Further & Higher Education (NCFHE) (as per Education Act – Act XXIV of 1988 in accordance with the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act – Act XVIII of 2002). A copy of the said report issued by the MQRIC, or the designated authority in case of warrants, shall be attached to the application, with the original presented at the interview.

Applicants not in possession of this report may still apply, provided that they submit a copy of the report to the receiving MASTER it! Board as soon as it becomes available and in any case by not later than 9 September **2014 at 4.00p.m. (Local Time)**.

4.1.7.1 Applicants whose qualifications are obtained from a foreign HEIs/Universities listed on the website of MQRIC as Approved Institutions (<http://www.ncfhe.org.mt>), are not required to produce the evaluation report on comparability of qualifications.

4.1.8 Applications for full-time studies submitted by employees of the Public Service/Public Sector require the endorsement of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry concerned through the Head of the relative Department/Directorate, on pain of ineligibility, to confirm whether paid or unpaid leave of absence for the duration of the course has already been conceded under those terms and conditions as established by the Ministry concerned. Clause 14.5 of these regulations shall apply to those eligible Applicants with approved paid leave of absence for the duration of the course, who subsequently are awarded a Scholarship.

4.1.9 Applicants in possession of other national/ESF (or a combination of both) public grants or national/ESF (or a combination of both) scholarships for the same course or programme shall be deemed ineligible to the MASTER it! scheme. In the event that an Applicant is granted a MASTER it! Scholarship and the Project Leader discovers, after the grant of such MASTER it! Scholarship, that the Scholarship Awardee had, at any point in time, whether prior to the award of the MASTER it! Scholarship, or after such award, accepted any such national/ESF public grant or national/ESF scholarship, the Scholarship Awardee shall be liable to refund the amount/s up to then granted to him/her in full, and this without prejudice to any other legal action which may be taken in his/her regard.

4.1.10 Provided that any scholarships or other grants awarded to the Scholarship Awardee shall be notified to and approved by the MASTER it! Board, whether such are awarded to the Applicant prior to the MASTER it! Scholarship or throughout the duration of the Scholarship. For the avoidance of doubt, any scholarships or grants awarded at any time to the Applicant in relation to the course of studies for which the Scholarship shall be granted, must be declared and approved by the MASTER it! Board. Applicant shall also consult Clause 14.6. In the absence of a scholar's declaration and written approval by the MASTER it! Board, the scholar is considered to be in breach of these Regulations and may be accused of fraud.

4.1.11 Applicants in possession of other national/ESF (or a combination of both) public grants or national/ESF (or a combination of both) scholarships for a different course or programme, have to complete the first course and fulfil all the contractual obligations before the grant of a second scholarship is awarded.

4.1.12 Applicants must be available to commence the academic studies by 31 October, 2014.

4.1.13 An applicant shall become ineligible for a Scholarship if s/he is in breach of any part of the Regulations.

5 Types of Scholarships

5.1 Masters programmes (MQF Level 7):

MASTER it! shall support full-time Masters Courses equivalent to MQF Level 7. Students are expected to follow Masters Courses with a minimum of 60 ECTS or a one **full-time** academic year course. However programmes of a longer duration may also be considered by the MASTER it! Board, provided that by 31 October 2015 the HEI/University shall be in a position to confirm that the Awardee will be awarded the Masters degree.

- Joint degrees or split-site programmes may be considered as long as documentation is provided indicating the one, leading degree awarding institution.
- Part-Time and Distance Learning programmes may be considered under this scheme, provided that by 31 October, 2015 the HEI/University can confirm that the Awardee will be awarded the Masters degree. This has to be stated in the Unconditional Letter of Acceptance.

6 Priority Areas of Study

6.1 **The MASTER it! Scheme offers different bursaries to address areas of national priority as identified within the Operational Programme II – ‘Empowering People for more Jobs and a Better Quality of Life’ – for the implementation of Cohesion Policy in Malta for the period 2007-2013 and is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).**

6.2 The scheme is primarily aimed to finance studies in the following areas:

High-End Manufacturing

Examples of specialisation: Renewable Technologies, Product/Equipment Design, Plastics/Advanced Materials Manufacturing.

Life Sciences

Examples of specialisation: Dietetics, Health Psychology, Leadership and organisational development in the health sector, Clinical Sciences, Cancer research; Medical and Surgical Specialities, Pharma manufacturing, Veterinary

Educational Services

Examples of specialisation: Hearing/Visual Impairment, Severe, Profound and Multiple Disabilities, SEBD, Autism, Learning Disabilities, Multi-Sensory Impairments, Inclusion Coordination, Career Guidance, Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Counselling, School Curriculum Development, Family Therapy, Literacy, Education Planning, Vocational Education, Humanitarian Action.

Financial Services

Examples of specialisation: Funds Management, Back office support Management, Financial Mathematics, Marketing, Innovation, Strategy, Economics, Business Analytics, E Commerce, Business Administration, Marketing and International Affairs.

Transportation & Advanced Logistics

Examples of specialisation: Ship Management, Ship Registration, Yachting/Super Yachting, Aircraft Maintenance/Repair, Aviation, Road Management.

Higher Quality Tourism

Examples of specialisation: Eco-Tourism, Health Tourism, Sports Tourism, International Relations.

Creative Industries

Examples of specialisation: Digital Media, Online Gaming, Radio/Television/Film Production, Scriptwriting, Visual Effects.

Environment

Examples of specialisation: Alternative Energy, Waste Management, Climate Change, Green Technology, Crop production, Marine Management, Oil and Resources Management.

ICT

Examples of specialisation: Software development in specific areas such as Security, Telecommunications, e-Health, Microelectronics, Telecommunications and Satellite, ICT for students with Special Educational Needs, Forensic Computing, Cyber Technology.

7 Tenure and Placement

7.1 Awards are tenable at any local or international HEI (including University) for a specific programme of study or research. Only those institutions recognised by the Maltese authorities shall be taken into consideration by the MASTER it! Board.

7.2 It is the responsibility of Applicants, applying for qualifications awarded by foreign HEI/University produce an evaluation report on comparability of qualifications issued by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) within the National Council for Further & Higher Education (NCHFE). A copy of the said report issued by the MQRIC, shall be attached to the application, with the original presented at the interview. Applicants not in possession of this report may still apply, provided that they submit a copy of the report to the MASTER it! Board by not later than 9 September, 2014 at 4.00p.m. (Local Time). The provisions contained in Clause 4.1.7. of these Regulations shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

- 7.3 The MQRIC may be contacted as follows:
Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) /
National Council for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)
Bice Mizzi Vassallo School
Alamein Road,
Pembroke PBK 1776
Tel. No.: (+356) 27540051 / 21801890 / 27540026 / 21801411
e-mail: ncfhe@gov.mt
www.ncfhe.org.mt

8 Choice of Institution

- 8.1 Applicants are expected to identify not more than five (5) institutions and courses that they consider most appropriate on the Application Form. No changes to the list of institutions are accepted after the closing date of 30 May, 2014 at noon (Local Time) unless in exceptional cases where a valid reason justifies such a request.
- 8.2 Applicants shall have at least one Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (ULA) in writing from a HEI/University listed on their Application Form. The last day of submission of ULA shall be **9 September 2014 at 4.00p.m. (Local Time)**.
- 8.2.1 The Unconditional Letter of Acceptance must be accompanied by a statement from the Applicant that s/he intends to complete the programme of studies and presentation of thesis and/or project on time** in order that by 31 October 2015 the HEI/University shall be in a position to confirm that the Awardee will be awarded the Masters degree.
- 8.3 Many courses have strict admission deadlines and Applicants must take the necessary steps to secure admission to their preferred institutions in advance of any Scholarship application to the MASTER it! Board. Applicants should note that a number of university departments require an Applicant to demonstrate a valid Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score before an offer of admission can be made. The fees for these tests shall not be covered by MASTER it! funds. Applicants should check admission requirements carefully at the time of application.

9 Administration of MASTER it!

- 9.1 The MASTER it! Scholarship Scheme is administered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning within the Ministry for Education, and Employment. The MASTER it! Board is responsible for the selection process and overseeing the scheme.

All correspondence is to be addressed to:

Project Leader (MASTER it!)
Ministry for Education and Employment
Directorate for Lifelong Learning
Rm. 162 / 163, Education Building
Great Siege Road,
Floriana VLT 2000 ,
Malta
Tel. No.: (+356) 2598 2815
Fax: (+356) 2598 2123
E-mail: masterit.mede@gov.mt
Website: www.myscholarship.gov.mt

10 Application Forms

- 10.1 Applicants are to apply by completing in full the appropriate Application Form which is available from the Customer Care Office, Education Information Centre, Education Building, Floriana or downloaded from the website www.myscholarship.gov.mt. Application and the MASTER it! 3rd Call Regulations may be downloaded from the website www.myscholarship.gov.mt.

- 10.2 Applicants shall submit their written/typed Application Form to the MASTER it! Board together with the following:
- i) five (5) copies of the Applicant's HEI/University transcripts;
 - ii) five (5) copies of the Unconditional Letter of Acceptance from the HEI/University applied for;
 - iii) five (5) copies of the Applicant's identity card;
 - iv) five (5) copies of MQRIC evaluation report (where applicable). See Clauses 4.1.7 and 7.2 for guidance;
 - v) one (1) original and four (4) copies of each of Appendix I, Appendix II and Appendix III of the Application Form
 - vi) where necessary, five (5) copies of the Applicant's disability identity card issued by the Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabbilta' (KNPD) for persons claiming that they do not have any possibility of following a full or part-time Masters owing to their disability under Section 12.1.
 - vii) A statement by Applicants that s/he intends completing the course in time as stipulated in Clause 8.2.1.
- 10.3 The MASTER it! Board shall give considerable weight to the contents of Appendices I, II and III of the Application Form.
- 10.4 Applications for Scholarships by students are required to arrive at the:
- Customer Care Office
Education Information Centre
Education Building
Great Siege Road
Floriana VLT 2000,
Malta**
- 10.5 The Application deadline is **30 May, 2014 at noon (Local Time)**. **In the case of Transcript and Unconditional Letter of Acceptance ONLY, the date of submission is extended to 9 September, 2014 at 4.00p.m. (Local Time)**.
- 10.6 Late and incomplete applications shall not be considered by the MASTER it! Board.
- 10.7 All Applicants are to request an acknowledgement for receipt of application from the receiving office if the form is submitted by hand. **Alternatively, applications sent by mail are to be sent by registered post.** The Applicant has to ensure that the application is received by the respective deadline. The MASTER it! Board, and the Appeals Board shall not consider any petitions stating that the Application Form did not arrive on time due any reason attributed to the mailing service.

11 Eligibility, Selection Process and Procedure

- 11.1 The Ministry for Education and Employment has set up the MASTER it! Board to operate the process of selection. This Board shall be responsible for all matters concerning selection according to pre-established criteria identified in Article 12 and determination of appropriate awards according to the Regulations.
- 11.2 Eligible Applicants shall be called for an interview. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to make sure to be available on the date and time communicated to him/her for the interview. No alternative arrangements shall be made to change the date and time of the interview unless there are exceptional circumstances (supported by written proof) that warrant the change of such date and time. The aforementioned exceptional circumstances shall be examined and such alternative date and time may be agreed to by the Board, at its discretion.
- 11.3 In the case of applicants who are unable to attend the given date and time for the interview due to being abroad, such interviews shall take place via SKYPE **only** at the given date and time. The MASTER it! Board does not assume any responsibility if the interview fails to materialise properly due to any technical reason. In exceptional cases, an alternative date for interview may be given by the MASTER it! Board depending on the circumstances which led to the failure of such an interview.
- 11.4 The Ministry for Education and Employment has also set up the Appeals Board to deal with objections raised by Applicants after they are informed in writing with the decisions of the MASTER it! Board.
- 11.5 If an Applicant disagrees with the MASTER it! Board, **only** the Applicant may present a petition to the Appeals Board within five (5) working days from the date when the MASTER it! Board communicates its decision to the Applicant in writing. In the petition, the Applicant has to state clearly the reasons why s/he is contesting the decision by the MASTER it! Board.
- 11.6 The Appeals Board shall only address appeals from the decisions of the MASTER it! Board on matters related to procedure or interpretation of the regulations in terms of eligibility, awards, and other decisions related to the granting of a Scholarship. Under no circumstance shall the Appeals Board change the Regulations, the score of Applicants deriving from interviews by the MASTER it! Board, nor change the ranking of an Applicant as a result of such score.
- 11.7 The decision by the Appeals Board is final.

12 Selection Criteria

- 12.1 Applications are considered on the basis of the following selection criteria:
- (a) Academic merit³ of the Applicant (20%);
 - (b) How studies are related to the identified priorities in Clause 6.2 (28%);
 - (c) The relevance of the research to the local economy (25%);
 - (d) The likely impact of the work on the development of Malta (25%);
 - (e) Previous experience in the area of specialisation for this Masters (2%);
 - (f) The modality of study of Masters programmes (preference shall be given to programmes in the following order *ceteris paribus*):
 - o First preference – Full time programmes;
 - o Second preference – Part time programmes;
 - o Third preference – Distance learning programmes.

Provided that, students who are persons with disabilities and do not have any possibility of following a full or part-time Masters programme unless through distance learning, shall be given first preference in the same way as those who apply to follow full-time programmes.

For those who are shortlisted, the MASTER it! Board shall consult further with KNPD (Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabbiltà) to evaluate the nature of disability with respect to undergoing further studies and whether this disability shall be considered for the purpose of this Article.

- 12.2 An Applicant is considered to have passed the interview if the Applicant obtains a pass mark (that is 50% of the total allotted marks) in the criteria (b), (c) and (d) above. Obtaining a pass mark does not automatically mean that a scholarship is being awarded.

13 Value of Awards and Payments

13.1 Distance learning courses:

For Masters Courses provided by a recognised HEI/University through distance learning, the Scholarship grant shall cover tuition fees **only**. The amount to be paid is €3,000 per annum. It is extremely important that **by 31 October 2015, the HEI/University shall confirm the award of a Masters degree.**

13.2 Part-time Masters courses:

For Masters courses provided by a recognised HEI/University on a part-time basis, the Scholarship grant shall cover tuition fees **only**. The amount to be paid is €3,000 per annum. It is extremely important that **by 31 October 2015, the HEI/University shall confirm the award of a Masters degree.**

13.3 Full-time Masters courses:

For Masters Courses provided by a recognised HEI/University on a full-time basis, the Scholarship grant shall cover tuition fees, bench fees and maintenance costs up to Euro 8,000 per annum. The maintenance grant cannot exceed €2,500 per annum.

Maintenance grants shall be paid on a pro-rata basis for the duration of the course, in two instalments during the academic year.

- 13.4 Scholarship Awardees who pay part or the full tuition fees and/or bench fees to a HEI/University, the fees paid by the student shall be reimbursed on receipt of both the HEI/University original invoice and the original official receipt of payment or equivalent (i.e. receipted invoice where applicable) issued by the receiving HEI/University. Awardees are bound to provide a bank statement as proof of payment.

- 13.5 **No funds may be disbursed after 31 August 2015. Therefore an Awardee who does not present the documents requested by the MASTER it! Office by 30 June 2015, shall forfeit automatically any right for such funds. No appeals shall be considered on this matter.**

13.6 Additional allowances for full time Masters:

13.6.1 Scholarship Awardees studying abroad:

For an Awardee selected by the MASTER it! Board and who is following full-time studies in a foreign HEI/University outside Malta, a **Study Abroad Allowance** of Euro 2,500 per annum is awarded. This amount shall be in addition to the amounts mentioned above, shall be given to cover additional costs related to studying abroad, provided that studying abroad shall mean, resident abroad (that is outside Malta) throughout the programme of studies. Proof of residence abroad must be provided from time to time. The Board reserves the right to ask the applicant for any further evidence of his residing abroad and if such further evidence is not forthcoming, the Board may decide to demand a refund of this allowance if already paid. The Awardee is entitled to such an allowance if s/he presents an Original Boarding Pass, an e-ticket showing details of flight and destination as well as completing the declaration on the form entitled "Confirmation of Residence Form" which is to be filled on signing of the Agreement. For further definition of Study Abroad Allowance, please consult Clause 3.27 of these Regulations.

³ Applicants in possession of a Masters Degree, shall not be awarded marks for this degree.
Master it! Scholarship Scheme 2014

13.6.2 Scholarship Awardees with Children:

For an Awardee with children or otherwise has legal custody of children, a child allowance is payable at the rate of Euro 1,170 per annum for the first child, and Euro 700 per annum for any additional child under the age of 16, provided they are residing with their parent/s. This grant is payable in addition to the amounts above specified. This allowance is paid to one of the awardees when both parents / legal guardians are in receipt of an award from this or any other scholarship scheme by the Malta Government, or partly-financed by the Malta Government. Proof of where is the residence of the child/children has to be presented in order for this allowance to be paid.

13.6.3 Gozo residents:

Awardees who reside in Gozo, following a full-time Masters course at the University of Malta, and awarded a Scholarship, shall be entitled to additional maintenance supplement of Euro 1,050 per annum for the duration of the course. In order to benefit from this additional allowance, applicant shall present a School Leaving Certificate and/or Secondary School Certificate and Profile from any Gozo Secondary School and/or Gozo Sixth Form which certificate/s shows that the applicant attended at least three (3) years in a school in Gozo.

14 General Conditions of Award

14.1 The general conditions in this section apply to all Applicants under the scheme and to all Scholarship Awardees.

Application stage

14.2 Awardees shall be expected to seek prior visa approval (where applicable) for any proposed studies abroad.

14.3 Full time Awardees shall need to seek approval beforehand from the MASTER it! Board of any commitment of employment during the duration of their studies. Unapproved employment shall be deemed to be a breach of these Regulations and the Agreement signed between the Scholarship Awardee and the Project Leader and shall lead to the termination of the Scholarship and the obligation on part of the Awardee to reimburse all the Amounts awarded until such time.

14.4 Without prejudice to Clause 14.3 above, Scholarship Awardees retaining more than twenty (20) hours per week of employment contemporarily to their studies/research shall be deemed to be in breach of their obligation towards full-time studies resulting in a cancellation of the Scholarship award and refund of any Amounts granted by then. For the purpose of these Regulations, a Scholarship Employee who is on approved paid or unpaid leave shall not be deemed to have retained the said hours per week of employment contemporarily to the studies/research. For the avoidance of doubt, any Scholarship Employee who notwithstanding the fact that s/he was granted paid or unpaid leave, engages himself/herself in employment or any other work exceeding twenty (20) hours per week, shall be in breach of this Clause and the provisions of Clause 14.3 shall *mutatis mutandis* apply. Applicants and Scholarship Awardees are to inform and seek approval of the MASTER it! Board in advance. Provided that this Clause does not apply for those students awarded a Scholarship for a Masters programme on a part time basis or distance learning.

14.5 In the case of Awardees who are employed on full-time employment contracts and receiving paid leave of absence or full pay with a reduced load, the grant shall be restricted to cover only tuition fees and bench fees. In such cases, no maintenance grants and no additional allowances shall be allocated.

14.6 Supplementary Scholarship awards or supplementary grants for the same course of programme of studies must be declared at the point of interview or before formally accepting the other awards. All declarations require approval from the MASTER it! Board. Any unapproved supplementary Scholarship awards or supplementary grants additional to MASTER it! for the same course or programme shall be deemed to be in breach of the contract. As a result, cancellation of award and refund of all awards granted by then shall be required by the MASTER it! Board. The Board considers this as fraud and may proceed with a criminal liability suit against such Awardees.

14.6.1 When a Supplementary Scholarship award or Supplementary Grant covers in full Tuition Fee and/or Bench Fee, then MASTER it! shall not cover for the Tuition Fee and/or Bench Fee.

14.6.2 When a Supplementary Scholarship award or Supplementary Grant covers part of the Tuition Fee and/or Bench Fee, then MASTER it! shall cover the remaining part of the Tuition Fee and/or Bench Fee not covered, provided that the thresholds in Article 13 are not exceeded.

14.6.3 When a Supplementary Scholarship award or Scholarship Grant is not intended to cover Tuition Fee and/or Bench Fee, then the MASTER it! Board shall reserve the right to revise the amount of the MASTER it! grant.

14.6.4 When a course at the University of Malta is eligible for any Grant (including Maintenance Grant and/or Stipend) from local funds, the amount of the grant is deducted from the eligible Maintenance Grant under this scheme.

Provisional Award stage

- 14.7 Applicants will be notified of their ranking by the MASTER it! Board.
- 14.8 The Awardee shall be given a draft Agreement that stipulates the terms and conditions of such Award. The MASTER it! Board reserves the right to review and cancel the provisional award if new information reveals any change in information or conditions which renders the provisional Awardee ineligible for the Scholarship Award.
- 14.9 The Awardee shall conclude and sign the Agreement by not later than three (3) months after the commencement of studies or the publication of rankings, whichever comes last unless otherwise justified. Failure to present signed Agreement by the prescribed date shall lead to the award being awarded to others according to their respective ranking. As part of the signing of Agreement, the Awardee shall be required to fill in a number of forms, including, TR/S-9, the Confirmation of Residence Form (for full time scholarship awardees), the Employment Termination Form (where applicable) and other forms that may be communicated by the Project Leader
- 14.10 Shall any conflict arise between the interpretation of clauses contained in the Regulations and the Agreement, it is what is contained within the Regulations which shall prevail.
- 14.11 The Awardee shall be expected to take up the Scholarship award from the date stated by the MASTER it! Board in the Agreement. If for any reason, the Applicant cannot commence his studies on the date stated in the Agreement, or requires a different start date s/he is duty bound to inform the MASTER it! Board as soon as possible and the MASTER it! Board reserves the right, on notification of such intention, to review the start date or else to cancel the Scholarship shall the changes imply postponing the start date in breach of Clause 4.1.12.
- 14.12 The MASTER it! Board reserves the right to publish the names of Applicants provisionally selected for Scholarships on the website of the Ministry for Education and Employment and on the main notice board of the Education Information Unit, Education Building, Floriana. In applying for an award, the Applicant gives consent for such publication in the event that his/her application is successful.

Contracted award stage

- 14.13 The MASTER it! Board reserves the right to publish the names of Scholarship Awardees on the website www.myscholarship.gov.mt.
- 14.14 Scholarships cannot be extended to enable the Applicant to complete an additional or higher qualification other than that for which the selection was made.
- 14.15 The MASTER it! Scheme is co-funded under the ESF Operating Programme II of 2007-2013.
- 14.16 Any intellectual property including patents directly arising from or derived from the research work funded by the Scholarship and carried out by the Applicant shall be covered by an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) agreement that acknowledges that the research work carried out, is partially funded by the European Social Fund.
- 14.17 The MASTER it! Scheme shall not seek to obtain any rights in intellectual property owned by the HEI (including a University) and/or the Awardee.
- 14.18 On award of a Scholarship, the Project Leader of the MASTER it! scheme shall make information obtained available to public authorities for accountability purposes.
- 14.19 Awardees who are found to have given false information or who have in any manner withheld information that would have influenced the awarding of the Scholarship and/or any grants in accordance with these Regulations, shall be immediately disqualified and shall be asked to reimburse any expenses and money granted . The Board may proceed with a criminal liability suit, without prejudice to any civil action for damages, against such Awardees.

Progress and completion

- 14.20 Every six (6) months, Scholarship Awardees shall ask their faculty supervisor to submit to the Project Leader a short statement confirming progress and attendance of the Awardee. Failure to receive this information could lead to a halt in payments of further instalments of the Scholarship.
- 14.21 On completion of the studies, the thesis/copy of research work, as well as a copy of the Transcript and the Official Certificate awarding the Degree shall be submitted to the MASTER it! Board within two (2) months from the award of the qualification.
- 14.22 Copies of all publications by Scholarship Awardees, including a publication arising from the thesis, shall be sent in electronic format to the MASTER it! Board, within thirty (30) days of being made public.
- 14.23 All publications arising from the degree being sponsored by MASTER it! shall reflect the following acknowledgement on the first pages of the thesis: "The research work disclosed in this publication is partially funded by the MASTER it! Scholarship Scheme. The scholarship is part-financed by the European Union – European Social Fund".
- 14.24 Awardees shall be expected to write a minimum of one article on their work/studies in the Maltese public media within sixty (60) days of their graduation, during which they publicly acknowledge that the degree was carried out following the award of a MASTER it! Scholarship and that the scholarship is part-financed by the European Union – European Social Fund. Such articles may be published on the website of the Directorate for Lifelong Learning. Awardees shall present a hard and soft copy of the article.

15 Termination prior to completion of programme

- 15.1 Scholarship Awardees who for any reason discontinue their studies shall inform the MASTER it! Board in writing immediately.
- 15.2 The MASTER it! Board shall on thirty (30) days written notice terminate the award if -
- the Applicant's progress is deemed unsatisfactory by the HEI/University;
 - the Applicant discontinues the Studies; and/or
 - an Applicant is in breach of any provision of these regulations, and does not remedy the breach within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice requiring him/her to do so.
- 15.3 When an Awardee has the Scholarship award terminated under conditions stipulated in Clause 15.2, the MASTER it! Board shall determine the amount to be reimbursed. The refund has to be made within three (3) months of failing the course or failing to complete the course of studies as the case may be.
- 15.4 Awardees who cannot pursue further studies due to unforeseen health situations or exceptional circumstances as approved by the MASTER it! Board shall not be deemed to be in breach of these regulations and shall be required to refund grants on a pro-rata basis as approved by and at the discretion of the MASTER it! Board, upon evaluation of the situation or exceptional circumstance.

In such situations, the Scholarship Awardee shall provide justifiable explanation as to why the course was not completed or why the Scholarship Awardee failed to obtain the qualification. Documented evidence, medical certificates and testimonials must accompany each claim. The MASTER it! Board shall in no way be bound to waiver all claims put forward. The MASTER it! Board reserves the right to appoint its own expert, be it medical or otherwise, to advise and assess the case of the claimant.

16 ESF Publicity Obligations

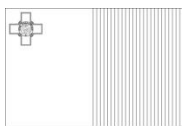
- 16.1 MASTER it! is part-financed by the European Union, Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality Life – European Social Fund. Since the thesis will be financed through Operational Programme II, the ESF logo, the EU Flag, the National Flag of Malta and the co-financing text are to feature of the first page of the thesis, as per layout stated under Section 4.1 of the Visual Identity Guidelines (downloadable from www.ppcd.gov.mt/publicity). Moreover, as per section 14.23, all publication arising from the degree being sponsored by MASTER it! shall reflect the following acknowledgement on the first pages of the thesis: "The research work disclosed in this publication is partially funded by the MASTER it! Scholarship Scheme. The scholarship is part-financed by the European Union – European Social Fund."

17 Information

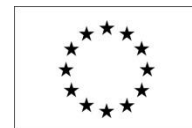
- 17.1 For further queries and information please contact:

Project Leader (MASTER it!)
Directorate for Lifelong Learning
Room 162 / 163, Education Building
Great Siege Road,
Floriana, VLT 2000
Telephone: +356 2598 2815
Fax: +356 2598 2123
Email: masterit.mede@gov.mt
Website: www.myscholarship.gov.mt

Please note that the official website of Master it! is found on www.myscholarship.gov.mt. The MASTER it! Board, nor the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, assume any responsibility for any incorrect information found on other websites as regards the MASTER it! Scholarship Scheme.



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
Scholarships part-financed by the European Union
European Social Fund (ESF)
Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



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