



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Malta Government Undergraduate Scheme

MGUS

This scheme is administered by the
Students' Maintenance Grants' Board

Regulations 2020/2021

These Regulations form one legally binding document
with the Students' Maintenance Grants' Application 2020/2021.

These Regulations DO NOT APPLY for students
who have applied and been accepted under previous schemes.

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Introduction

Over the last decade, Malta has witnessed a significant overall expansion in the higher education sector. In a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative to have a strong participation rate in higher education that promotes intellectual, social and economic growth.

High quality undergraduate education is of central importance to a number of objectives: an ever more highly skilled workforce and the development of new fields of study and specialisation. It is a key to Malta's economic and social progress, and is essential to many people's continuing professional development.

The Maltese Government believes that students may find valid learning pathways in degree courses / programmes that are provided, either through foreign higher education institutions or through recognised private higher education institutions in Malta.

The Malta Government Undergraduate Scheme 2020/2021 aims at providing more opportunities to further the choice of undergraduate degrees/qualifications up to MQF Level 6 and including Bachelor Degrees and vocational qualifications, classified as Level 6 or equivalent under the Malta Qualification Framework (MQF).

Through this scheme Government is extending the financial support available to undergraduate students at the University of Malta, MCAST and the American University of Malta (AUM), to other students undertaking equivalent studies at other institutions, leading to officially recognised local and foreign MQF Level 6 qualification, as per eligibility requirement of the SMG Regulations, i.e., Legal Notice 308/2016.

Students pursuing studies in a foreign / private institution at any other level may request the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board (SMGB) by a letter / e mail and the duly filled in application within the stipulated time, to consider their case for eligibility.

1. Aims and Objectives

The key objectives of this scheme are:

- To encourage more student participation at an undergraduate level in Malta and abroad;
- To promote academic / vocational excellence in the private tuition sector;
- To increase students' choice of degrees / qualifications and institutions.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible under this scheme, applicants shall be students currently registered as **full time** students, **physically on campus**, reading a course of studies at one of the following institutions:

- a licensed private higher education institution or licensed tuition centre in Malta offering courses leading to a recognised MQF Level 6, or;
- a foreign higher education institution offering recognised MQF Level 6 Qualification.

NOTE: This scheme excludes students registered on Distance Learning (full/part time), Part-Time and Blended Courses. Students who change modality of course shall be deemed in breach of these regulations.

For the purposes of this scheme, 'recognised MQF Level 6 qualification' shall mean such qualifications classified as undergraduate / vocational courses equivalent to MQF level 6 by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) within the National Council for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE).

Accredited Courses enlisted by NCFHE at <http://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/register/Pages/register.aspx> shall be exempt from the requirement of the MQRIC verification by the applicant. However, the SMGB reserves the right to request a report if this is deemed necessary for the determination of eligibility. The Students' Maintenance Grants' Board (SMGB) may request the report from the designated Authority responsible for granting warrants on behalf of student.

The SMGB reserves the right to withdraw from the scheme eligibility of certain courses leading to specific degrees/qualifications, at any stage of the application/vetting process.

2.1. Provided that, in order to apply under the MGUS, candidates should additionally meet the following eligibility criteria as established by Legal Notice 308/2016 and its subsequent amendments, namely:

- (a) (i) are Maltese citizens, or have at least one parent being a Maltese citizen; or are nationals of a European Union and, or European Economic Area State or a family member of such European Union and, or European Economic Area national (as defined in the Free Movement of European Union Nationals and their Family Members Order and in the Immigration Regulations, respectively for a European Union and European Economic Area nationals) (provided that such person has obtained permanent residence in Malta in accordance with the Free Movement of European Union Nationals and their Family Members Order and with the Immigration Regulations respectively for European Union and European Economic Area nationals); or be a national of a European Union and, or European Economic Area State who is in Malta exercising his Treaty rights as a worker, self-employed person or person retaining such status in accordance with the Free Movement of European Union Nationals and their Family Members Order; or be a third country national that has been granted refugee and, or long term residence status under the Status of Long-Term Residents (Third Country Nationals) Regulations;
 - (ii) have resided in Malta for a period of not less than five consecutive years immediately prior to the commencement of the relative course of studies:
Provided that for the sole purpose of calculating the five consecutive years requirement under these regulations, any period of time during which the student would have been residing outside Malta due to medical treatment, or study abroad, or any other purpose that the Board may consider acceptable shall not be considered as residing outside Malta; and
 - (iii) have completed their term of compulsory education;
- (b) are attending the higher education course regularly and making satisfactory progress; and
- (c) are not in full-time employment or in part-time employment working more than twenty (20) hours weekly;

- (d) applicant must intend to follow the course full-time, be physically on campus and progress on full-time mode to completion. Students who change modality during duration of course will be deemed in breach of these regulations and liable to refund all or part of the Students' Maintenance Grants received, as determined by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board.
- (e) applicant shall have satisfied all the necessary entry requirements of the degree / qualification awarding institution by the application submission deadline, the 30th November, 2020 at noon CET.
- (f) applicants have not been accepted for stipend from any other scheme/scholarship. Provided that students who are accepted for funds from any other scheme/scholarship after submission of application, must inform the SMGB immediately in writing on maintenancegrants.mede@gov.mt. Any double funding shall render students liable to refund all or part of the Students' Maintenance Grants received as determined by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board.

2.2 (a) Applicant shall be in possession of certified copies of the qualification certificates and the classification thereof by application deadline the 30th November, 2020 at noon CET. It is the responsibility of applicants, in possession of qualifications awarded by foreign post-secondary or tertiary education institutions, to produce an evaluation report on comparability of qualifications issued by the MQRIC. A copy of the said report issued by the MQRIC, or the designated Authority in case of warrants, should be uploaded to the online application form. The MQRIC original report is to be kept by the applicant and presented, only for verification purposes. Candidates not in possession of this report may still apply, provided that they submit a copy of the report together with all the requested documentation to the SMGB as soon as it becomes available and in any case *by not later* than one (1) month from the closing date of the call for applications, unless a special concession is granted by the SMGB.

- (b) an applicant who has already started the course but has not yet applied under a previous scheme may apply under this scheme, provided that:
 - (i) applicant who has benefitted from or has applied for any other scholarships/grants is to disclose this information in the Application or after submission of application, by e mail. Eligibility in such case is determined by the Board. In the event that the Board subsequently discovers that applicant failed to disclose to the Board of any other scholarship/s/grants, the applicant would be automatically disqualified from this Scheme and would have to refund all grants received.
 - (ii) applicant is NOT in possession of /in the process of being awarded a degree/qualification at the same MQF level (i.e. Level 6) or higher than the degree applicant is applying for.
- (c) **Applicants in possession of a degree/qualification at or higher than MQF Level 6 shall not be eligible to apply.**
- (d) Applicant must be available, to commence full time studies by 31st December, 2020, and to subsequently continue in full-time attendance, physically on campus uninterruptedly, for the duration of the intended course up till completion.
- (e) The SMGB may, in exceptional cases, consider courses starting at a later date but not later than 31st March 2021.

3. Value of Awards

The MGUS shall support students reading full-time studies leading to their first degree/qualification at MQF Level 6 as specified in these Regulations. The awards are classified as follows:

- I. **General award:** students reading courses leading to a degree/qualification at MQF Level 6 shall be entitled, for the entire duration of the course, to the grants as indicated in Section A of Annex 1 hereunder.
- II. **Prescribed courses:** Students reading courses equivalent to the prescribed degree/qualification listed in Section B of Annex 1 hereunder shall be entitled to an award as indicated in the same schedule, for the entire duration of the course.
- III. **National High Priority Courses:** Students reading courses considered as National High Priority degree/qualification shall be entitled, for the entire duration of the course, to grants as indicated in Section C of Annex 1.

The courses falling under these categories shall be determined by the Minister for Education and Employment on the advice of the SMGB.

Undergraduate students from Gozo studying in recognised private institutions **in Malta** being eligible for a grant awarded under this scheme shall be automatically eligible, for the duration of their course, to an additional subsidy from the Ministry for Gozo, equivalent to that subsidy granted to Gozitan students attending the University of Malta, MCAST and American University of Malta. Proof must be provided that all lectures are delivered in Malta and the applicant has to be physically present in Malta for such lectures.

Students applying under this Scheme **may not** apply for the Supplementary Maintenance Grant.

4. Entitlements

The scheme shall award:

- (a) A One-Time Grant for First Year students at the commencement of their studies,
- (b) An Initial Grant to all students payable for every year of the course;
- (c) Ten four-weekly stipends payable between December and August every academic year.

All Grants and Stipends are credited directly to the bank accounts specified in the online application.

5. Selection Process

The role of the SMGB is to verify information submitted by applicants, and to assess the eligibility of applicants in accordance with pre-established criteria, as established by both the Legal Notice 308/2016 and these Regulations.

Each application shall be considered as follows:

- a. The SMGB itself shall consider the application.
- b. Where necessary the SMGB shall appoint an expert in the subject area concerned to evaluate the application and take into consideration the advice submitted by appointed experts.

The Minister for Education and Employment may be consulted and may give instructions in writing, to interpret or give additional rulings for unforeseen circumstances that may arise.

6. Choice of Institution

Many courses have strict admission deadlines and applicants must take the necessary steps to secure admission to their preferred institutions in advance of any application under the MGUS. Applicants shall be responsible to check such admission requirements carefully prior to submitting their application.

7. Administration of the Malta Government Undergraduate Scheme

The MGUS shall be administered by the SMGB within the Ministry for Education and Employment.

The SMGB set up by the Minister for Education and Employment shall operate the process of selection. The SMGB shall be responsible for all matters concerning the selection of awardees. The Board shall also oversee that the awardees and the institutions comply with the scheme Regulations and the Students' Maintenance Grants' Legal Notice. The Students' Maintenance Grants' Board shall also decide on matters of refund, including when and how much to refund in case of discontinuation of course, termination/resignation and/or change on modality of course,

8. Attendance, Progression and Graduation Records

The SMGB may at its discretion, request course attendance records from the institutions attended by awardees under this Scheme, limitedly for the purposes of compliance with these Regulations. Progression reports may be requested at end of each semester.

At the end of their course of studies, all awardees are to submit a copy of the graduation certificate to the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board via email. Failure to do so, the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board may demand that the awardee refunds all or part of the funds already received. This documentation must reach the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board by the end of the respective calendar year.

9. Application Form

Interested candidates are invited to apply using the appropriate online application on www.education.gov.mt/studentsgrants. **Applications must be submitted annually.**

Documents to be uploaded with the online application shall include the following:

- i) One (1) copy of the Unconditional Letter of Acceptance from the University/Local tuition centre (where applicable). The Letter of Acceptance shall include
 - the commencement date of the course
 - the end date of the course
 - the MQF Level at the point of entry
 - the MQF Level at the end of the course
 - confirmation that the course is on full-time basis *and*
 - modality of course applied for
- ii) One (1) copy of MQRIC verification report (where applicable);
- iii) One (1) copy of documents to satisfy eligibility conditions in 2(a) of the Regulations including proof of five (5) year residence in Malta preceding the commencement of course. These documents should include one (1) copy of the secondary School Leaving Certificate and one (1) copy of the Jobsplus Employment History;
- iv) One (1) copy of contract of work indicating the hours of work per week, if applicable and

- v) One (1) copy of the receipt of payment for first payment of tuition fees. In case of courses where no tuition fee is paid, the student is to submit proof from his/her University / Institution stating that the student has started his/her course as scheduled.

10. Application Process

Supporting documents must all be uploaded with the online application. The SMGB **shall NOT** accept any documents sent by e mail or by mail.

11. General Conditions of Award

- (a) Applicants following courses leading to a degree / qualification conditional to obtaining intermediary qualifications classified at a level lower than MQF Level 6, shall be entitled to grants as determined by the SMGB in line with Legal Notice 308/2016.
- (b) Applicants who are required to repeat one (1) year or do an additional year in their chosen course of studies shall be entitled to stipend only during the repeat/additional year. Students who choose to discontinue /interrupt their studies to continue by a determined date as agreed with the relative educational institution, shall request approval from the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board. It shall remain at the Board's discretion whether or not to approve of such an extension or whether is shall deem student as having discontinued his/her course and request refund of all Students' Maintenance Grants received or part thereof. Any change in institution must be approved by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board.
- (c) Awardees whose progress, as assessed through periodical assessment procedures, is deemed to be unsatisfactory, or who are not attending their course regularly, shall forfeit the right to receive the award or part thereof until such time as the Head of the Educational Institution, Institute, or Faculty of the University concerned certifies that these students have resumed regular attendance and are making satisfactory progress. In this respect the SMGB may demand that the Grant awardee refunds all or part of the funds already received.
- (d) The fixed four-weekly part of the award is paid during the academic year, including the Christmas and Easter recesses, but excluding the summer recess. Stipends are also not paid when a student is following a sandwich course and is being remunerated for his/her placement.
- (e) Where the structure of particular courses so warrants, the Minister for Education and Employment may approve the payment of an award during the summer recess.
- (f) Applicants progressing from a diploma at MQF level 5 to a degree / qualification at MQF Level 6, or from a general degree to an honours shall not be deemed to be following a second course for the purposes of these Regulations. Students already benefiting from an MGUS, cannot re-apply under this new scheme. MGUS Regulations 2020/2021 are not applicable for students who are already benefitting under previous Malta Government Undergraduate Schemes, in which cases the terms of the Regulations for their particular scheme are still applicable.
- (g) The financial aspect of this Scheme shall be administered by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board (SMGB).
- (h) Awardees must inform the SMGB in writing, **at application stage, every academic year**, of any commitment of employment. Awardees are allowed to retain part-time employment up to and not exceeding 20 weekly hours.

- (i) Awardees who retain full-time or more than 20 hours of employment or engagement on a contract of service contemporarily to their studies shall be deemed to be in breach of these Regulations, resulting in cancellation of the Award and shall be obliged to refund any funds already received by them. Applicants and scholars are responsible for informing the SMGB of any such situations in advance. For all intents and purposes Awardees will not be deemed to be in breach of these Regulations if they engage on full-time employment between the 1st July and the 30th September of any academic year of their course. Students pursuing a sandwich course and not receiving remuneration for their placement shall also be entitled to receive students' maintenance grants during the academic year.
- (j) Awardees in Full-time employment, who, **unless they have approved unpaid leave**, are on paid leave of employment for the purpose of undergoing a course of studies, or who enter into a contract with an employer whereby they bind themselves to work for that employer following the completion of their course, and who would therefore be benefiting from that salary or the agreed remuneration, shall not be eligible for Students' Maintenance Grants under this Scheme.
- (k) Applicants who are public service/sector employees on full-time employment contracts and receiving paid leave of absence shall not be eligible to the scheme.
- (l) Applicants whose studies commence later than the 31th December, 2020 but not later than 31st March 2021, shall request concession in writing from the SMGB. Students shall not be entitled to any grants prior to the commencement date of the course.
- (m) Applicants who apply before the applications deadline, but receive the MQRIC verification report after the official start date of their course, shall be entitled to all the grants applicable from the official start date of their course.
- (n) Any other award or grant or assistance given (or a combination of both) by the Government of Malta or any other institution (whether public or private, local or foreign, or a combination of such, including the Arts Scholarship and the Sports Scholarship) to support the applicant/awardee for the same course/programme of studies must be declared before formally accepting the Award, grant or assistance (or any combination) under this Scheme. The SMGB shall decide whether to award or withdraw the award of Students' Maintenance Grants or refund thereof.
- (o) The Students' Maintenance Grants' Board reserves the right to confirm the information submitted in the application with other authorities and to publish the names of successful applicants. In applying for Students' Maintenance Grants under this Scheme, applicant gives his/her consent for such verification and processing of details as may be required.

12. Additional Requirements

- (a) Awardees shall be notified by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board.
- (b) Scholars who do not start their studies by the course commencement date shall forfeit their right to the Award. In that event scholars are to immediately inform the SMGB in writing. Scholars who discontinue their studies after the commencement of the course are requested to communicate their resignation in writing to the SMGB stating the reason/s for such resignation and in this case scholars shall be requested by SMGB to refund all or part of the Grant funds received.
- (c) Awardees reading courses of more than one academic / vocational year shall ask their faculty supervisor to submit a yearly short statement confirming their progress and attendance. This must be uploaded to the online application for the Students' Maintenance Grants. Failure to

apply annually and submit such a statement, shall automatically lead to a halt in further payment of funds. Student will be considered as having terminated his/her studies. Students who fail to submit proof of their progression before the end of November of the same academic year would only be eligible from date of submission of proof of progression, and no backdated funds would be awarded.

- (d) Awardees who opt to change the University or Institution before the completion of studies, shall not receive any funds if the new University or Institution demands that the awardee repeats more than one year of the studies carried out at the previous University or Institution.
- (e) Awardees who require a study break are to inform the SMGB in writing. Grant funds shall be suspended until the awardee informs the SMGB in writing that studies have resumed. If the break is of more than one academic year, the student shall be considered as having terminated his/her studies and shall be requested to refund all/part of the funds received to date. Students must apply online at the commencement of every academic year upon continuation of studies.
- (f) Awardees are awarded an Students' Maintenance Grant to obtain **one** degree / qualification at MQF Level 6. Funding will not be extended to enable the awardee to complete an additional or higher qualification other than that stated in the application. Funding under this scheme covers a maximum of 4 years. A repeating year during which students may be awarded stipend rates only, is not included in this 4-year period. A special concession is being granted to High Priority Courses for the duration of the whole course.

13. Queries

For further queries, please contact One Stop Shop officials at the Ministry for Education and Employment. Alternatively, contact EduServizz.gov via email: servizz@gov.mt

Website: www.education.gov.mt/studentsgrants

Telephone: *Freephone 153*

Annex 1

A. General Courses (including vocational/professional courses) at MQF Level 6

Students who, under the terms and conditions established in these Regulations, are following a Full-time course (MQF Level 6), qualify for the following award listed below, except for students following Prescribed Courses or National High Priority Courses;

- (i) A fixed rate of €90.93 every four weeks' covering period between the 1st of October and the 30th of June; payable period December – August.
- (ii) A sum of €565.87 per academic year to partly cover expenses related to educational material and equipment;
- (iii) A one-time grant of €465.87 payable in the first year.

B. Prescribed Degree at MQF Level 6

Students who are following a prescribed full-time undergraduate degree course (MQF Level 6) shall qualify for the following awards:

- (i) A fixed rate of €159.12 every four weeks' payable between the 1st of October and the 30th of June; payable period December – August.
- (ii) A sum of €798.81 per academic year to partly cover expenses related to educational material and equipment;
- (iii) A one-time grant of €698.81 payable in the first year.

C. National High Priority Courses

Students who, under the terms and conditions established in these Regulations are granted a monetary grant and are following a full-time undergraduate degree course defined as National High Priority by SMGB, qualify for the following award for the duration of their course of studies.

- (i) A fixed rate of €319.20 every four weeks' payable between the 1st October and the 30th of June; payable period December – August.
- (ii) A sum of €798.81 per academic year to partly cover expenses related to educational material and equipment;
- (iii) A one-time grant of €698.81 payable in the first year.

Other information:

- a. **Stipend rates are revised every January by a proportionate rate of the COLA increase.**
- b. **Updated lists of Prescribed and High Priority Courses are approved by the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board and are published separately in the Students' Maintenance Grants' Board website.**