CASE STUDY: FINAL VERSION

Version of Carmel Borg (University of Malta, MT)

Visited by Mary Claire Halvorson (Goldsmiths University of London, UK)

University Factsheet

University Title	L-Università ta' Malta (University of Malta)
Location/country	Msida, Malta (Main campus), Valletta and Gozo (secondary campuses)
Public or private	Public
Year when the institution was founded	Collegium Melitense (1592) University of Malta (1769)
Number of overall students of the institution	10,000
Degree/non-degree	Degree
Number of academic/research and non-academic/administrative staff	Resident academics: 632 Visiting teaching staff: 535 Junior College teaching staff (pre-tertiary institution run by University): 196 Non-academic: 753
Number of faculties	13
Kind of degrees offered (if possible including EQF)	Three-cycle degrees (Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.Ds), postgraduate diplomas and certificates
Date of the Case Study	March 2010

University-specific best practices in relation to the 10 Commitments

Commitments	University of Malta
1 Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies	Section 4.2
2 Providing education and learning to a diversified student population	Section 4.2 Section 6 Section 8
3 Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners	
4 Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services	
5 Recognising prior learning	
6 Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture	
7 Strenghtening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning	
8 Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students	Section 5
9 Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes	Section 6
10 Acting as role models of lifelong learning institution	

Index of Categories

1. Basic Information

Institution: University of Malta..

Country: Malta..

Staff involved with the Case Study of the institution:

1	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email
	Carmel Borg	Associate Professor	carmel.borg@um.edu.mt
2	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email
	Alfred Vella	Professor and Pro Rector	alfred.j.vella@um.edu.mt
3	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email
	Peter Mayo	Professor and Head of Dept.	peter.mayo@um.edu.mt

(Please provide more lines if necessary)

Staff and other stakeholders involved in the case study preparation of the University:

1	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email
	Carmel Borg	Associate Professor	carmel.borg@um.edu.mt
2	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email
3	First and last Name	Job Title/role	Email

(Please provide more lines if necessary)

2. Brief Analysis of the Case-Study process (key-questions):

- To what extent was the report discussed within the institution?

- How would you describe the Case Study process (what were positive aspects and encountered difficulties)?

The discussion took place with two key players - a senior member of staff with several years of experience at several levels of the institution, including Senate, and one of the current Pro-Rectors, responsible for academic affairs at University. Both are strategically placed to engage in a reflection on LLL at the University of Malta - The former academic is an expert in adult education with a research agenda in LLL, while the latter is deeply involved in decision making re academic programmes.

The process took the shape of a healthy reflection on current LLL provision at University.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

3. Universities LLL-Vision& Mission& goals

3.1. Please briefly describe the overall University Vision[1] concerning ULLL

3.2. What is the Mission[2] of the institution towards ULLL?

3.3. What are the goals[3] of the institution towards ULLL? What is the schedule for these goals?

3.4. Amongst these goals, please choose the 3 LLL priorities for the next coming years until 2015

3.1 Vision: Outstanding Past/ Bright Future

3.2. Mission: to develop and sustain a dynamic relationship between education, democracy and work, by bringing analysis and empirical research to bear on issues that are topical in Malta and elsewhere. The University is also committed to maintaining a high national and international research profile.

3.3. Goals/schedule: The degree courses at the University are designed to produce highly qualified professionals, with experience of research, who will play key roles in industry, commerce and public affairs in general.

---

[1] Vision: Defines in a few words the desired or intended future state of the institution in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction in a long term view.

[2] **Mission**: defines the fundamental purpose of the institution, basically describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision.

[3] **Goals**: what do we want really? There are a lot of 'similar' words in a strategic planning activity: desired end states, plans, policies, goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and actions.

3.4. Top 3 LLL priorities: to increase the number of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels; to serve industry, commerce and public affairs through custom-made continuous professional development courses; and to reach out to the community through its commercial wing (MUHC).

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

4. **LLL-path of your institution**

- **How can the process and progress on the LLL-path of your institution over the last 10 years be described? How would a time graph look like with the main decisions and a short description of them?**
- **What were key incidents/highlights/achievements during these 10 years?**
- **What are the obstacles and challenges met (solved/unsolved problems/failures) during these 10 years?**
- **Which kind of organisation has been built in structural/personnel terms?**

Highlights

These last ten years have witnessed a constant increase in the student population of the University of Malta, the only public university on the island, particularly in the number of students engaged in part-time, post-graduate studies. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that the country has reached a stage where a Bachelor degree is perceived by many as insufficient in the context of a highly competitive society and economy. The most important employers in the country are also pegging specialised courses and postgraduate studies with higher salaries and promotions, thereby increasing the demand for short, specialised courses and postgraduate studies. Moreover, graduate, Maltese citizens, more than ever before, are venturing abroad. This need is encouraging Maltese citizens to equip themselves with postgraduate degrees in order to competitive in the international labour market.

The government's decision to continue to consider education as a social good, despite a slowing economy, meant that free, stipended education at Bachelor's level has been maintained together with reasonable and accessible fees for postgraduate studies.

Given the social commitment towards higher education, courses which are perceived as socially and culturally significant are generally maintained despite their apparent financial unsustainability.

The Government, through its generous scholarship scheme (STEPS), has encouraged postgraduate studies, particularly at the Ph.D level.

Extending the stipend to students accessing LLL through the maturity clause has opened opportunities for further studies to individuals who have traditionally stayed away from further studies due to financial reasons.

Over the past ten years, the university has extended its repertoire of part-time, Bachelor degree courses. Early Childhood Education has recently joined a list of undergraduate courses offered on part-time basis. Such courses open up new LLL paths to different categories of people who decide, mid-way through their life or career, to upgrade their qualifications, enter the labour market or change employment.

Bilateral and multilateral agreements between university and other international universities have increased the opportunities for postgraduate studies locally. These joint ventures, often resulting in joint degrees, are filling a void in the postgraduate scene in Malta.

Transferability of qualifications from vocational institutions to the university is slowly becoming a reality. This fact has helped a number of individuals to transfer to university following completion of a qualification elsewhere.

The university has recently opened its doors to the general public, making it possible for individuals to attend single study-units free of charge.

Challenges

The main challenge in the LLL sector is for university to venture deeper into recognising prior learning as a legitimate qualification for furthering one's studies. Many faculties are still sceptical in this regard.

Structures

To date, the university does not have a formal structure that is fully dedicated to the promotion of LLL. The impetus for LLL provision often comes from individuals within faculties.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

5. LLL-future at your institution

- **How do you see the future perspective of your institution?**
- **How do you plan to reach your goals (described under 3.3.)**
- **What are the next steps?**
- **What are the conditions to meet?**
- **Which trends have an influence on your institution?**

There is a clear commitment on the university's part to expand access to LLL. This commitment is fuelled by the government's vision 2015 which includes a substantial increase in the number of citizens following post-secondary and tertiary education.

The current trend of extending the repertoire of post-graduate studies and of short, specialised and custom-made courses will continue.

The university will exploit its excellent, digital infrastructure to offer digital and blended courses, targeting local as well as international LLL needs.

The university will venture further into popular education, reaching out to communities through its radio (Campus FM), the virtual environment and through courses within the community.

The University of the Third Age (U3E) will continue to service the educational needs of the post-60 category and to hopefully popularise part of its curriculum.

Industry, services and the public sector will continue to create demands for LLL at university.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

6. Funding systems of the institution and the LLL activities

- **Please explain how is your University's definition of LLL – do you follow a more holistic perspective for the whole institution or do you have in financial terms different budgets allocated? If you have not a separate LLL funding stream, then please give the information on the total University budget and give an indication on how you define and measure in your University (also including services & provisions)**

The funding mechanism of the UOM remains largely unaltered. There is almost complete reliance on State funds. A lump sum (approx. 95% of the university's budget) is devolved by government, through the yearly budget and administered by the university's council. There is no separate funding for LLL activities.

EU structural funds and other programmes such as FP7 have had some impact on the university's ability to improve its LLL capacity.

The quality and quantity of research in Malta has increased thanks to greater access to international funds as well as better provision of governmental funds. Spending on Research and Development has increased because of the need of the economy to diversify and specialise, rather than because of the needs of HE, which to date is receiving only limited tangible funding for R&D.

As regards to quantity of research, the available data (Eurostat and NSO) indicate a stable picture, showing some improvement for the 2004-2006 period, decreasing slightly in 2007.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

Please try to fill out the two tables below:

Table 1:

	Please specify the year	University's Total Budget	LLL Total Budget	Research Budget
Approximately-10y ago (e.g. 2000)		**Euros 23,449,653**		
Approx. 5y ago		**Euros 37,320,00**		
Current		**Euros 49, 000,000**		
Future				

Table 2:

Sources of income	Current University's Total Budget	LLL Total Budget
Public	… %	… %
Student fees	… %	… %
Industry	… %	… %
Research	… %	… %
Other (please specify)	… %	… %
Total	100%	100%

- **What are the allocation procedures within the institution? Who decides what and how? In general? Who controls the income?**

- **Approximately what percentage of the budget could be used by the institutional leadership to implement new initiatives?**

- **What does the institution perceive as strengths and weaknesses in terms of its funding, and how could weaknesses be remedied and strengths be further enhanced?**

- **Which trends/future perspectives you see for the funding streaming?**

As indicated above, there is no separate funding for LLL activities. Public funds are administered by council which has a majority of government nominees sitting on it. The allocation is based on projections made by the different faculties and entities operating within university.

Over-dependence on state funds is perceived by many as a major weakness.

University will be pressured into generating more alternative funding to supplement public funds.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

7. Institution's/ LLL-Staff

1. **Do you have staff who are described as LLL staff – if so, please describe their functions and positions**
- **How many are internals/externals?**
- **How many full and part time staff?**
- **How many persons are involved in total with the LLL-provisions in your institution?**

The context of a public university operating in a small state is generally very different from that of a university located in a large state. In our context, the typical academic is expected to perform multiple tasks at different levels. In fact, in the literature dealing with small states we often refer to academics as multifunctional intellectuals. One of the 'symptoms' of such a fact of university life in a small state is the academics' teaching load. If one takes the Faculty of Education as an example, it is not uncommon to find academics teaching and supervising at Bachelor's, Master's, PGCE, diploma, certificate and Ph.D levels. In other words, the smallness of the institutions does not allow for division of labour by academics.

In all, the University is serviced by 315 visiting academics and 639 full-time academics.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

8. Institutions/ LLL-Target groups & Services

- **At which target groups are your provisions aiming?**

- **Which are the most interesting target groups for your institution and why?**

- **Which kind of support services are established for the target groups and how effective are they enhancing their achievements?**

Groups targeted by University:

Civil servants aiming for higher ranks

Managers interested in formalising their experience

Professionals who want to further specialise in their field

Educators and paraprofessionals engaged in continuous professional development

Citizens looking for a change in career or for re-entry into the labour market

Home-bound workers who want to further their studies

The general public taking courses for leisure purposes

Most interesting groups:

From an economic point of view, the most financially-viable courses are the ones related to management, marketing and finance. Science and technology related courses are also in demand. The latter categories feature prominently in the government's 2015 vision and tend to be privileged over other areas of study

---

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

9. In depths SWOT-Analysis[4]

- **On the basis of the 3 priority goals, please complete a SWOT Analysis to assess your institution's capacity to further develop into a LLLU (please provide your institutions definition of a LLLU or give a explanation to which concept you refer (BeFlex+/LLL- Charter, etc)**

---

[4] A SWOT analysis must start with defining a desired end state or objective. The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving the objective. These come from within the company's unique value chain. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories: internal factors (S W) and external factors (O T):

In view of the priority goals mentioned earlier, my assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is the following:

Strengths

Commitment towards LLL

Education still treated as a social good

LLL constitutes a national vision

Free education up to Bachelor's level

Fees, where applicable, are relatively low across the board

Weaknesses

Budget heavily dependent on government funds. Most of the budget is taken up by salaries and stipends.

Under-utilisation of the digital infrastructure for e-learning initiatives

Slow in recognising prior learning at entry point

No separate infrastructure or coordinated action for the promotion of LLL

Opportunities

Malta still has one of the lowest participatory rates at post-secondary level and beyond and, therefore, has great potential for growth

Excellent digital infrastructure that awaits exploitation

Bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with international institutions on the increase

Great demand for popular education

Demands for ongoing training are growing

Homemakers, mostly women, are increasingly looking to further their studies

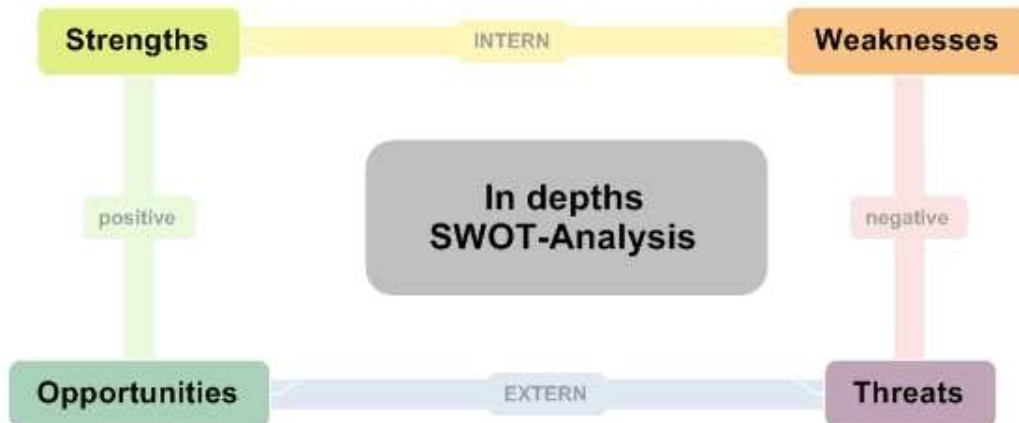Retired citizens are increasingly searching for educational programmes

Threats

Competition from international and local institutions

Viability and sustainability of certain programmes

Global and local economic situation

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

10. Conclusion

- **please prepare a conclusion which summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and offers a specific action plan to remedy weaknesses and to develop strengths**
- **please draft an overall sketch of your top 5 "Do's and Don'ts" in the construction of a LLLU**

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)