



wblchampion

Maltese National Report 2025



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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the national findings of the WBL Champion Project in Malta, a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at strengthening the implementation and integration of Work-Based Learning (WBL) across European education systems. The Maltese national report draws on both desk research and field engagement, including in-depth analysis of national policy frameworks, institutional best practices, and primary data collected through a structured stakeholder survey.

Malta has laid a solid foundation for WBL, supported by key instruments such as the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (2018), the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), and the regulatory work of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). In addition, national strategies such as the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2023–2030 and Malta’s Economic Vision 2021–2031 prioritise skills development, industry-education alignment, and lifelong learning, all of which contribute to the enabling environment for WBL.

As part of the fieldwork for this report, a stakeholder survey gathered responses from 30 individuals across sectors including higher education, industry, public service, and civil society. The survey explored themes such as awareness of WBL policy, employer involvement, digital readiness, and perceptions of implementation challenges. It also served to validate the relevance of the WBL Champion Project's objectives in the local context.

Key findings of the report include:

- A strong recognition of WBL as a valuable model for bridging the gap between education and employment, but persistent challenges in employer engagement (43.3%) and curriculum alignment (63.3%).
- Significant gaps in digital readiness, with 70% of respondents unaware of existing WBL digital tools, despite 90% confirming their importance.
- An urgent need for clearer communication, simplification of administrative processes, and wider access to funding for WBL coordination and mentorship.
- Encouraging interest in stakeholder participation, with 86.7% of respondents expressing willingness to engage in future WBL initiatives such as workshops or policy dialogues.

The report also showcases four national best practices that exemplify successful WBL implementation in Malta:

- KNIGHTS (formerly CMBS): Embedding WBL across accredited higher education programmes through flexible, hybrid models.

- EY Malta: Demonstrating WBL integration in a corporate environment via internships, virtual academies, and early career pathways.
- JA Malta: Promoting entrepreneurial WBL through experiential programmes and school-business partnerships.
- MFHEA: Playing a central role as regulator by developing WBL guidelines, ensuring programme quality, and aligning Malta's system with European frameworks.

Based on the evidence gathered, the report outlines nine strategic recommendations, including expanding employer incentives, improving digital infrastructure, developing CPD for mentors, and strengthening awareness campaigns. These are not presented as criticisms of the current system but as enhancements to build on Malta's growing momentum in WBL integration.

The WBL Champion Project serves as a catalyst for advancing this agenda, by piloting innovative practices, facilitating dialogue between academia and industry, and providing comparative insights that can inform both national policy and EU-level collaboration. The conclusions and recommendations of this report will contribute directly to the project's transnational deliverables and shape Malta's role as a proactive WBL champion across Europe.

2 Introduction

This report is part of the work undertaken in the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Work-Based-Learning Champion". The project seeks to elevate Work-Based Learning (WBL) as a leading methodology within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by developing a structured framework for effective implementation of this practice across the EU. Recognising that WBL bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and labour market needs, this project aims to enhance the integration of real-world experiences within educational curricula, ensuring students acquire job-relevant skills and greater job readiness.

Although WBL policies exist within EU's educational frameworks, inconsistencies in quality and implementation in the various countries of the Union hinder widespread adoption in HEIs. To address this, WBL Champion carries out a regulatory analysis of WBL policies, redesign HE courses that are currently lacking WBL practices, develop a quality assurance toolkit and design three Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses to support HEI staff and industry mentors. Additionally, an online platform will foster collaboration among WBL practitioners and pilot testing in partner countries will validate the effectiveness of redesigned curricula with embedded WBL methodologies.

The project's main targets are HEIs academics, students and staff, as well as companies and industry mentors that will be engaged with the project to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of WBL practices.

2.1 Objectives of the WBL Champion Project

Objective 1: Enhance the digital competencies of HEI professionals, as a way to integrate digital tools into WBL practices, which will, in turn, support the digital transformation in Education. This will empower educators to effectively incorporate technology within WBL programmes, aligning with EU priorities for digital readiness.

Objective 2: Provide accessible, innovative tools for HEI staff, students, companies and industry mentors. By developing user-friendly resources, this project will ensure that all participants in WBL programmes can confidently engage with digital tools, fostering a streamlined approach to WBL across institutions.

Objective 3: Redesign six existing HEI courses to incorporate WBL within curricula, directly addressing the labour market's demand for graduates with practical experience. By embedding WBL in partner HEIs, this project will facilitate transitions for students into the workforce and strengthen the alignment between HE and VET programmes.

Through these objectives, the WBL Champion project will create a unified framework and tools to support HEIs and industry leaders, thus driving a more systematic and impactful use of WBL in higher education.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives the project is divided into Work Packages, each with their specific set of objectives. The project starts by establishing a strong foundation for enhancing WBL practices within higher education by analysing existing WBL policies in EU partner countries (Malta, Italy, Portugal, and Ireland) and at the European level and applying these insights to the redesign of HEI courses. This Work Package, hereinafter referred to as WP2, is essential to ensure that HEIs effectively integrate WBL into their curricula, thereby improving learning outcomes, fostering relevant skill development and aligning educational programmes with labour market demands.

The project's first main deliverable is the report on "Identification of National and EU WBL policies". It will be core output of the project's WP2 and it will provide detailed insights into existing WBL policies and practices across partner countries, as well as identify best practices that are currently being used in both HEIs and companies. This report is crucial for the project as it will serve as the basis for developing strategies, course designs and digital tools that align with the needs of HEI instructors and student, as well as guiding the effective implementation

of WBL-integrated curricula, which will be the main focus of the succeeding phase of the project.

2.2 Scope of this report

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the current landscape of Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. It examines national policies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional strategies that shape the implementation of WBL across different educational and training contexts. The report highlights notable best practices adopted by key stakeholders, including education providers, regulatory bodies, and employers. It also identifies existing gaps, systemic challenges, and areas requiring further development or reform. Through this analysis, the report aims to support the enhancement of WBL provision in Malta by offering a set of evidence-based recommendations. These recommendations are intended to inform policymakers, practitioners, and industry leaders in strengthening WBL systems, increasing stakeholder engagement, and promoting the wider uptake and sustainability of WBL initiatives in the country.

2.3 Methodology

In addition to primary stakeholder engagement, this report is underpinned by an extensive review of recent national literature published over the past three years. Notably, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) has produced two cornerstone publications that have shaped the national understanding of Work-Based Learning (WBL): the *Scoping Report on WBL* (2022), which offers a foundational analysis of Malta's WBL landscape and outlines key policy considerations, and the *Guidelines for Quality Assurance for Courses that include a Work-Based Learning Component* (2023), which provide a structured framework for ensuring academic and experiential quality across WBL programmes.

These documents were complemented by a review of strategic developments from educational institutions and national bodies. MCAST's recent inclusion in the EU4Dual Alliance marks a significant step forward in Malta's commitment to transnational, dual-model education. This initiative reflects a deep integration of industry and academia, and introduces dual Master's and Doctorate programmes co-funded by the EU under Erasmus+, further signalling the country's active role in European-level innovation in work-based learning.

Further policy context was drawn from the *National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2023–2030*, launched by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Employability (MEYR). The strategy reinforces WBL as a key pillar in diversifying adult learning approaches and improving inclusion, particularly for low-skilled and vulnerable populations. It promotes WBL as a crucial

vehicle to achieve Malta's national targets in employment, education participation, and poverty reduction.

To ensure that this report reflects current realities and institutional practices, MFHEA, EY Malta, and JA Malta were also approached directly. These engagements offered an opportunity to validate and expand upon the findings from the literature, while gathering practical insights from the regulatory, industry, and youth development perspectives. The feedback gathered from these key stakeholders has been instrumental in shaping the analysis and recommendations put forward.

Finally, national data and commentary from the Eurydice platform helped situate Malta's reforms within a broader European policy environment, highlighting the country's evolving approach to vocational education, adult learning, and skills development.

Together, these sources form the backbone of the desk and field research, and have directly informed the design, stakeholder selection, and thematic analysis within this country report.

2.4 Importance and Benefits of WBL

Work-Based Learning (WBL) directly addresses the disconnect between academic learning and the demands of the labour market. By integrating practical experience with theoretical knowledge, WBL provides students with a comprehensive learning experience that prepares them for real-world challenges in their respective fields.

As underscored by the European Training Foundation, Work-Based Learning (WBL) offers significant benefits across various stakeholders, enhancing education, employment, and policy-making:¹

Companies benefit greatly from WBL as it fosters environments where continuous learning is encouraged, leading to increased innovation and productivity. This not only improves product quality and customer service but also reduces employee turnover by making jobs more engaging and thereby reducing recruitment and training costs.

For learners, WBL transforms educational programmes by making them more relevant and directly connected to the workplace. This practical approach not only makes learning more interesting but also significantly improves job prospects by equipping students with work-relevant skills and establishing direct connections with potential employers. This is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged groups, helping to expand opportunities and increase social inclusion in the labour market.

¹ https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2018-09/Work-based%20learning_Handbook.pdf

Employees also see substantial benefits from WBL. It makes their work more engaging and offers opportunities to learn new skills, which can lead to further professional development and career advancement. The dynamic nature of WBL ensures that employees continually adapt and remain competitive within their fields.

Policy makers and public institutions recognise WBL for its ability to produce high-quality, relevant skills that are more in tune with current workplace demands than traditional classroom-only learning. WBL strengthens the cooperation between educational institutions and businesses, which helps align educational outcomes more closely with the real demands of the labour market. Moreover, involving employers in the design and management of vocational education and training (VET) increases their confidence in the VET system and makes economic sense as it shares costs between employers and government.

Educational institutions benefit from integrating WBL as it helps in developing essential soft skills such as teamwork and problem-solving, in addition to instilling basic work habits like punctuality. Showing students the practical application of their courses increases their interest in their studies and can be particularly important for increasing participation and improving outcomes among disadvantaged students.

Overall, the wide-ranging advantages of Work-Based Learning make it a cornerstone for modern education and employment strategies. It enhances the linkage between education and the labour market, making the workforce more adaptable and skilled. This not only benefits individuals in terms of employability and career progression but also enhances the competitiveness and innovation of businesses, ultimately contributing to economic growth and social stability.

3 Overview of National and EU Work-Based Learning Policies

Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta is governed by a multi-tiered legal and policy framework that integrates both national regulations and European-level strategies. While Malta has made notable progress in aligning its vocational and higher education systems with WBL principles, survey data suggests that stakeholder familiarity with the governing frameworks remains limited. Only 46.7% of respondents reported being aware of national or EU WBL policies, while 53.3% indicated a lack of familiarity—highlighting a clear need for greater visibility, clarity, and dissemination of relevant frameworks.

3.1 National Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

The Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (2018) is the primary legislative instrument regulating WBL in Malta. This Act provides a structured legal basis for apprenticeships and WBL arrangements, defining key terms, establishing the roles and responsibilities of host organisations, and outlining learner protections. It also mandates the development of quality assurance standards and encourages employer-educational institution partnerships.

The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) further supports the WBL landscape by classifying qualifications across eight levels and linking formal learning to learning outcomes, including those attained through work experience. It ensures national qualifications are comparable to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), enabling learner mobility and cross-border recognition of learning.

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) acts as the national regulatory body overseeing the quality of WBL programmes. It is empowered to accredit institutions, review programme content, ensure quality assurance practices, and issue guidelines.

MFHEA's 2023 Guidelines for Quality Assurance for Courses that include a Work-Based Learning Component provide a structured approach for institutions embedding WBL into academic courses. These guidelines define the requirements for planning, monitoring, mentoring, and assessment of WBL within formal qualifications, and serve as a reference for ensuring quality and relevance.

Other national mechanisms include the Internship and Placement Scheme (IPS) coordinated by the Malta Public Service, and the Investing in Skills Scheme administered by Jobsplus. These offer financial and structural support to both learners and employers in facilitating high-quality WBL and apprenticeship placements, especially within the public and private sectors.

Academic institutions such as the University of Malta (UOM) and the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology (MCAST) also maintain internal WBL frameworks, governed by institutional internship regulations and supported through partnerships with industry. Notably, MCAST's recent involvement in the EU4Dual Alliance underscores its strategic commitment to WBL at both national and European levels.

3.2 Institutional Governance and Coordination

In Malta, the governance of Work-Based Learning (WBL) is shared among several key entities, each playing a distinct but interconnected role in shaping and sustaining the national WBL landscape. The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) acts as the primary regulatory body, overseeing accreditation processes, quality assurance mechanisms, and the implementation of national WBL guidelines to ensure standards are met across educational and training programmes.

The Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR) provides the strategic direction for WBL through national frameworks such as the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2023–2030. This strategy positions WBL as a fundamental pillar for social inclusion and economic development, reflecting Malta's commitment to aligning education with labour market needs.

Jobsplus, Malta's public employment agency, contributes through operational support by managing various WBL-related funding schemes, including Investing in Skills. These schemes aim to incentivise employer participation and upskill the workforce in line with industry demands.

Educational institutions, meanwhile, are responsible for the design and delivery of academic programmes that integrate WBL components. These are often developed in close collaboration with employers and supported internally by placement offices and institutional policies that promote experiential learning.

While this multi-actor governance model offers strength through collaboration, it also presents challenges, particularly in achieving full policy coherence and maintaining consistent levels of employer engagement. Strengthening coordination across these entities remains essential for the continued growth, effectiveness, and scalability of WBL in Malta.

3.3 Integration of European Frameworks

Malta actively incorporates European principles into its national WBL policy framework. The European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA) informs many of the MFHEA quality guidelines, particularly in relation to learning outcomes, structured learning plans, and assessment criteria. Furthermore, participation in the Erasmus+ Programme enables Maltese learners and institutions to benefit from EU funding and collaboration for transnational WBL experiences.

Survey results reflect moderate stakeholder confidence in these frameworks. Among those familiar with WBL policies, 64.3% rated their effectiveness as "3" on a scale of 1 to 5, while 28.6% rated them as "4". When asked about EU-level policies, 46.7% of respondents believed that initiatives like Erasmus+ and the EFQEA positively support WBL in Malta, although 33.3% remained neutral, and 10% reported being unaware.

3.4 Summary of Policy Landscape

Malta's WBL structure is supported by a comprehensive legal and institutional framework, with strong alignment to EU strategies. However, awareness and perceived effectiveness vary, indicating a need for enhanced policy visibility, capacity building, and streamlined governance. Increased stakeholder engagement and inter-agency collaboration will be crucial in further embedding WBL as a mainstream component of education and training in Malta.

4 Local Best Practices in WBL

4.1 KNIGHTS *(formally known as Central Mediterranean Business School)*

KNIGHTS stands out as a leading example of institutional excellence in Work-Based Learning (WBL) implementation in Malta. At KNIGHTS, WBL is not treated as an ancillary experience, but as a central, structured, and intentional component of academic delivery. The school defines WBL as a form of learning that takes place in the workplace and is formally integrated within its accredited academic programmes. This pedagogical model is built on the belief that the workplace itself serves as an extension of the classroom, offering students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world environments while developing core technical and professional skills.

WBL is embedded across a broad range of KNIGHTS' undergraduate and postgraduate offerings, particularly at MQF Level 6 (Bachelor's) and Level 7 (Master's). Depending on the structure of the programme, WBL typically constitutes between 15 and 30 ECTS credits. Students alternate between classroom-based learning and practical placement, with flexibility to accommodate both full-time students and working professionals. Placements may be scheduled either concurrently or consecutively to meet both learner and employer needs, supporting the school's inclusive and adaptable approach to higher education.

KNIGHTS collaborates with employers across Malta's key economic sectors, including finance, accounting, business consultancy, ICT, hospitality, and marketing. Strategic partnerships with leading employers such as EY Malta are developed and sustained through shared learning outcomes, joint evaluations, and structured feedback mechanisms. Employers are viewed as co-educators, actively involved in defining learning expectations and assessing learner performance throughout the placement cycle.

A core innovation introduced by KNIGHTS is its *Sites of Learning* model, which formally recognises the workplace as an active site of academic instruction. This model ensures that

employer input is central to curriculum design and delivery, while maintaining academic integrity through well-defined learning outcomes, reflective assignments, and dual supervision from both academic tutors and workplace mentors. Learning outcomes are explicitly aligned with the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) descriptors and mapped against industry expectations, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the labour market.

Assessment of WBL is triangulated, involving student reflections, employer feedback, and academic evaluation. Students are typically required to submit reports, logbooks, or work-based projects, which are assessed by faculty members. Employers contribute through structured feedback forms, which are used during both mid-point and final reviews. This method promotes alignment, transparency, and a deeper engagement between academic institutions and industry partners.

KNIGHTS has also addressed common challenges in WBL implementation, such as inconsistent employer readiness and limited placement availability in niche sectors, by developing strong employer training and mentorship practices. The school leverages digital tools to monitor learner progress, support remote placements, and facilitate ongoing communication between all stakeholders. Special consideration is given to adult learners already in employment, with placements adapted to validate and extend their professional experience within an academic framework.

Looking forward, KNIGHTS is prioritising the expansion of WBL opportunities in emerging sectors such as sustainability, digital innovation, and entrepreneurship. The institution is also enhancing its internationalisation efforts, including participation in Erasmus+ partnerships, and is investing in digital platforms for placement tracking and performance feedback. KNIGHTS aspires to play an active role in shaping a national WBL framework and contributing to the broader policy dialogue on education and industry integration in Malta.

As a holistic model that combines academic rigour, workplace relevance, and institutional adaptability, KNIGHTS exemplifies best practice in WBL delivery and serves as a replicable case for other institutions across Malta and the EU.

4.2 EY Malta

EY Malta represents a strong model of employer-led Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. Its approach is firmly rooted in the belief that WBL bridges academic knowledge and real-world professional readiness. At EY, WBL is defined as a structured, practical learning experience

embedded directly within the firm's operational environment. Students participating in EY's WBL programmes are not observers; they are treated as active team members, contributing to client engagements while developing technical and soft skills essential to thriving in the professional services industry.

A standout initiative is EY Malta's collaboration with KNIGHTS on the MQF Level 7 ACCA Accelerated Work Study Programme, in which students simultaneously pursue a BSc in Accountancy and Finance and complete their ACCA qualification while working within EY. This dual-track model ensures academic excellence and practical application occur in tandem. EY also offers formal internships and graduate schemes across departments such as tax, audit, financial reporting, and advisory services. These placements cater to students from business, IT, and finance backgrounds, with participants treated as junior professionals from day one.

What distinguishes EY's model is its multi-layered mentorship and feedback system. Each WBL student is assigned a counsellor responsible for regular check-ins and performance tracking, complemented by daily supervision from engagement team members. Progress is monitored using EY's global performance management tools and aligned with the ACCA Practical Experience Requirements (PER). This ensures learners are evaluated against professional benchmarks in areas such as problem-solving, ethical judgement, communication, and teamwork.

EY's collaboration with academic institutions like KNIGHTS is built on mutual curriculum alignment. The firm is directly involved in shaping programme content, determining work placement duration, and ensuring academic assessments reflect practical industry needs. This co-design ensures that students gain the competencies required within EY's service lines while maintaining academic integrity.

WBL students are seen as a valuable addition to EY's teams, bringing fresh perspectives and contributing meaningfully to client delivery. Many transition into full-time roles after graduation, already familiar with EY's culture and performance standards. For EY, WBL also supports its long-term talent development pipeline, helping the organisation identify and shape future professionals who align with its values.

Despite the success of the model, EY acknowledges challenges, particularly balancing training needs with client-facing demands during peak periods. These are addressed by ensuring that WBL students are placed in adequately resourced teams and receive gradual exposure to complex tasks. EY also maintains consistency in mentorship through counsellor training and structured onboarding processes.

EY Malta continues to innovate in response to evolving work environments. The firm utilises digital tools like Microsoft Teams and EY's global learning platforms to support hybrid placements, especially post-COVID. Furthermore, EY is expanding WBL into emerging fields

such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), AI-driven audit technologies, and sustainability advisory. This aligns with both national priorities and EY's global transformation goals.

Overall, EY Malta's approach stands out as a best practice due to its depth of integration, commitment to mentorship, alignment with both academic and professional frameworks, and forward-looking innovation. It offers a replicable employer model for other countries seeking to bridge the gap between education and employment through structured, impactful WBL experiences.

4.3 JA Malta Foundation

JA Malta exemplifies a dynamic and inclusive model of Work-Based Learning (WBL) grounded in youth entrepreneurship and experiential education. As a non-profit organisation focused on preparing young people for the world of work, JA Malta defines WBL as a structured approach that integrates classroom learning with hands-on experiences in real or simulated work environments. This philosophy underpins the organisation's core programmes, which aim to equip learners with practical skills, entrepreneurial mindset, and workplace readiness.

Central to JA Malta's WBL model is its flagship Company Programme, where secondary school students form and operate their own mini-enterprises over the course of an academic year. In this programme, students take on different roles, from managing production to marketing and finance and run their companies as real businesses. The experience is supported by volunteer mentors from the business community who guide student teams through brainstorming, planning, operations, and financial decision-making. This mentorship not only builds technical skills but also reinforces confidence, resilience, and leadership.

JA Malta also organises Leaders for a Day, an initiative where students shadow senior executives in various industries to observe leadership and decision-making up close. This immersive exposure to professional environments adds depth to the students' understanding of workplace dynamics and executive responsibilities. JA Malta is currently working to scale this initiative nationally to ensure wider access across schools in Malta.

Additionally, JA Malta contributes to European WBL efforts through its participation in the *Skills4Retail* project, a cross-border initiative addressing the evolving needs of the retail sector, with a focus on digital and sustainable practices. As part of its contribution, JA Malta supports the development of practical WBL experiences for learners and partners with businesses to deliver internships and training aligned with sector-specific demands.

A key strength of JA Malta's approach is its collaborative model, which treats WBL as a shared responsibility among educators, industry mentors, and the organisation itself. Professionals are involved not only as guest speakers, but as co-creators of programme content, facilitators

of skill-building workshops, and long-term mentors. Educators play a crucial role in embedding WBL experiences into formal education, while companies contribute access to internships, real-life challenges, and mentorship.

The impact of JA Malta's WBL initiatives is evident in the personal and professional growth of its participants. Students emerge with stronger communication skills, entrepreneurial thinking, teamwork, and confidence. Their development is tracked through tools such as the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass, an internationally recognised certification measuring both soft and technical skills acquired during the programme.

Inclusivity is a cornerstone of JA Malta's practice. The organisation makes targeted efforts to involve students from diverse backgrounds, including those supported by Learning Support Educators (LSEs) or from socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts. JA Malta also engages parents and guardians to ensure a supportive learning environment for all participants. Programmes are continuously improved based on feedback from students, educators, and industry partners, ensuring relevance and impact.

JA Malta's WBL strategy aligns closely with both national and EU priorities. At the national level, its activities support Malta's National Education Strategy 2024–2030, particularly in fostering inclusive, skills-based education. At the EU level, JA Malta's programming reflects the goals of the European Year of Skills 2023, especially in advancing digital, green, and entrepreneurial competencies.

Looking ahead, JA Malta aims to scale its initiatives and deepen partnerships across the education and business sectors. Strategic goals include expanding the Company Programme and Leaders for a Day, widening the scope of internships, and establishing a Centre of Excellence in partnership with the Ministry for Education and HSBC Malta Foundation to embed financial and entrepreneurial literacy across schools nationally.

JA Malta's holistic and inclusive model of WBL makes it a standout best practice. Its programmes offer transformative learning experiences that are scalable, socially responsive, and aligned with national and European educational goals.

4.4 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)

The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) plays a central role in shaping, regulating, and promoting Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. As the national regulator for post-secondary education, MFHEA defines WBL as a structured and formally recognised learning process that occurs within real work environments and forms an integrated part of accredited qualifications. The Authority views WBL as a key pillar in Malta's national education and skills strategy, with the goal of enhancing graduate employability, aligning learning with labour market needs, and responding to sectoral skills gaps.

MFHEA's commitment to WBL is anchored in its robust regulatory framework. Accredited programmes that include WBL components must comply with the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) and the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). Providers are expected to demonstrate clear and measurable learning outcomes, ensure supervision from both academic and industry mentors, and align assessments with programme-level credit structures. Essential standards include adherence to health and safety regulations, data protection requirements, and formal partnership agreements with host organisations.

The publication of MFHEA's 2023 Guidelines for Quality Assurance for Courses that include a Work-Based Learning Component further reinforces Malta's commitment to structured, high-quality WBL. These guidelines offer detailed expectations for WBL design, implementation, and assessment, and are designed to help institutions maintain academic integrity while embracing industry collaboration.

To ensure that WBL provision remains relevant and responsive, MFHEA regularly engages with providers, employers, industry associations, and public bodies. Through consultation processes during programme accreditation, national working groups, and labour market monitoring, MFHEA actively promotes WBL in emerging sectors such as digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and green technologies. Providers are encouraged to involve employers at the earliest stages of curriculum design, fostering alignment between educational outcomes and workplace realities.

MFHEA also supports the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a powerful complement to WBL. Through its RPL guidelines, the Authority enables individuals, particularly mature learners and professionals, to convert informal and non-formal work experience into academic credit. This process expands access to qualifications and supports lifelong learning by validating real-world experience.

In response to evolving delivery formats, MFHEA ensures that virtual and hybrid placements meet the same quality standards as traditional WBL models. Providers are required to clearly demonstrate how remote mentorship, progress monitoring, and engagement will be maintained. This protects the learner experience and ensures that innovations in digital learning do not compromise quality.

At the European level, MFHEA aligns Malta's WBL ecosystem with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) through its MQF framework, ensuring comparability and mobility of qualifications across EU member states. MFHEA actively participates in European policy forums such as EQF advisory groups, ENQA, and Erasmus+ initiatives, thereby contributing to international cooperation, benchmarking, and shared learning.

From MFHEA's perspective, a best practice WBL programme is characterised by structured supervision, clearly defined and assessed learning outcomes, meaningful employer involvement, and flexibility to accommodate diverse learner needs. Such models enhance employability, deliver real value to employers, and contribute to national economic resilience by addressing current and future skill shortages.

Looking ahead, MFHEA envisions a nationwide WBL framework that formally integrates WBL into all relevant post-secondary qualifications. While current expectations are embedded within the broader accreditation system, MFHEA recognises the value of a dedicated national WBL strategy. Such a framework would bring greater standardisation, offer structured support to providers, and increase clarity and confidence among employers and learners.

In its role as both a regulator and policy driver, MFHEA exemplifies best practice in WBL governance, ensuring that quality, relevance, and learner-centred design remain at the forefront of Malta's education and training systems.

5 Analysis of Gaps and Challenges

5.1 Respondent Profile and Survey Context

To support this analysis, a survey was conducted targeting a broad range of stakeholders involved in the development, regulation, and delivery of Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. A total of 30 respondents participated in the survey. The majority of respondents (30%) were from the education sector, including higher education institutions and training providers. Other participants included representatives from industry, regulatory bodies, and non-governmental organisations engaged in youth employability and skills development.

The questionnaire was structured to capture perceptions across five key areas: awareness of WBL policies, identification of implementation challenges, understanding of digital integration, views on EU-level support, and willingness to engage with future WBL initiatives. The following sections summarise the key findings, situating them within Malta's policy context and the aims of the WBL Champion Project.

This diverse respondent base ensures a representative view of the national WBL landscape and provides valuable insight into the barriers and opportunities from both education and industry perspectives.

5.2 Survey Results and Implementation Challenges

The survey conducted as part of this report provided valuable insights into the current challenges hindering the full implementation of Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. Drawing responses from 30 stakeholders across education, industry, and the public and NGO sectors, the survey aimed to capture views on policy awareness, structural barriers, digital integration, and stakeholder engagement in WBL initiatives.

Misalignment Between Education and Labour Market Needs

The most significant challenge, reported by 63.3% of respondents, was the ongoing mismatch between educational curricula and labour market demands. Participants expressed concern that many academic programmes still fail to align with the realities of modern workplaces, resulting in graduates who lack the job-ready skills that employers require. This persistent disconnect undermines graduate employability and contributes to a widening skills gap. The results suggest an urgent need for greater industry involvement in curriculum development, alongside systematic labour market analysis to ensure that training remains responsive to evolving economic needs.

Limited Awareness and Visibility of WBL Opportunities

Closely following this issue, 56.7% of respondents highlighted a lack of awareness and visibility of WBL opportunities. Stakeholders noted that both learners and employers often remain unaware of the availability, value, and structure of WBL programmes. This reflects a communication and outreach gap, limiting participation and undermining efforts to position WBL as a mainstream educational pathway. It also points to a missed opportunity to develop a national WBL identity or “brand” that resonates with multiple audiences, from students to employers and educators.

Employer Engagement and Administrative Complexity

A further 43.3% of respondents cited limited employer engagement as a major barrier. While Malta has made strides in connecting academia with industry, many employers, particularly SMEs lack the resources, support structures, or incentives to take on WBL students. Stakeholders called for the creation of clearer engagement frameworks, simplified

onboarding processes for host organisations, and government-supported incentives to make WBL more attractive to the private sector.

Similarly, administrative burden and bureaucratic complexity were flagged by another 43.3% of respondents. These issues often arise in areas such as insurance, compliance, placement agreements, and scheduling. Institutions and businesses alike noted that the procedural effort required to set up a quality WBL experience can deter involvement, especially when no centralised support or digital infrastructure exists to streamline it.

Promotion and Funding Limitations

In addition to low awareness, 40% of respondents indicated that WBL is insufficiently promoted at a national level. There is a clear need for structured communication campaigns and integrated guidance platforms that consolidate information on WBL providers, opportunities, and success stories.

20% of respondents also cited funding limitations as a challenge particularly for smaller institutions and employers. Without financial incentives, some stakeholders are unable to dedicate adequate time or resources to supervising or hosting learners in a meaningful, structured way.

Digital Readiness and Integration

A particularly notable finding relates to the digitalisation of WBL systems. While 90% of respondents considered digital skills to be either “important” or “very important” to the effective delivery of WBL, only 30% reported awareness of any digital tools or platforms currently supporting WBL in Malta. This striking discrepancy reveals a critical gap between perceived importance and practical implementation. Tools such as e-portfolios, virtual internships, and digital monitoring systems are either underutilised or not widely known, suggesting a need for greater investment in both digital infrastructure and stakeholder training.

Challenge Area	Percentage of Respondents	Key Insight
Misalignment between education and labour market	63.30%	Academic content not aligned with industry needs
Lack of awareness of WBL opportunities	56.70%	WBL initiatives not widely known among stakeholders
Limited employer engagement	43.30%	Employers not actively involved or supported
Administrative complexity	43.30%	Complex procedures deter participation
Insufficient promotion	40%	Limited outreach and visibility of WBL
Lack of funding	20%	Resource constraints for employers/institutions
Awareness of digital tools	30%	Most are unaware of digital support tools
Perceived importance of digital skills	90%	High value placed on digital skills in WBL

5.3 Interpreting the Survey Findings

The survey findings present a detailed and nuanced snapshot of the current state of Work-Based Learning (WBL) implementation in Malta. While there is a shared recognition among stakeholders of WBL's potential to bridge the gap between education and employment, the data also reveals a set of persistent structural, operational, and awareness-related challenges that must be addressed to unlock its full impact.

The misalignment between academic curricula and labour market needs, cited by 63.3% of respondents, emerges as the most pressing issue. This points to a systemic disconnect that hinders graduate readiness and limits the relevance of education to real-world contexts. It underscores the urgent need for more strategic and sustained collaboration between education providers and employers, particularly in curriculum co-design and regular skills mapping exercises.

Similarly, the lack of awareness and promotion of WBL opportunities identified by over half of the respondents highlights a critical communication gap. Despite policy progress and the existence of various WBL schemes, many learners, employers, and even educators remain unaware of how to access or implement these opportunities. This calls for coordinated national outreach, clearer branding of WBL pathways, and the development of centralised information hubs.

Challenges around limited employer engagement and administrative burden reflect the practical constraints that often deter participation. Employers, especially SMEs, face real difficulties in dedicating time and resources to WBL without structured incentives or streamlined systems. This reveals the importance of reducing red tape and increasing support mechanisms, such as placement coordinators, digital infrastructure, and legal templates.

The survey also exposed a significant digital divide in WBL implementation. While 90% of respondents acknowledged the importance of digital skills, only 30% were aware of digital tools currently available to support WBL. This gap suggests a missed opportunity to modernise delivery and track outcomes using technologies such as e-portfolios, virtual mentorship, and online placement tracking platforms.

Taken together, the results validate the direction of Malta's national WBL policies while highlighting clear areas where further action is required. They strongly support the WBL Champion Project's focus on redesigning curricula, boosting stakeholder engagement, building digital capacity, and supporting policy adaptation at both national and EU levels.

The responses also reflect a genuine appetite for engagement and reform. With 86.7% of stakeholders expressing interest in participating in future WBL workshops, there is a clear mandate for collective action. What is now required is a national framework that brings

together policy, practice, and innovation ensuring that WBL becomes a fully embedded, high-quality component of Malta's education and employment ecosystem.

5.4 Comparison of Survey Responses with Malta's National Literature and WBL Ambitions

The survey findings align closely with Malta's national ambitions to enhance the structure, quality, and visibility of Work-Based Learning (WBL), as laid out in key policy frameworks including the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (2018), the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), and the MFHEA's 2022 Scoping Report and 2023 WBL Quality Assurance Guidelines.

Industry-Education Mismatch

The most significant barrier identified by stakeholders reported by 63.3% of survey respondents was the mismatch between educational curricula and labour market needs. This reflects one of the central motivations behind the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (2018), which aims to promote closer cooperation between employers and education providers to ensure that academic content reflects industry requirements. Similarly, the MQF explicitly calls for learning outcomes, particularly at Levels 4–7, to be aligned with occupational standards and real-world competencies.

MFHEA's 2022 *Scoping Report on WBL* echoed this concern, stating that many academic programmes "lack the embedded practical components needed to prepare students for complex and evolving work environments." The survey data reinforce this observation, showing strong demand for curricular reform and the embedding of industry co-designed components in formal qualifications.

Employer Engagement

A significant 43.3% of respondents cited limited employer engagement as a major challenge. This is particularly relevant in the context of national objectives to create "mutually beneficial" partnerships between education institutions and businesses. The MFHEA WBL Guidelines (2023) clearly define the role of employers in co-delivering WBL, supervising students, and contributing to assessment processes. However, both the survey and MFHEA's consultations suggest that, in practice, many employers, especially SMEs, lack the capacity, clarity, or incentives to engage systematically.

MFHEA has also acknowledged this gap, with Dr. Rose Anne Cuschieri (CEO of MFHEA) emphasising in her contribution to this report that employer collaboration must go beyond ad hoc internships and evolve into structured, accountable partnerships, supported by regulatory clarity and policy guidance.

Administrative and Operational Complexity

Alongside limited employer engagement, 43.3% of survey participants also highlighted the administrative burden associated with implementing WBL, mirroring the MFHEA's recommendation to streamline processes through digital tools and standardised frameworks. The national literature has also called for centralised coordination units within institutions to support placement logistics, legal agreements, and monitoring.

These concerns reflect broader implementation challenges addressed in both the 2022 Scoping Report and 2023 Guidelines, which propose clearer workflows, documentation templates, and training for employer mentors to ensure that WBL becomes sustainable at scale.

Promotion and Awareness of WBL Opportunities

The survey also revealed that 56.7% of respondents felt there is a lack of awareness about WBL pathways, and 40% noted that WBL is insufficiently promoted. This aligns with MFHEA's own assessment that public understanding of WBL, particularly its structure, value, and outcomes remains fragmented.

While national strategies such as the *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2023–2030* and *Economic Vision 2021–2031* promote WBL as a means to increase workforce adaptability and resilience, the findings indicate that more effort is needed to translate these strategic visions into public-facing campaigns, accessible information portals, and user-friendly guidance for both learners and employers.

Digital Readiness

Finally, digitalisation represents a critical gap in Malta's WBL ecosystem. While 90% of respondents viewed digital skills as essential for effective WBL, 70% admitted to being unaware of any digital tools supporting WBL delivery in Malta. This signals a major discrepancy between policy intent and implementation. MFHEA's 2023 Guidelines stress the need for "adaptable delivery formats" and the inclusion of digital platforms for monitoring, mentoring, and reflective learning but awareness and uptake remain limited.

5.5 Affirming the Ambitions, Needs and Goals of the WBL Project

The findings of the national stakeholder survey provide robust, evidence-based validation for the direction and priorities of the WBL Champion Project. The responses reflect a clear alignment between the challenges identified on the ground and the intervention areas defined by the project's work packages. They affirm that the WBL Champion Project is not only timely but also strategically positioned to address systemic barriers to Work-Based Learning (WBL) across the Maltese education ecosystem.

Redesigning Higher Education (HE) Courses to Embed WBL

The survey's strongest signal came from the 63.3% of respondents who cited a mismatch between curricula and labour market needs. This supports the project's first key deliverable: the redesign of six HE programmes to embed WBL components, ensuring that academic content is developed in collaboration with employers, guided by current and emerging skills demands.

This is further reinforced by MFHEA's emphasis on aligning learning outcomes with workplace competencies, and its guidelines encouraging industry engagement during programme design. The WBL Champion Project can directly respond to this priority by piloting co-designed course models and sharing them as national and European reference examples.

Stakeholder Engagement and Awareness Campaigns

With 56.7% of respondents identifying a lack of awareness of WBL opportunities, the project's second goal, which is to build stakeholder engagement mechanisms and launch awareness campaigns, is clearly warranted. Respondents reported confusion or lack of information around how WBL works, who is eligible, and what roles employers and institutions are expected to play.

Encouragingly, 86.7% of respondents expressed interest in participating in future workshops or focus groups, demonstrating a high level of readiness to engage with WBL initiatives. The project can capitalise on this momentum by facilitating national roundtables, employer-education forums, and public information campaigns, while developing guidance materials for students, businesses, and providers.

Developing Digital Competencies and Resources

The project's third focus, digital transformation of WBL delivery, is strongly validated by the gap between stakeholder perceptions and digital readiness. While 90% of respondents agreed

that digital skills are important or very important for WBL, only 30% were aware of digital tools currently in use. This digital blind spot threatens to undermine the scalability, inclusivity, and monitoring of WBL programmes.

The WBL Champion Project's commitment to building digital platforms, e-assessment tools, and digital WBL mapping resources directly addresses this shortfall. It also supports Malta's broader educational digitalisation agenda, as outlined in the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning and MFHEA's 2023 QA Guidelines for virtual placements.

Enhancing Employer and Policymaker Involvement

A recurring theme in the survey and stakeholder interviews was the lack of structured employer engagement. With 43.3% of respondents citing this as a barrier, and many pointing to administrative burden (also 43.3%) as a deterrent, the need for streamlined employer–education coordination mechanisms is clear.

The WBL Champion Project's role in facilitating policy recommendations, incentive frameworks, and placement management solutions is vital. These deliverables respond to MFHEA's call for more effective quality assurance, mentorship training, and employer onboarding templates. The project is well positioned to propose simplified, scalable WBL frameworks that balance academic rigour with operational feasibility.

Informing EU and National Policy Adaptations

Finally, the survey revealed mixed awareness and perceptions of EU WBL policy frameworks, with 33.3% of respondents remaining neutral and 10% unaware of tools like Erasmus+ or the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA). This indicates a communication gap between EU policy and local implementation, which the WBL Champion Project is uniquely placed to address through comparative reporting, cross-border collaboration, and dissemination of success stories.

By embedding Malta's WBL experience into the broader European context and fostering shared learning, the project can help shape policy adaptations that are both context-sensitive and transnationally relevant.

5.6 Reflections

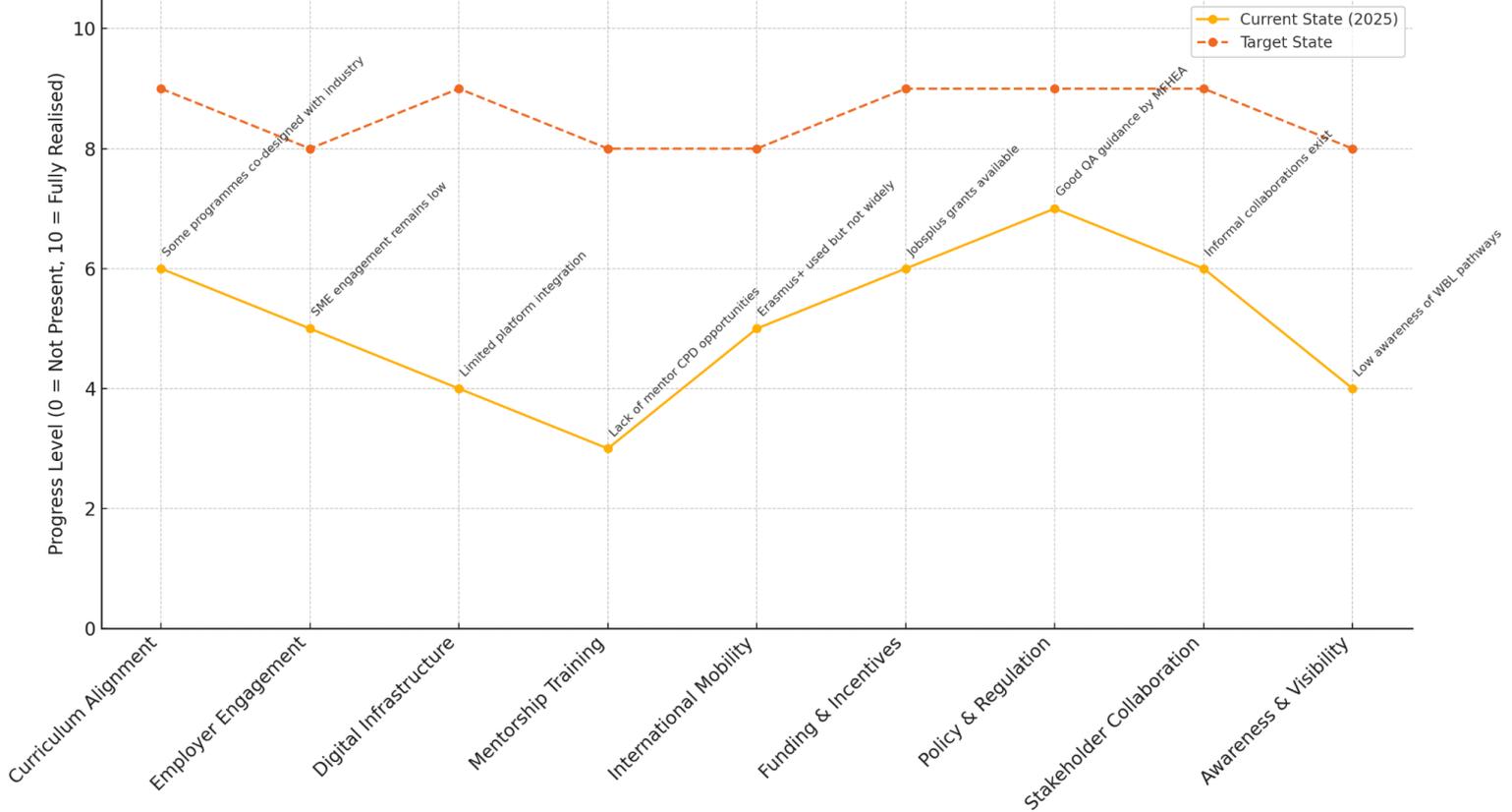
Building on the findings of the national survey and their alignment with Malta's current WBL policy landscape, this section outlines key reflections and targeted recommendations aimed at bridging the implementation gaps and reinforcing the ambitions of both the WBL Champion Project and national stakeholders.

The survey provided a clear indication that there is widespread conceptual support for Work-Based Learning (WBL) in Malta. Stakeholders recognise its potential to bridge the gap between education and the labour market, enhance employability, and improve the relevance of higher education. This was echoed in national policy literature and MFHEA feedback, particularly in their 2023 Quality Assurance Guidelines and 2022 Scoping Report, which call for more structured, quality-driven WBL models.

However, the responses also surfaced a number of persistent barriers to successful implementation. Chief among these were the misalignment between curricula and real-world skill needs, a general lack of awareness about existing WBL opportunities and tools, and insufficient employer engagement, especially from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Furthermore, many respondents cited procedural and bureaucratic hurdles as key deterrents, which reflects a need for more agile and accessible WBL frameworks.

The findings confirmed the relevance of the WBL Champion Project's objectives, particularly around curricular redesign, digital transformation, policy contribution, and stakeholder mobilisation and now offer a clear evidence base to guide its next steps.

Malta's Work-Based Learning Practices: Current Composition vs Future Ambitions



This graph illustrates Malta's current progress and future ambitions across key dimensions of Work-Based Learning (WBL). Each category, ranging from curriculum alignment to digital infrastructure and employer engagement, has been evaluated on a scale from 0 to 10. The solid line represents the current state (2025), highlighting strengths such as policy and regulation, and areas needing improvement such as mentorship training and digital tool integration. The dashed line shows Malta's desired target state, reflecting national ambitions as outlined in strategic documents and supported by stakeholder survey responses. Annotations provide further context on specific challenges and ongoing efforts, underscoring the roadmap toward a more integrated, future-ready WBL system.

5.7 Recommendations for Strengthening WBL in Malta

While Malta has made commendable progress in promoting Work-Based Learning (WBL) through initiatives such as the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (2018), MQF-aligned qualifications, MFHEA's quality assurance framework, and various employer support schemes offered by entities like Jobsplus, there remains considerable scope to scale, streamline, and strengthen WBL implementation.

The following recommendations aim to build on the foundation already in place, based on stakeholder feedback and national policy alignment:

Expand and Tailor Employer Incentives for Academic WBL

Malta already offers employer support mechanisms such as the Work Exposure Scheme and Investing in Skills Scheme via Jobsplus. However, the survey responses suggest that these are not always well understood, accessible, or tailored to the needs of SMEs participating in academic WBL tied to accredited programmes.

Malta would benefit from enhancing the visibility, usability, and relevance of these schemes for employers in education-linked placements, especially in sectors where WBL is emerging or underdeveloped. Doing so would encourage wider participation and ensure that WBL is not only offered but embedded across industries and qualification levels.

Strengthen Curriculum-Industry Alignment

While current educational frameworks such as the MQF emphasise outcomes aligned with employability, the survey confirmed a persistent disconnect between curricula and labour market needs. Institutions like KNIGHTS and MCAST have made progress in integrating real-world skills into their programmes, but a more formalised and consistent mechanism for industry input into curriculum design would enhance this further.

Malta would benefit from establishing sector-specific curriculum councils or advisory boards that bring together employers, regulatory bodies, and educators to co-create content and learning outcomes, ensuring programmes remain agile and future-proof.

Develop a Centralised Digital Platform for WBL Coordination

Several institutions use internal systems to manage WBL placements and learner progress, and MFHEA encourages digital documentation and reporting in its QA guidelines. However, survey results highlighted limited awareness and inconsistent use of digital tools to support WBL across providers and employers.

A national digital platform could serve as a central hub for placement matching, learner tracking, reporting, and stakeholder communication. This would not only improve coordination and visibility, but also reduce administrative burden and enable standardisation across the sector.

Expand Public and EU-Linked Financial Support for WBL Delivery

Existing schemes such as Erasmus+, Jobsplus subsidies, and ESF+ grants support various training and upskilling pathways. Nonetheless, respondents noted that many education

providers and employers still face financial and capacity constraints when organising high-quality WBL placements.

Malta could further strengthen WBL implementation by expanding access to co-funding for placement supervision, mentor training, and programme development, particularly within HEIs and SMEs. Simplifying access to these funds and increasing outreach about their availability would be key enablers.

Invest in Mentorship Training and CPD for Employers

Quality mentorship is central to a successful WBL experience. MFHEA recognises employers as co-educators in its WBL guidelines, but the survey and institutional feedback point to a lack of consistent support for mentors, many of whom have no formal training in workplace pedagogy.

Malta would benefit from introducing structured training and CPD pathways for workplace mentors, supported by HEIs or central bodies. This would raise the quality and consistency of supervision and help employers feel more confident and competent in their educational role.

Promote International Mobility and European Collaboration in WBL

Through programmes like Erasmus+, Malta is already part of the European learning mobility ecosystem. Institutions such as MCAST, through the EU4Dual Alliance, are leading the way in cross-border work-based education. However, opportunities remain unevenly accessed across institutions and learner groups.

Malta should scale and diversify participation in Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 mobility for WBL, particularly for students in vocational and applied learning tracks. Supporting outbound and inbound WBL exchanges will boost internationalisation, innovation, and global competitiveness of Malta's education sector.

Improve National Awareness of WBL Digital Tools

Digital solutions exist across the sector ranging from virtual placements to learning management systems but survey respondents revealed a 70% awareness gap, despite 90% acknowledging their importance. This suggests the need not for new tools, but for better awareness, training, and integration of existing ones.

Malta would benefit from a national awareness campaign, complemented by practical guides and capacity-building sessions, to promote digital tools that enhance WBL planning, delivery, and assessment.

Streamline Administrative Requirements for Employers and Providers

While MFHEA provides guidelines and templates to aid compliance, many respondents, particularly employers, reported that bureaucratic procedures remain a barrier. This is especially challenging for smaller companies or first-time placement hosts.

To support wider WBL uptake, Malta could simplify procedures by expanding standardised documentation, offering onboarding toolkits, and creating helpdesk-style support mechanisms. Streamlining compliance would make WBL more accessible while maintaining accountability and quality assurance.

Facilitate Stakeholder Workshops and Communities of Practice

Encouragingly, 86.7% of stakeholders expressed interest in WBL engagement events. Malta's institutions already engage in consultations and working groups, but there is a clear appetite for more structured spaces to connect, collaborate, and innovate across sectors.

Malta would benefit from hosting regular WBL stakeholder forums, both online and in-person, focused on real-life implementation, tool sharing, and matchmaking between academia and employers. These communities of practice would reinforce a culture of co-design and continuous improvement.

These recommendations are grounded in the lived experiences of Malta's educators, employers, and regulators, and reflect both the progress already achieved and the potential for future growth. By building on existing frameworks and enhancing coordination, capacity, and communication, Malta can strengthen its position as a forward-looking, learner-centred WBL leader. As the WBL Champion Project advances, these actions offer a clear and practical pathway to deepen impact, drive quality, and ensure that Work-Based Learning continues to evolve as a cornerstone of Malta's education and workforce development strategy.

6 Conclusion

Malta stands at a promising juncture in its Work-Based Learning (WBL) journey. With robust legislation, forward-thinking institutions, and an active regulatory body in MFHEA, the foundations for an impactful WBL ecosystem are already in place. Yet, as the national survey and literature review have revealed, building on these foundations requires a renewed focus on coordination, communication, and capacity-building.

The insights gathered throughout this report highlight a clear appetite for change and collaboration. Stakeholders from across education, industry, and policymaking recognise the value of WBL in preparing learners for the world of work. However, gaps persist particularly in aligning educational content with evolving labour market needs, improving employer

engagement, streamlining administrative processes, and embedding digital solutions more effectively.

These are not shortcomings but rather opportunities for strategic improvement. The WBL Champion Project is uniquely positioned to act on this momentum. By co-designing courses with employers, expanding awareness campaigns, enhancing digital infrastructure, and supporting structured mentorship, the project can help Malta not only meet its WBL ambitions, but exceed them.

Importantly, the recommendations presented here do not call for reinvention. They build on what already exists: trusted national schemes, committed institutions, and a shared belief in the transformative power of experiential learning. What's needed now is integration of efforts, systems, and stakeholders to ensure that WBL becomes not just a complementary pathway, but a core feature of Malta's education and workforce development strategy.

As the WBL Champion Project advances into its implementation phase, these findings and actions offer a clear, data-driven blueprint. They affirm that the path forward lies in partnership between learners and mentors, institutions and employers, policy and practice. And through these partnerships, Malta can continue to lead by example, shaping a future-ready, inclusive, and resilient WBL model with relevance across Europe and beyond.

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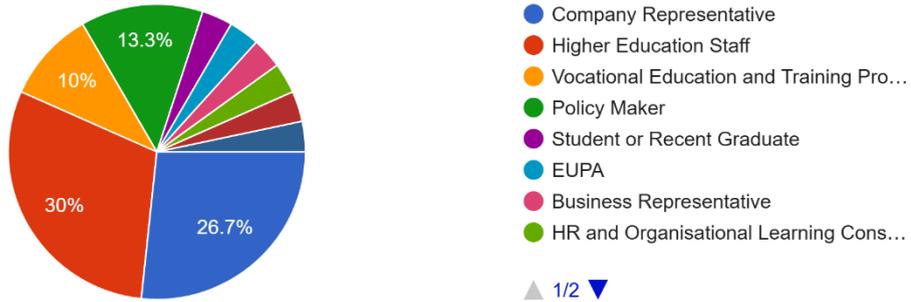
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8 Annex

8.1 Survey Data

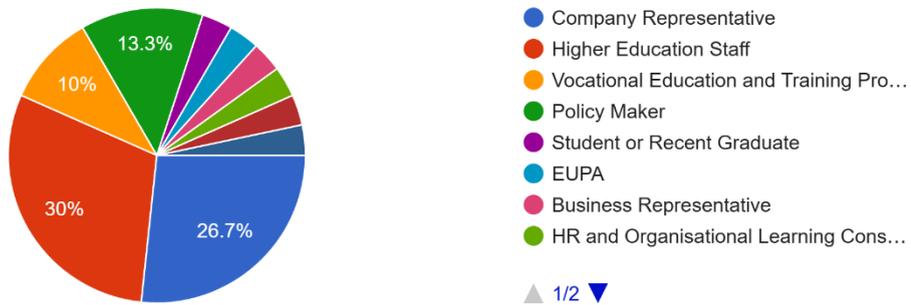
Which category best describes you?

30 responses



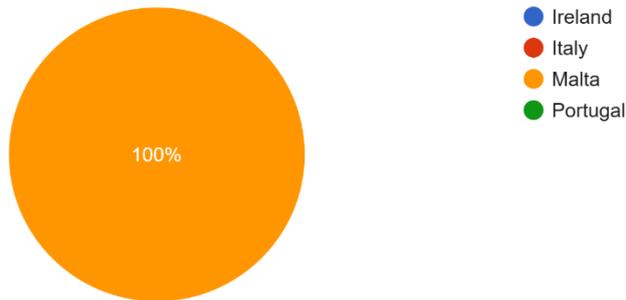
Which category best describes you?

30 responses



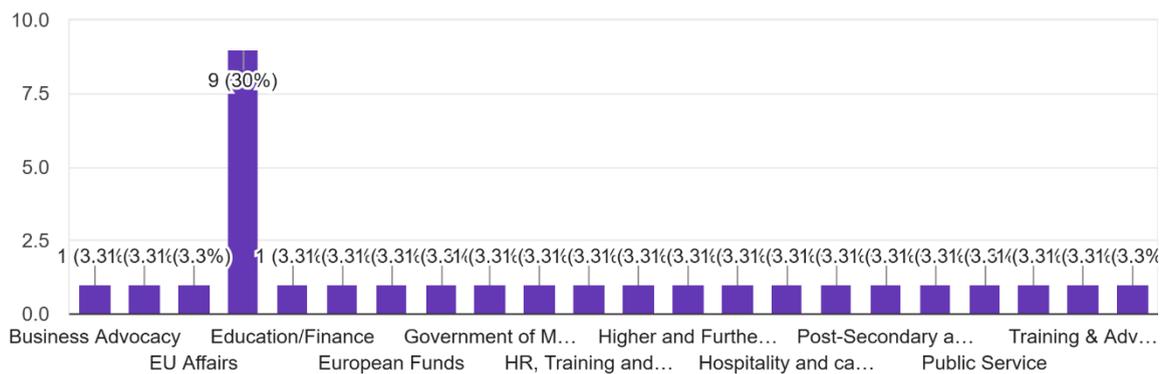
Country of residence:

30 responses



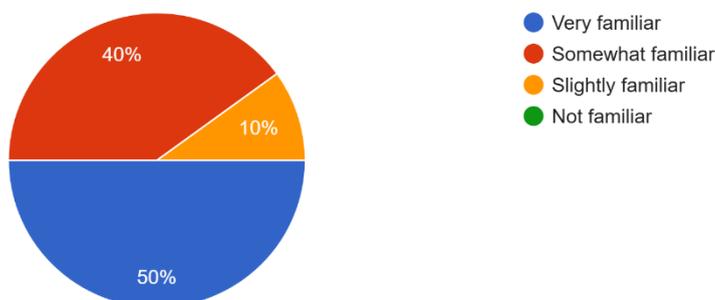
In which sector/industry do you primarily work?

30 responses



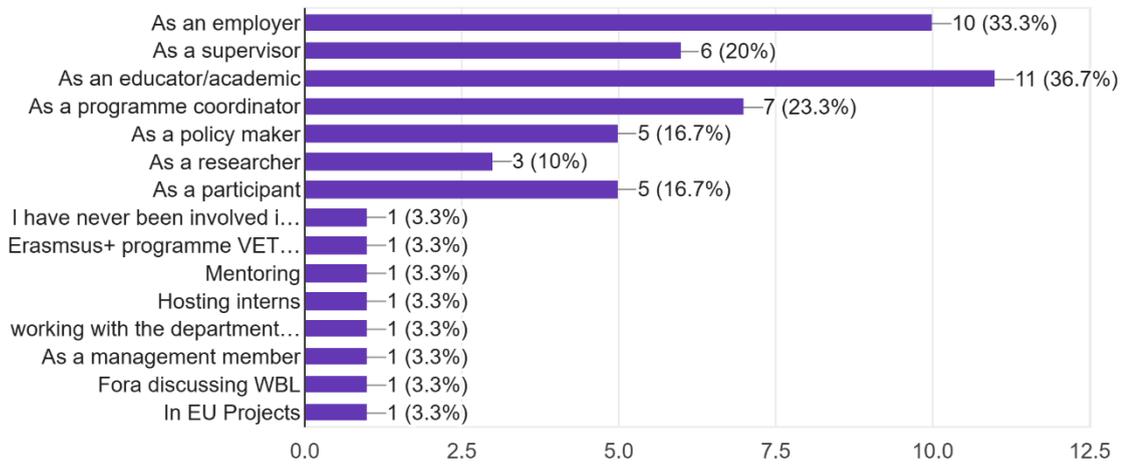
How familiar are you with WBL practices in your organisation?

30 responses



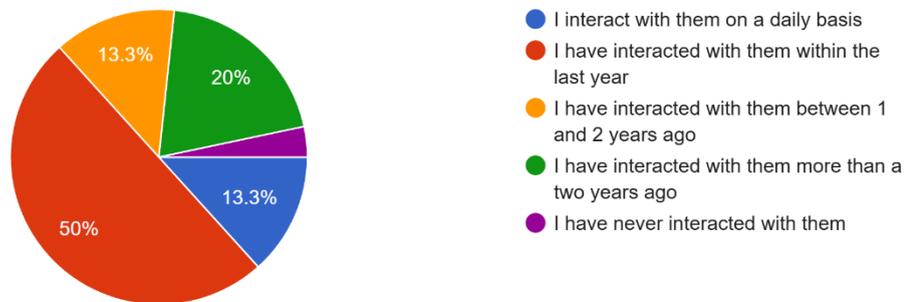
What is/was the nature of your involvement in WBL programmes or initiatives (e.g.: apprenticeships, internships, dual education systems, others)? (multiple answers can be chosen)

30 responses



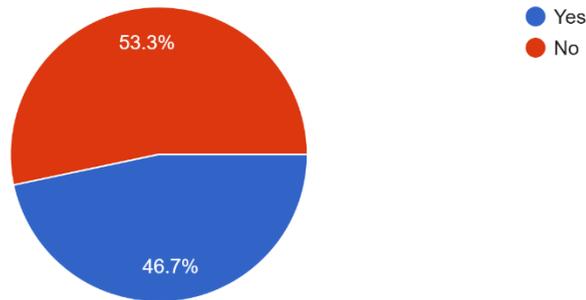
How recently have you engaged with work-based learning practices (implementing, supervising, as a participant, etc)?

30 responses



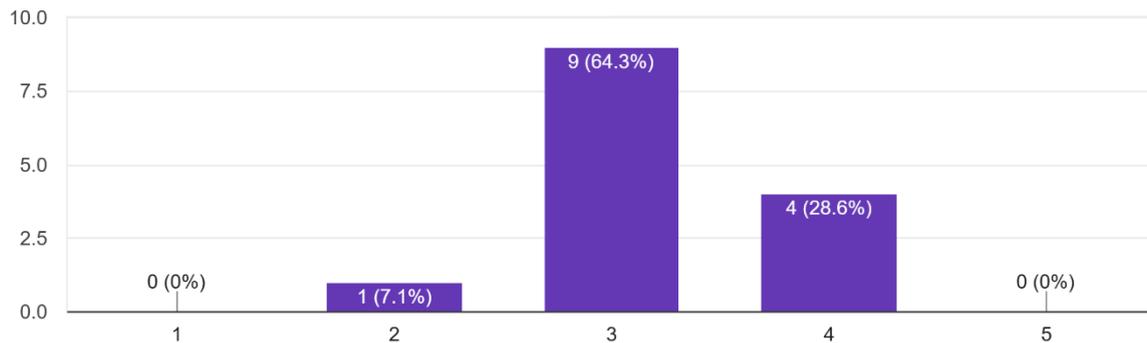
Are you familiar with National or European policies supporting WBL?

30 responses



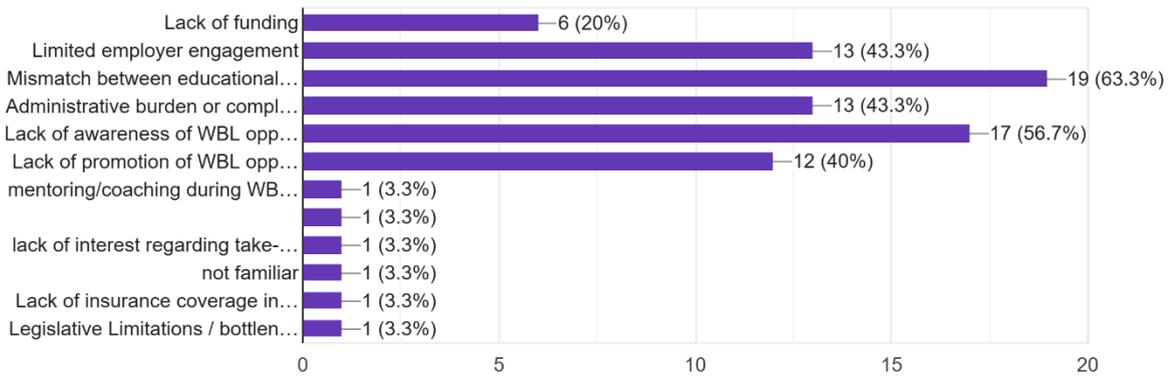
If you answered “Yes” to the previous answer, how would you rate the effectiveness of National or European policies in supporting WBL in your country?

14 responses



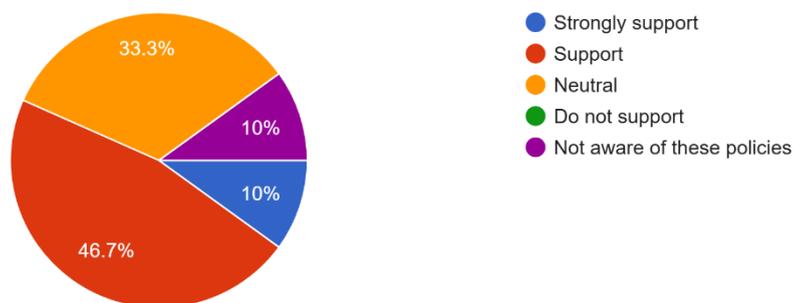
What do you consider the most significant challenges in the current national WBL policies? (Select up to 3 options)

30 responses



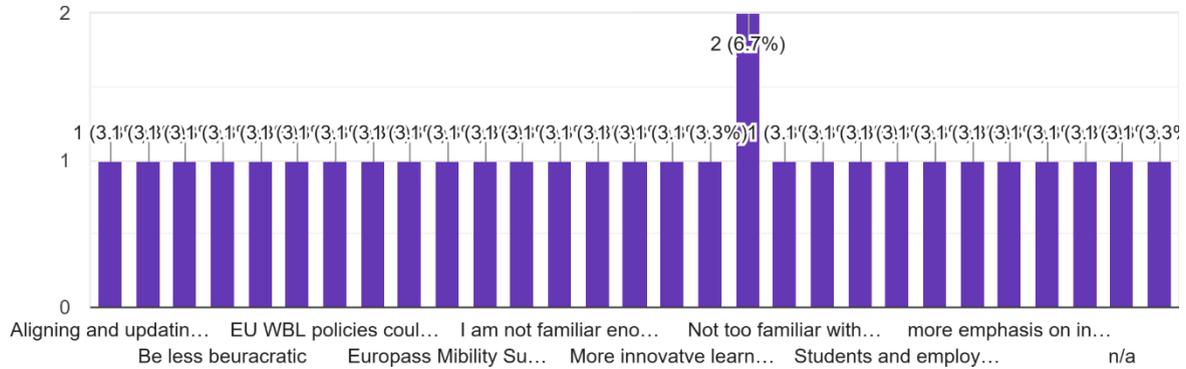
To what extent do you feel European Union policies and initiatives (e.g., Erasmus+, European Framework for WBL) are supporting WBL in your country?

30 responses



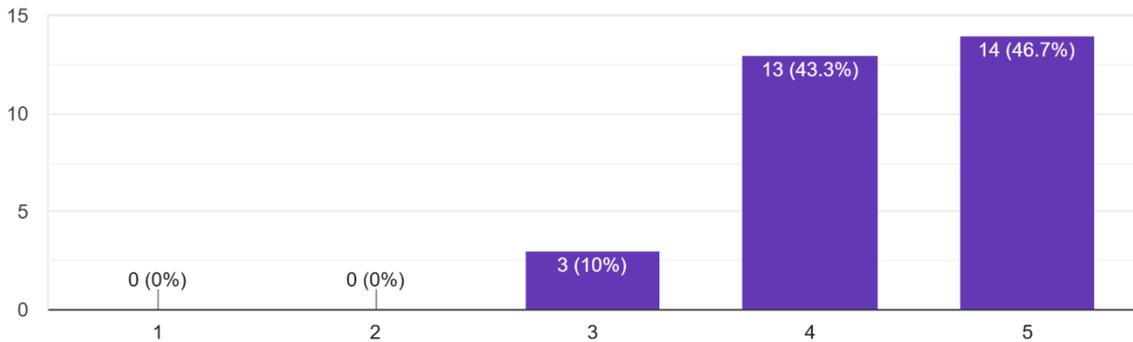
Are there any aspects of European Union WBL policies that you believe should be improved to better address the needs of your sector?

30 responses



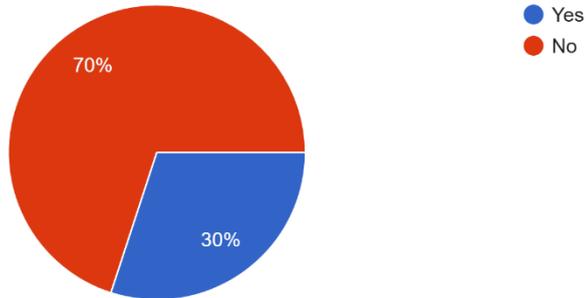
How important do you consider digital skills for the effective implementation of WBL programmes?

30 responses



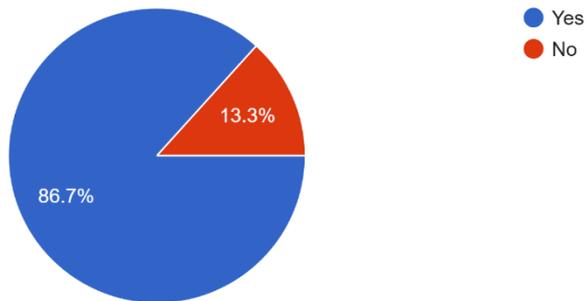
Are you aware of any digital tools currently used to support WBL in your country or institution?

30 responses



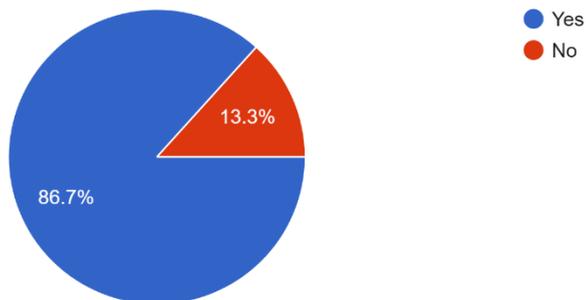
Would you be interested in participating in future workshops or roundtables on WBL and related digital skills?

30 responses



Would you like to be added to the "WBL Champion Stakeholder List" to receive updates and information about future WBL-related activities and tools?

30 responses



8.2 Best Practice Templates

Appendix 1

Title of the best practice (if there is no specific title write a short description):	Sites of Learning Model – KNIGHTS
Type of entity implementing (Public school, Private school, Center of training of teachers/schools, High-Education institutes or Universities, Teacher’s career management centres, Ministry or Department of Education, or Other) Please be specific here	Higher Education Institute – KNIGHTS (formerly CMBS)
At what level is/was it being applied: (School level, company level, corporate network, local level, regional level, National level, European Level, other – please specify)	University level
Year of starting (month/year)	September 2019
Is it still ongoing? (In case the practice is still ongoing, please put "Yes". If completed, please indicate the last year of implementation).	Yes
Key objectives	To integrate WBL formally into academic qualifications and align learning with labour market needs.
Brief description of best practice	KNIGHTS embeds 15–30 ECTS of WBL in MQF Level 6 and 7 programmes. Students alternate between theory and practice, with dual supervision and reflective assignments. Employers are engaged as co-educators through structured feedback.
Key actors involved	KNIGHTS faculty, employers (e.g. EY), students, academic and workplace mentors

Target group(s)	Undergraduate and postgraduate students
Sources (website, links, documents)	https://cmbs.edu.mt
What methodology was used in the application of this BP?	Experiential learning, curriculum co-design, dual supervision, reflective assessment
Elements that facilitated the implementation of the best practice (institutional, economic, social, and environmental)	Academic-industry partnerships, digital monitoring tools, adaptable placement models
Main challenges encountered in delivering this best practice, and how were they overcome?	Limited placements in niche sectors; resolved by employer mentorship training and hybrid formats
What was the overall impact of implementing this practice?	Enhanced student employability, strengthened academic-industry links, flexible and inclusive WBL delivery

Appendix 2

Title of the best practice (if there is no specific title write a short description):	Accelerated Work Study & Internships – EY Malta
Type of entity implementing (Public school, Private school, Center of training of teachers/schools, High-Education institutes or Universities, Teacher’s career management centres, Ministry or Department of Education, or Other) Please be specific here	Private Sector – EY Malta
At what level is/was it being applied: (School level, company level, corporate network, local level, regional level, National level, European Level, other – please specify)	Company level
Year of starting (month/year)	October 2017

Is it still ongoing? (In case the practice is still ongoing, please put "Yes". If completed, please indicate the last year of implementation).	Yes
Key objectives	To provide professional work exposure, integrate academic content with client delivery, and develop early talent.
Brief description of best practice	Students work on real client projects in tax, audit, and advisory while completing their academic programmes. A dual mentorship structure and global evaluation tools ensure competency development and performance alignment.
Key actors involved	EY HR, service line leads, KNIGHTS academic mentors, students
Target group(s)	Students in accounting, business, and IT disciplines
Sources (website, links, documents)	https://www.ey.com/en_mt/careers
What methodology was used in the application of this BP?	Work-integrated learning, continuous feedback, professional standards benchmarking
Elements that facilitated the implementation of the best practice (institutional, economic, social, and environmental)	Mentorship system, structured onboarding, collaboration with KNIGHTS
Main challenges encountered in delivering this best practice, and how were they overcome?	Staffing limitations during peak periods; addressed through resource allocation and mentor training
What was the overall impact of implementing this practice?	Improved talent retention, high graduate employment rates, scalable employer-led WBL model

Appendix 3

Title of the best practice (if there is no specific title write a short description):	Company Programme & Leaders for a Day – JA Malta
Type of entity implementing (Public school, Private school, Center of training of teachers/schools, High-Education institutes or Universities, Teacher’s career management centres, Ministry or Department of Education, or Other) Please be specific here	NGO – JA Malta
At what level is/was it being applied: (School level, company level, corporate network, local level, regional level, National level, European Level, other – please specify)	School level (national reach)
Year of starting (month/year)	October 2005
Is it still ongoing? (In case the practice is still ongoing, please put "Yes". If completed, please indicate the last year of implementation).	Yes
Key objectives	To build entrepreneurial skills, confidence, and workplace readiness among youth.
Brief description of best practice	Students form and run mini-companies and shadow executives. Programmes are supported by educators and industry mentors, focusing on real-world responsibility, innovation, and leadership.
Key actors involved	JA staff, secondary educators, industry mentors, students
Target group(s)	Secondary school students
Sources (website, links, documents)	https://jamalta.org

What methodology was used in the application of this BP?	Project-based learning, experiential simulation, mentorship
Elements that facilitated the implementation of the best practice (institutional, economic, social, and environmental)	Cross-sector partnerships, inclusive access models, national support
Main challenges encountered in delivering this best practice, and how were they overcome?	Expanding access and mentor supply; resolved through strategic partnerships and funding
What was the overall impact of implementing this practice?	Stronger employability skills, equity in WBL access, national engagement in youth entrepreneurship

Appendix 4

Title of the best practice (if there is no specific title write a short description):	Quality Assurance Guidelines for WBL – MFHEA
Type of entity implementing (Public school, Private school, Center of training of teachers/schools, High-Education institutes or Universities, Teacher’s career management centres, Ministry or Department of Education, or Other) Please be specific here	Regulatory Body – MFHEA
At what level is/was it being applied: (School level, company level, corporate network, local level, regional level, National level, European Level, other – please specify)	National level
Year of starting (month/year)	June 2023

Is it still ongoing? (In case the practice is still ongoing, please put "Yes". If completed, please indicate the last year of implementation).	Yes
Key objectives	To ensure high-quality, learner-centred, and labour market-aligned WBL across accredited education providers.
Brief description of best practice	MFHEA issued QA guidelines mandating supervision, formal agreements, learning outcomes, and RPL recognition for WBL programmes. These promote academic integrity and standardisation while enabling innovation.
Key actors involved	MFHEA, education institutions, employers, QA stakeholders
Target group(s)	Higher education providers and learners
Sources (website, links, documents)	https://mfhea.mt
What methodology was used in the application of this BP?	Policy consultation, framework alignment, structured QA process
Elements that facilitated the implementation of the best practice (institutional, economic, social, and environmental)	Legal authority, EU frameworks (EQF), institutional collaboration
Main challenges encountered in delivering this best practice, and how were they overcome?	Inconsistent practices; addressed through guidelines, templates, and stakeholder engagement
What was the overall impact of implementing this practice?	Greater WBL clarity, national alignment with EU standards, increased trust and participation



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