

MALTA / LABOUR MIGRATION POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION
Second Phase

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GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
SECURITY AND EMPLOYMENT



IMPLEMENTATION

Second Phase

The Malta Labour Migration Policy, released for consultation in early 2025, aims to refine the country's approach to labour migration by focusing on four guiding principles:

- 1.** Retention and Stability to encourage workforce integration and productivity;
- 2.** Protection of Employee Rights and Enhancement of Working conditions through improved oversight and fairness;
- 3.** Alignment of Labour Migration with domestic market needs to fill unaddressed roles;
- 4.** Skills-based approach that attracts talent and promotes training.

Following extensive consultation and revisions to the original 32 recommendations, the first phase of the Malta Labour Migration Policy began implementation on 1 August 2025, with 20 of the initial measures put into effect.

The second phase of the implementation strategy will continue to support the initial measures by focusing on further protection of employment rights, retention, as well as to enhance the skills and integration of foreign workers in Malta. In this respect, some measures will be implemented gradually from January 2026.

In addition, as part of the ongoing implementation of the measure aimed at upskilling and integrating the foreign workforce (Recommendation 27 in the Consultation Document on the Malta Labour Migration Policy), a new integration course will be offered to foreign nationals already residing in Malta. This initiative is intended to further enhance their skills and support their successful integration into Maltese society and the local labour market.

Pre-Departure Course for First-Time Single-Permit Applicants in Malta

From January 2026, Malta will introduce a new Pre-Departure Course for all Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) applying for a Single Permit.

The Pre-Departure Course is designed to ensure that anyone coming to work in Malta meets basic standards in skills,

English language, and cultural awareness. It serves as Malta's official way of confirming that new workers are prepared for the local workplace and can integrate successfully into the community.

To obtain a work permit, all first-time Single Permit applicants will need to hold a valid Pre-Departure Course Certificate. The system is based on a two-part structure that combines national integration standards with sector-specific skills validation.

Part 1, which is mandatory for all first-time applicants, consists of a Pre-Departure Course.

This includes two online modules—Living and Working in Malta and Rights and Obligations at the Workplace—each followed by an assessment. Applicants will then attend a live interview to confirm their English language proficiency.

Part 2 applies only to certain occupations that require additional, sector-specific training—such as roles in tourism and hospitality—where both Pre-Departure Course and Skills Pass are necessary for eligibility.

The entire process can be completed online through the Skills Pass Portal, followed by an in-person verification interview at one of the designated assessment centres worldwide.

The rollout will begin on 5 January 2026, when the Pre-Departure Portal officially opens.

From that date, applicants may start the Pre-Departure Course. Beginning 1 March 2026, Identità will start verifying full Pre-Departure Courses Certificates as part of the standard work permit application process.

The cost of this course is €250. For further details on this measure, refer to section A in Appendix.

Suitability Check

Each applicant will undergo an independent suitability check. Jobsplus reserves the right to refuse any application that does not provide sufficient evidence of the applicant's suitability for the job.

The suitability check will be based on the following criteria:

- 1.** Verification of the required Skills Card.
- 2.** Approval from the relevant regulatory body is required only for regulated professions where such approval is necessary for the specific duties of the role..
- 3.** Recognition of qualifications by the Malta Qualifications Recognition and Information Centre (MQRIC), where applicable.
- 4.** A Declaration of Suitability completed and signed by the employer.

Jobsplus reserves the right to request any additional documentation or information that it might require to ascertain suitability for the role.

Extension of Renewal Period

After working in Malta for one year, employees may renew their work permit for a longer period if specific requirements are met.

The renewal period depends on the type of job and the applicant's situation.

	ISCO Level	Maximum Renewal Period	Key Requirements
Lower-skilled roles	ISCO 5–9	Up to 2 years	- Must meet all residence permit requirements- Valid work contract of at least 2 years- Completion of an approved training program
Higher-skilled roles	ISCO 1–4	Up to 2 years	- Must meet all residence permit requirements- Work contract valid for at least 2 years
Special schemes (KEI, SEI, Blue Card Directive)	—	Up to 3 years	- Must meet all residence permit requirements
Skills Pass for Tourism and Hospitality	-	Up to 3 years	- Had acquired the Full Skills Pass and progressed to at least the next Skills Pass level – Employed with an MTA licensed operator – Work contract of at least 3 years (or indefinite contract)

The following is the envisaged implementation timeline:

Effective Date	Eligible Groups	Maximum Renewal Duration
January 2026	KEI, SEI, Blue Card Directive holders, Skills Pass that progressed to next level	Up to 3 years
January 2026	ISCO 1–4 roles	Up to 2 years
March 2026	ISCO 5–9 roles (with approved training)	Up to 2 years

Renewal costs are €150 per year. For example: a 2-year permit would cost €300. For further details, refer to section B of the Appendix.

A Holistic Programme for Immigrants' Integration

The high proportion of foreign nationals employed in lower-skilled roles underscores the need for stronger collaboration between government and employers to invest in workforce development. Well-structured training initiatives are essential to boost productivity, enhance staff retention, and ease labour and skills shortages.

Upskilling efforts must be tailored to the particular needs of foreign workers. A key component of this strategy is the introduction of Integration Courses, which provide cultural orientation and practical guidance on living and working in Malta. These courses help participants understand local customs, adapt more effectively to the Maltese workplace, and contribute confidently within their roles.

To support this goal, a new integration course will be offered through licensed Maltese institutions. The programme will cover areas such as Maltese culture and traditions, civic participation, legal and safety awareness, personal and professional development, , and language learning in both English and Maltese.

For further details, refer to section C of the Appendix.

Desk-investigations of employment regulations

In the second phase of implementing the Malta Labour Migration Policy, the Single Permit Directive is being amended to strengthen the enforcement of existing laws against worker exploitation.

Prohibition of Financial Compensation

Disqualification may be applied in cases where there is evidence that employers have requested or received financial compensation from employees in connection with their recruitment or subsequent termination, in contravention of the law.

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APPENDIX

Further details on
specific measures

A.

Pre-Departure Course for First-Time Single-Permit Applicants in Malta

The Skills Pass will follow a two-part structure.

The two-part structure will depend on the occupation in which the Non-EU/EEA/EFTA national is expected to be employed. The first part is mandatory for all Non-EU/EEA/EFTA nationals applying as first-time applicants, while the second part is required only for occupations that necessitate additional sector-specific modules in order to be eligible for employment in those roles.

Part 2 shall be mandatory only where Non-EU/EEA/EFTA nationals seek employment in a role that necessitates the completion of additional modules in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements for that specific position.

For instance, individuals pursuing employment in certain roles within the Tourism and Hospitality sector are required to complete both Part 1 and Part 2. The latter comprises sector-specific modules, the content of which shall vary in accordance with the requirements of the respective sector.

Part 1: Pre-Departure Integration Course

All Non-EU/EEA/EFTA nationals applying for a First-Time Permit will have to complete two online courses and an English proficiency assessment prior submission of their First-Time Single Permit application for working in Malta.

- Courses:
 - Living and Working in Malta
 - Rights and Obligations at the Workplace
- Each course requires approximately 10–12 hours of learning, including video modules, reading materials, and practice assignments, delivered through the Skills Pass platform
- The assessments will be followed by a 20-minute live online interview conducted either at ITS Malta or at an authorised Global Assessment Centre, verifying both language proficiency and understanding of course content.
- Candidates will have up to 42 days to complete Part 1 and may revisit the courses before their final interview.

Part 2: Sector-Specific Certification

Sectors governed by their own subsidiary legislation, such as Tourism and Hospitality, may introduce additional online modules and assessments as required by their respective policies or legal frameworks. These sector-specific components will form part of the Phase 2 interview.

These modules and/or assessments will be managed by the responsible body for such sector. Assessments will be in-line with the National Occupational Standards, as derived and adapted from time to time by the responsible body. The body corporate/authority responsible for the sector will lead the development of the assessments in line-with the guidelines provided by the Skills Pass Unit, to align with its systems.

Applicability

The Pre-Departure Integration Course shall be carried out by:

- Any Non-EU/EEA/EFTA national who is at least sixteen (16) years of age; and
- Any Non-EU/EEA/EFTA national who is applying for a first-time single permit with Identità.

Exemptions and Transitional Arrangements

- Existing Non-EU/EEA/EFTA nationals holding valid single permits prior to the implementation date remain exempt.
- Existing Non-EU/EEA/EFTA nationals employed within sectors that require additional skill modules (Part 2) such as Tourism and Hospitality will be required to obtain the full Skills Pass Certificate in line with relevant legislation.

Timeline

	Effective Date	Description
Portal Launch	5 January 2026	The Skills Pass portal opens for all first-time work permit applicants to commence the Pre-Departure Integration Measure.
Certificate Requirement	1 March 2026	Identità begins verification of the full Skills Pass Certificate as part of the work permit application process.

B.

Extension of renewal period

Following the completion of one year of engagement, the renewal period may be granted for a duration exceeding one year, subject to the fulfilment of specific criteria.

- 1.** Applicants employed in lower-skilled occupations (defined according to ISCO levels 5–9) may be granted a renewal period of two years, provided that:
 - a.** All requirements necessary for the residence permit are duly satisfied.
 - b.** The duration of the employment contract is not less than two years.
 - c.** The applicant has successfully completed a verified training programme (as defined below).
- 2.** Applicants employed in higher-skilled occupations (ISCO levels 1–4) may be granted a renewal period of two years, provided that:
 - a.** All requirements necessary for the residence permit are duly satisfied.
 - b.** The duration of the employment contract is not less than two years.
- 3.** Applicants under the Key Employment Initiative (KEI), Specialist Employment Initiative (SEI), and the Blue Card Directive may be granted a renewal period of three years, provided that all requirements necessary for the residence permit are duly satisfied.
- 4.** Applicants with a full Skills Pass for Tourism and Hospitality, advancement to at least the next Skills Pass Level via a 60 ECTS qualification (minimum Yellow, MQF level 2), is employed by an MTA licensed operator, and has a contract of at least three years (or indefinite) may receive a three-year renewal, provided that all requirements necessary for the residence permit are duly satisfied.

The renewal fee is €150 per annum; therefore, payment must cover the full validity period of the permit.
Example: a two-year permit will cost €300.

Training Definition for Renewal Purposes

For the purposes of this measure, training refers to accredited programmes provided by a further or higher education institution licensed by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). Training must be delivered by a local training service provider and must correspond to at least MQF Level 2 and 8 ECTS credits or higher.¹

Applicants must provide documentary evidence of completion (e.g. a copy of the certificate) for any training courses undertaken during their period of employment in Malta.

Eligible types of training include:

1. General training programmes²
2. Integration and cultural courses (as defined below)
3. English and Maltese language courses

Ineligible types of training include:

1. Non-accredited training not recognised by the MFHEA
2. Training undertaken as a pre-condition for obtaining a work permit
3. Training completed prior to the commencement of the work permit
4. Legally mandatory training
5. Internal training, information sessions, meetings, conferences, seminars, or team-building events

Timeline

The following is the envisaged implementation timeline:

Effective Date	Eligible Groups	Maximum Renewal Duration
January 2026	KEI, SEI, Blue Card Directive holders	Up to 3 years
January 2026	ISCO 1–4 roles	Up to 2 years
March 2026	ISCO 5–9 roles (with approved training)	Up to 2 years

¹ Licensed institutions can be found here: <http://qualifications.ncfhe.gov.mt/#/institutions>. The list of accredited programmes can be found here: <https://qualifications.mfhea.gov.mt/#/qualifications>.

² General training' shall mean training involving tuition which is not applicable only or principally to the employee's present or future position in the assisted firm, but which provides qualifications that are largely transferable to other firms or fields of work and thereby substantially improve the employability of the employee. Training shall be considered 'general' if, for example, — it is jointly organised by different independent enterprises, or if employees of different enterprises may avail themselves of the training, — it is recognised, certified or validated by public authorities or bodies or by other bodies or institutions on which a Member State or the Community has conferred the necessary powers. See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001R0068>

C.

A Holistic Programme for Immigrants' Integration

As part of this measure, a new cultural and integration course is being introduced. This course will build on the existing pre-departure integration course and aims to further support the integration of TCNs residing in Malta. The course will contain both in-person and online courses.

The course will have a duration of 40 - 42 hours, with the following modules:

Session 1: Malta: A Journey Through Heritage and Traditions

Session 2: Integrating effectively within Maltese society

Session 3: Understanding Malta's Democracy and its Institutional Framework

Session 4: Overview of Malta's Legal System

Session 5: Staying Safe and Healthy in Malta

Session 6: Leading an active life in Malta

Session 7: Personal and Career Development

Session 8: Renting in Malta: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

Session 9: Budgeting personal finances effectively

Session 10: Clean and Green Malta – A Guide for Residents

Session 11: Digital Literacy

Sessions 12, 13, 14 & 15: English Language Programme for Immigrants

Sessjonijiet 16, 17, 18 & 19: Programm ta' Tagħlim tal-Malti

Session 20: Building Bridges: Tolerance towards all citizens and Interfaith Understanding

TCNs who successfully complete this course will be eligible for an extension of their renewal period as defined above.

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