



L-Università
ta' Malta

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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Foreword by the Rector

PROFESSOR ALFRED J. VELLA

Rector

It gives me huge satisfaction to review this report which outlines the great work we're doing at *L-Università ta' Malta* (UM) for the benefit of our students and ultimately that of the nation.

The year under review registered new records, both in the total number of students following courses with us and that of international students who comprised 25% of the total studying on campus. A key development was the mainstreaming of micro-credentials and the organisation of teaching and learning in stackable credentials that provide certification to students besides that available from the normal programmes of study of the University. This approach targets especially (although not uniquely) the adult learner and serves to make the University more responsive to societal needs and aspirations as well as the upskilling of the workforce.

During this year, the Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) rolled out its full annual cycle of activities providing training to academics in key areas such as the use of generative AI in teaching, assessment, research and administration and also provided mentoring to early career tenure track academics.

The research and innovation mission remained central to our work: Scopus and Web of Science registered over 1000 research

publications of which 60% were in Open Access. External funding of projects totalled €17.1 million. In addition to the cohort of resident academics, over 500 research support officers were employed to assist in the generation of research together with another 535 doctoral candidates and 575 master students also working on research dissertations. These numbers testify to the fact that UM is clearly a foremost research-committed university in the Mediterranean region and explains why it has earned the confidence of local and international students, and indeed academic staff and continues to escalate University Ranking systems worldwide. The considerable body of research opens prospects of commercialisation and one notes that during the period under review, 11 new patents were registered and in addition to the three spin out companies that were then active and growing robustly, the university had another 5 spin outs in the pipeline.

Academic year 2024-2025 was the last full year during which it was my privilege to lead this important institution since in July 2026 Professor Frank Bezzina will take up office as the new Rector of UM. I take this opportunity to wish Professor Bezzina the best of luck in this not-easy role and strongly encourage all academic and administrative colleagues to rally behind the new leadership team so that *L-Università* can continue to grow healthily and sustainably. Malta needs a strong University given the challenges ahead for Europe and the world.

Vision, Mission, Values

The University of Malta aims to be among the best universities in Europe and the world and to provide world-class research and education. Our community of scholars endeavours to maintain the highest standards in education and strives to ensure that what we deliver is fit for the purpose of serving industry and the country in general, keeping both the economic and the social wellbeing in focus.

This is expressed in our mission statement: "to serve the aspirations of the people of these islands through locally and globally significant research and the provision of quality higher education in the arts, sciences and the humanities as required for Malta's economic, social and cultural development, via the scholarship of discovery, teaching and service to the community. These functions shall be delivered in a sustainable manner that is responsive to this country's present and emergent needs".

As is typical of any European University, ours is committed to the values of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and this commitment is sealed in the Magna Charta Universitatum, which we signed together with another 387 rectors in Bologna in 1988. Other values which we embrace as members of the European Higher Education Area are academic integrity, institutional accountability, and the involvement of our students and staff in the institution's governance.

Governance of the University

COUNCIL

The Council is the supreme governing body of the University.
Its functions are defined in the Education Act, Article 77.

The members of Council are listed hereunder:

Pro-Chancellor President <i>(Ex Officio)</i>	Perit Karmenu Vella
Rector Vice President <i>(Ex Officio)</i>	Professor Alfred J. Vella
Senate representatives	Professor Joseph Cacciottolo Professor Dominic Fenech Professor Emmanuel Sinagra Professor Noellie Brockdorff
Members elected by the academic staff	Professor Frank Camilleri <i>(up to 18.09.2025)</i> Professor Emmanuel Said <i>(as from 19.09.2025)</i> Professor Liberato Camilleri Professor David Mifsud
Members elected by the non-academic staff	Mr Clive Ferrante Mr Elton J. Baldacchino Mr Noel Caruana
Student representatives	Mr Jeremy Mifsud <i>(up to 09.03.2025)</i> Ms Bianca Pace <i>(as from 10.03.2025)</i> Mr Eucharist Bajada Mr Michael Spiteri
Member appointed by the Minister for Education, Youth and Employment	Mr Matthew Vella <i>(up to 24.09.2024)</i> Judge Emeritus Joseph Filletti <i>(as from 25.09.2024)</i>
Member appointed by the Chair of the Foundation for Theological Studies	Rev. Professor George Grima

Members appointed by the Prime Minister
to represent the general interest of
the country

Ms Krista Caruana Falzon
Dr Marius Caruana
Mr Reginald Fava
Ms Josanne Ghirxi
Mr Mario Grech
Dr Charles Mangion
Dr Danika Marmara
Mr Charles Micallef
Mr Carlo Mifsud
Mr David Muscat
Mr James Pearsall
Mr Roderick Psaila
Mr Oliver Scicluna
Ms Stephanie Scicluna Laiviera

Secretary to Council |
Secretary of the University

Mr Simon Sammut

The Council has established a number of Committees with specific responsibilities as follows:

Student Affairs Committee (including Travel Grants, Bursaries, Scholarships)

Staff Scholarship and Bursaries Committee

Staff Affairs Committee

Academic Resources Funds Committee

Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff Work Resources Committee

Audit and Risk Committee

Committee to consider extension of appointments of Academic Staff

Finance Committee

IT Services Committee

Safety Committee

Board of Discipline (Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff)

Medical Board for University (for University Staff)

Committee for Council Rules of Procedure

Shortlisting Committee for the appointment of Directors of Institutes/Centres/Schools

Research Fellowship Committee

University House Liaison Committee

SENATE

The University Senate is responsible for the general direction of the academic matters of the University and deals with any matter of an academic nature arising in the administration of the University. The Senate regulates studies and research in the University; it establishes the conditions for admission into the University through regulations, makes regulations governing all courses leading to University awards, and approves the programmes of study constituting such courses. It also advises the Council on matters of an academic nature.

The members of Senate are listed hereunder:

President (<i>Ex Officio</i>)	Professor Alfred J. Vella
Pro-Rectors	Professor Frank Bezzina Professor Joseph Cacciottolo Professor Ing. Simon Fabri Professor Carmen Sammut Professor Valerie Sollars
Deans	Professor Dominic Fenech Chev. Professor Marc Bonello Professor Nikolai J. Attard Professor Emanuel Said (<i>up to 04.08.2025</i>) Professor Simon Grima (<i>as from 05.08.2025</i>) Professor Colin Calleja Professor Ing. Andrew Sammut Dr Stephen Lungaro Mifsud Professor Ing. Carl J. Debono Professor Ivan Mifsud Professor Noellie Brockdorff Professor Godfrey Laferla Professor Emmanuel Sinagra Dr Sandra Scicluna Rev. Professor Stefan Attard
Representatives from each of the faculties	Professor Keith Sciberras Professor JoAnn Cassar Dr Maria Luisa Gainza-Cirauqui (<i>up to 08.09.2025</i>) Dr Anne-Marie Agius (<i>as from 09.09.2025</i>) Dr Joseph Schembri (<i>up to 03.10.2024</i>) Dr Carl Camilleri (<i>as from 04.10.2024</i>) Dr Michelle Attard Tonna (<i>up to 21.05.2025</i>) Professor Sandro Caruana (<i>as from 22.05.2025</i>) Professor Ing. Paul Refalo (<i>up to 30.07.2025</i>) Dr Jean Paul Mollicone (<i>as from 31.07.2025</i>) Professor Josef Trapani Professor John Abela Professor Ivan Sammut Professor Joseph A. Cannataci Professor Josanne Vassallo (<i>up to 20.10.2024</i>) Professor Richard Muscat (<i>as from 21.10.2024</i>) Dr Fiona Sammut Professor Mary Anne Lauri Rev. Dr Kevin Schembri (<i>up to 08.09.2025</i>) Rev. Professor Charlo Camilleri (<i>as from 09.09.2025</i>)

Student representatives	Mr Andrea Cuschieri Ms Marthea Grech Mr Andrew Sciberras Ms Cherise Sultana Dr Gerard-William Zammit Young
Representatives of the Minister for Education and Employment	Ms Ritianne Borg Saliba Judge Emeritus Joseph Filletti
Representatives of the Institutes	Professor Odette Vassallo Professor Ing. David Zammit Mangion
Librarian (<i>Ex Officio</i>)	Mr Kevin J. Ellul
Secretary Registrar	Dr Colin Borg

The Senate has established several committees with specific responsibilities as follows:

Animal Welfare Committee

Board to Review Reason for Absences from Assessments

Committee for Student Societies

Committee for Students' Requests

Committee for the Implementation of the Students' Charter

Committee of Discipline (regarding Students' Misconduct)

Committee for the consideration of Police Conduct Certificates

Digital Education Committee

Doctoral Academic Committee

Editorial Board – Malta University Press

Joint Programmes Committee

Library Committee

Office for Academic Professional Development Advisory Committee

Ph.D. and Master (by research) Degrees Scholarship Selection Board

Professional Development Committee for the Doctoral School

Programme Validation Committee

Quality Assurance Committee

SEA-EU Affairs Committee

Selection Committee for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

UM Fitness to Practise Board

University Admissions Board

University Assessment Appellate Board

University Assessment Disciplinary Board

University Research Ethics Committee

Web Editorial Board

Joint Senate and Council Boards/Committees

Academic Promotions Board A (Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Junior College Academics)

Academic Promotions Board B (Associate Professors and Professors)

ACCESS Disability Support Committee

Committee for Research Engagement

Committee for Safeguarding the Code of Professional Academic Conduct

Committee for Sustainability at the University of Malta (C-SUM)

Committee for University of Malta's Strategic Plan

Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs

Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee

Research Fund Committee

University Equity Committee

University Honours Committee

Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee

Sustainability Matters

Whilst sustainability initiatives at the University of Malta continued to thrive over the past year, this brief overview of sustainability-related achievements for 2025 is being introduced by referencing three major milestones to help contextualise the foundations for sustainability and its development at the institutional level. This is particularly important considering that this is the first University annual report to include a section addressing sustainability matters.

Overview of sustainability at UM

In 2018, a joint Senate/Council Committee for Sustainability (C-SUM) was set up. The Committee was tasked with

- developing the sustainability vision, strategy and objectives for the University of Malta
- identifying sustainability areas in line with the SDGs that can be implemented at the University of Malta, and establishing targets and indicators to oversee and monitor implementation
- accessing and collecting all the necessary information to support its monitoring and reporting functions across all entities within the University, and reporting performance through international metrics
- supporting or undertaking the necessary research on various aspects of implementing and maintaining sustainability practices at the University, and participating in local, national and international fora to present results and achievements
- establishing effective communication with the University community on sustainability issues arising from time to time on and around the Campus, and recommending proposals for improvement.

Subsequently, one of the Strategic Themes in the University's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 laid out the six areas for which this strategic theme was to provide direction. These included:

- the sustainable development of land and buildings on campus
- the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste
- encouraging sustainable transport measures
- extending energy efficient measures, conservation of water and reducing consumption
- delivering training and research about sustainability
- promoting healthy living practices on campus.

In 2023, the Rector chose to add sustainability to the profile of one of the Pro-Rectors.

Sustainability at UM 2024/2025

Overhaul of the University's sustainability webpage

Thanks to the staff at our Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office (MCAO), the University **Sustainability webpage** underwent a complete overhaul during the academic year 2024/2025. This was made possible through the initiative of members of staff who came forward as Sustainability Champions.

Introducing the concept of Sustainability Champions

Whether considering the implementation of policies or promoting practices to encourage sustainability, every member of the University community is encouraged to take responsibility for promoting sustainability through personal beliefs and actions, promoting and participating in events and by addressing sustainability in teaching, research and outreach.

An invitation was extended to staff to consider being identified as 'sustainability champions'. Several came forward and recorded short video clips **sharing their insights and interest in sustainability from a personal and professional perspective.**

Professional development

Training aimed at academic and administrative staff, as well as workshops and presentations for the wider community, were introduced. Examples of training and information sharing included:

Training for Malta Tourism Authority staff about Sustainability in Tourism was conducted in November 2024

A lecture about the local water sources and aquifers was held in January 2025

A blended intensive programme (BIP) for staff and students, members of the SEA-EU Alliance, was organised at the University of Malta in February 2025. The focus of the BIP was tourism sustainability.

An online lecture led by Prof. Walter Leal about tapping into funding possibilities for sustainability-related projects was held in March 2025

Sustainability workshops for UM Staff were introduced in May 2024. Building a Sustainable University: Empowering UM Staff for Change was the introductory workshop, offered by the Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD), in collaboration with the Centre for Environmental Education and Research (CEER). This was initially offered in May 2024 and repeated for different audiences in September 2024 and in January 2025.

This training was also offered to entities as part of their Professional Development Day (e.g. the Faculty of Science in December 2024).

A second workshop, entitled **Embedding education for sustainability in study units** was offered in February and October 2025. This workshop sought to support academic members of staff to consider how sustainability principles and insights could be incorporated into their teaching components and disciplines.

Teaching, learning and sustainability

Through their undergraduate or postgraduate programmes of study, many students participated in various events and activities addressing sustainability matters. In 2025, members of staff were invited to submit **details of study-units that directly or indirectly address sustainability and/or SDGs**.

Students were also provided with opportunities to consider sustainability through various project-based initiatives. Undergraduate students at the Institute of Earth Systems (IES) were assigned projects to explore and investigate four aspects of sustainability on campus between February and June 2025. These included water management, waste management, setting up a swap shop, and inviting the farmers' market onto Campus. On 10 April 2025, the Farmers' Market visited Campus for the first time.

Students from the Department for Health, Physical Education and Consumer Studies within the Faculty of Education organised an information-sharing event with multiple aims: to increase awareness of different herbs and spices that can be used in meals to reduce stress; to highlight the importance of meal planning in creating low-cost meals; to encourage healthy lifestyles by utilising nutritious ingredients; and to provide guidance on stress management and budget-conscious meal preparation. **Short information and simple recipe cards were also prepared for distribution along with healthy, quick-to-make snacks.**

Students from the Institute of Physical Education and Sport (IPES) organised several events during the year to promote physical activity and well-being, combining these initiatives with outreach events and contributing towards good causes on behalf of NGOs.

Events by IPES students



Saddle & Sport Festival



Open Day at Starlites Basketball Club



TREK-STRETCH & BREATHE



The Gollcher Team-Building Treasure Hunt

Dissemination of Research, research projects and academic publications

The University radio, Campus 103.7, hosted a series of thirteen one-hour programmes entitled *Sostenibilità: Ricerca u Esperjenzi Lokali*. The series was broadcast between April and June 2025. Academics from various Faculties and Institutes – including the Faculties for the Built Environment; Medicine and Surgery; Engineering; Education; Economics, Management and Accountancy (FEMA); Media and Knowledge Sciences (MAKS); Information and Communication Technology (ICT); the Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE), the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development (ICCS), the Institute for Digital Games (IDG); and the Centre for Environment Education and Research (CEER) – were among the guests who shared insights into their sustainability-related research and its wider impact.

Academic research and publications conducted by staff at the University of Malta have also been collated in a **dedicated section on the UM Sustainability webpage**.

Outreach activities

Sustainability matters were also addressed through a number of activities, reinforcing the University's commitment to society. Several initiatives were organised to coincide with international days.

On the occasion of World Food Day in October 2024, a food-collection drive was organised. With around 20 collection points across campus, food items were gathered and donated to Il-Kċina ta' Marta, an entity responsible for preparing nutritious meals and assisting individuals and families in need across various parishes and communities.



Feeding the Future: Nourishing Change for Sustainable Development



World Food Day collection initiative

In June 2025, UM participated in a summer clothes collection on behalf of the NGO INSPIRE. The organisation requested the University's participation in sourcing clothes to be resold at its charity and second-hand shops.



Summer Clothes Collection

To mark **Sustainable Gastronomy Day** on 18 June, a number of short activities were introduced across campus. Colleagues from the Department of Health, Physical Education and Consumer Studies joined forces with staff at Il-Kantin to offer healthy, complimentary items and specially prepared dishes at accessible prices.



Sustainable Gastronomy Day - 18 June | UM Initiatives

Two publications followed from initiatives that began on Sustainable Gastronomy Day. The first, **Choose your own food**, invited University staff to respond to three questions associated with their food preferences, consumer choices and the importance of labelling.

A second publication, **The Mediterranean Sustainable Kitchen** recipe book, launched in October 2025, was prepared by staff and students from the Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics within the Faculty of Health Sciences.

During August and September 2025, academic and administrative staff, Ph.D. students, and Research Support Officers (RSOs) participated in **video recordings focussing on the SDGs** and SDG targets aligned with their research, teaching, and/or professional roles at UM. Through this event, the University participated in the European Sustainable Development Week 2025 (18 September to 8 October 2025).



Infrastructural Work

During the academic year 2024/2025, through the Estates, Facilities and Capital Development Directorate necessary maintenance works, construction and refurbishment continued. The management of University properties and facilities was adequately catered for, to provide the University staff and students access to services which are necessary to effectively achieve the institution's objectives of excellence in teaching and research, whilst simultaneously focusing on sustainability both in the way the interventions are implemented and in the manner in which they are utilised and maintained.

Work proceeded on major, routine maintenance and minor works. Most of the work was undertaken by the Estates in-house maintenance team, and partly outsourced where the nature and size of the job demanded the intervention of external contractors. Requests from the Faculties and other University entities, including observations and inspections and, which were conducted by the Estates staff, exceeded 6,000. Such demand reflects a wider understanding of the system through which University staff may request the assistance and intervention of staff at Estates.

Within the Facilities Management Unit (FMU), the preventive maintenance on plants, lifts, air conditioners, Photovoltaics (PVs) and generators was, to a large extent, undertaken under the various maintenance agreement contracts with external contractors. The FMU's technical staff also continued to monitor and address issues related to the above as soon as they arose.

The Estates Industrial staff also provided vital assistance in the general maintenance works at other UM premises, including the Marsaxlokk Campus, the Msida Campus, the Valletta Campus, Junior College (JC), the Floriana Argotti Botanic Gardens and Resources Centre and the Fawwara Centre.

Parking and logistical issues that arose as a consequence of the continued construction activity on campus and the Campus Hub continued to pose challenges, but were adequately handled. The Precincts Office also continued to introduce a number of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to address issues that developed over the year, and a change in management also took place.

Space Management remained an important and demanding issue, and to this extent, regular updating of the space audit was carried out. The current SOP on Space Management and Change of Use is currently being reviewed with a view to providing a more effective tool to ensure the best use of all University spaces. The Facilities Management Unit is still seeking to recruit an Energy Manager to further enhance its drive to reduce energy costs and consumption, identify alternative sources of energy, and explore other avenues for sustainable initiatives, with the ultimate objective of providing a Sustainable Energy Strategy for the University.

As regards Capital Development, progress was achieved on a number of projects. These may be classified under (i) Construction works in progress, (ii) Project designs and PA applications and (iii) Tenders preparation.



Construction works in progress

The continued assistance to the Sustainable Living Complex (SLC) project on finishes, furniture, coordination of schedules, including the preparation of tenders for the Substation works, Chiller area and the connection of services.

The extensive refurbishment work at the Junior College Biology laboratories was initiated, and following the completion of the finishes and Mechanical and Electrical works, the lab furniture is now in the process of being installed. Work has proceeded on the installation of lightning protection systems on all University buildings. The JC football ground lighting tender has been awarded, and work is expected to commence shortly.

Project designs and PA applications

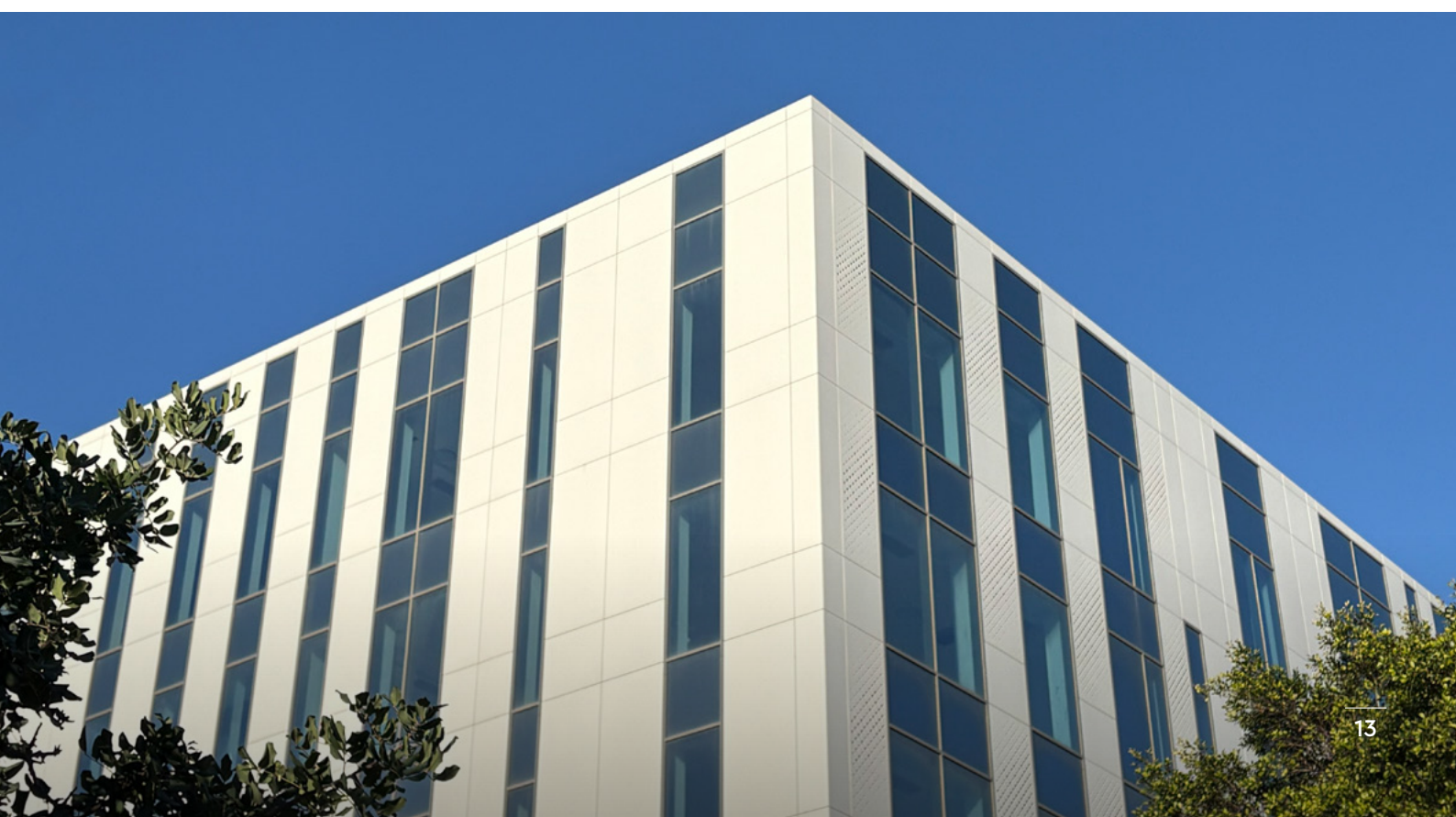
- Revised design work for the eventual relocation of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing to the current Faculty for the Built Environment (BEN) building continued to be developed in liaison with the Faculty Dean. Cost estimates were also prepared.
- Extensive internal design work continued on the new Faculty for Dental Surgery, and the PA permit was approved and obtained. Cost estimates were prepared.
- The PA permit for the extension to the Archaeology Centre was approved, and discussions have been initiated on the M&E, whilst awaiting confirmation of funding following detailed cost estimates.
- Project design work continued on the Library projects,

namely the Student Study Area, the Archives and Rare Books Collection and the Library Entrance Project.

- Design work was initiated on the existing building facades at the Msida Campus with a view to improving the aesthetics and environmental performance of the individual buildings.
- The Sports and Performing Arts internal design continued, and detailed cost estimates were prepared.
- Design work and a method statement, including cost estimates for the Wied Ghollieq car park rehabilitation project, were drawn up.
- Refurbishment designs for the Maths and Physics toilet facilities, as well as those for Students' House, were prepared.
- Plans were prepared for services, cladding, double-glazed windows, and the generator screen at the Valletta Campus.
- Design work for the refurbishment of the Chemistry Labs.
- Lecture Centre (LC) seating replacement continued.
- The Engineering Lecture Hall work continued.
- Design work on a number of projects was initiated at JC, including a new library, JC Chemistry, Physics and Maths Office wings, the Sports Hall, Chapel and Study Area.

Tenders preparation

A number of tenders were prepared, some being directly related to the above-mentioned projects, and others related to new initiatives.



Satellite Campuses

VALLETTA CAMPUS

The Conferences and Events Unit experienced an increase in event bookings compared to the previous academic year, with the majority of events delivered in a hybrid format.

In total, the Valletta Campus hosted 316 events, including ten press conferences, six events organised by the Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, and eight major international conferences. Other notable events included the SEA-EU meetings, UM Council and Senate meetings, several COST meetings, graduation ceremonies, and five book launches. The Campus also welcomed a significant number of exhibitions, short courses, and training and examination sessions. In May, the UM Research Expo was held at the Valletta Campus, providing UM researchers with the opportunity to showcase ongoing research across the University.

Two major international events were hosted during the period under review. In November 2024, the Campus welcomed the 34th Annual Conference on Astronomical Data Analysis Software and Systems (ADASS). In July 2025, it hosted DIGRA

2025 (Digital Games Research Association), welcoming over 400 delegates from around the world. Both conferences included the live streaming of plenary sessions and panel discussions for participants unable to attend in person.

The Valletta Campus also served as a filming location for several scenes in two international film productions. The Valletta Campus Theatre (VCT) continued its busy schedule as the primary rehearsal venue for UM's School of Performing Arts. Public engagement remained strong, with the theatre hosting thirty-five external companies, artists, festivals, and production houses over the twelve-month period, demonstrating its integral role within Malta's cultural landscape as a professional, community, and artistic hub.

The largest production staged during the year was *Il-Każin tal-Imqarbin*, which achieved seven consecutive weekends of sold-out performances. The VCT also hosted the Malta International Arts Festival, presenting three international performances, each with distinct technical and staging requirements. *ŻfinMalta*, the National Dance Company, staged three productions, making full use of the theatre's resources.



GOZO CAMPUS

Courses

During academic year 2024–2025, a number of courses continued to be offered at the Campus, namely:

- Bachelor of Commerce in Business and Enterprise Management and Economics (Year 3) (2 students)
- Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (Year 5) (4 students)
- Master in Counselling (Year 4) (8 students)

A new course leading to the Diploma in Commerce commenced in October 2024, enrolling a total of 11 students.

These courses are offered on a part-time basis, with face-to-face lectures held mainly on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings.

The Centre for Liberal Arts and Sciences continued to offer micro-credentials at the Gozo Campus.



One of the lectures of LAS1082 in progress.

The University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age once again opened its academic year at the Gozo Campus. The opening ceremony, held on 11 October 2024, included an introductory speech by Ms Simone Ellul, administrator at the University of the Third Age, and a Holy Mass celebrated by Rev. Lawrence Sciberras. The Minister for Gozo, Hon. Clint Camilleri, who was also present, delivered a short address to the participants. Over fifty participants attended these courses.



The Hon. Clint Camilleri addressing the participants during the opening ceremony of the U3A academic year.

Space for study

During May, a study space at the Gozo Campus was made available to provide students with a quiet area in which to study and prepare for their examinations. This joint initiative was made possible through collaboration between the Gozo Campus, the Gozo University Group and Ms Simona Refalo, Mayor of Xewkija Local Council.

Examinations

As in previous years, the necessary arrangements were made at the Gozo Campus to enable UM students residing in Gozo to sit for their end-of-semester examinations in Gozo. During academic year 2024–2025, examinations were held as follows:

- January/February 2025 Session: 400 (Pen and Paper) and 90 (WISEflow on Campus) 468 students
- June 2025 Session: 442 (Pen and Paper) and 96 (WISEflow on Campus) 503 students
- September 2025 Session: 85 (Pen and Paper) and 17 (WISEflow on Campus) 115 students

Refurbishment

In December 2024, a number of lecture rooms were refurbished and equipped with new furniture. Additionally, a new kitchenette was installed in one of the rooms. These will provide better facilities for the organisation of more activities on the campus.



Prof. Perit Rebecca Dalli Gonzi delivering her speech during a seminar held at the Gozo Campus



One of the lecture rooms equipped with new desks and chairs.

MARSAXLOKK CAMPUS

The Marsaxlokk Campus houses the Institute for Sustainable Energy, which focusses on renewable energy and energy efficiency research, postgraduate education and certification courses, and provides support to local industries and government institutions. The Institute currently has four full-time academics and five non-academic staff, three research support officers, and eighteen associated academic members. During this academic year, the Institute hosted four Masters and three Ph.D. students, while three additional Masters students graduated. The Institute also hosts several Erasmus and visiting students and provides service to several UM Departments and Institutes through teaching and supervision. It is currently hosting one Marie Curie scholar.

ISE continues to be very active in research and is currently involved in 11 research projects. These projects are in the areas of solar energy (Slice, Enforce), energy storage and hydrogen (HydroGenEration), offshore renewables (Fortress, MUSICA, OWRQ, CA20109), Wind energy (Multi-bladed Wind-turbine development), energy in buildings (DETOCS, Housing Authority collaboration), and interdisciplinary (HYPER). ISE has developed and maintains active collaboration with several groups.

ISE academics and associate academics published a total of 32 papers (19 by resident academics) and were guest editors for four peer-reviewed special issue publications. ISE co-organised the National Energy Conference with the Energy and Water Agency, and ISE members participated in several key national and international conferences and events as speakers, attendees, or participants. ISE members of staff also participated in several UM, national, and international committees and are very active in the local community. During this academic year, ISE members of staff were featured several times in local and international media either as subject-matter experts or discussing their work. Of particular note, in January, the project MAELSTROM, of which ISE was part, was featured on Euronews.



TRANSFER OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE & GOZO CAMPUS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

On Thursday, 20 February 2025, the Lands Authority formally signed a perpetual emphyteusis agreement with the University of Malta for the transfer of land, on which the Junior College and Gozo Campus are situated, to the University. With this transfer, the University aims to strengthen its operations and strategic vision in education and research, while ensuring better use of public buildings.

Student Services, Courses, Graduations and Student Numbers

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

New courses

During academic year 2024/2025, the University of Malta introduced a number of new courses across various academic entities.

At postgraduate level, the Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Regulation and Compliance was launched by the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy (FEMA) to provide in-depth insight into the complex landscape of financial oversight. The Master of Conservation in Decorative Architectural Surfaces, Easel Paintings, or Stone was also introduced, building on the Preparatory Programme and enabling students to develop and apply conservation decisions to the highest practical and ethical standards.

The Master of Science in Work and Organisational Behaviour (by Research) was launched by the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) to further develop expertise in fields relating to human resources, occupational health, and organisational studies.

Additionally, the Doctorate in Educational Leadership (EdD) was offered for the first time by the Faculty of Education. This Level 8 professional doctorate is designed for practising educators wishing to enhance their leadership, strategic and project management abilities, deepen their professional understanding, and develop high-level reflective and research skills aimed at transforming their educational organisations.

Furthermore, the Master of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Society and the Master of Science in Cybersecurity were also offered as new areas of postgraduate study.

At undergraduate level, the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Financial Mathematics and Risk Management was launched as a full-time four-year degree by the Faculty of Science.

The Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Language Technology and Artificial Intelligence was also introduced through a collaboration between the Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology and the Department of Artificial Intelligence.

The Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism Management was also offered as a new area of undergraduate study.

Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials at the University of Malta (UM) continue to grow steadily, offering short, targeted learning experiences that address specific societal, professional, and labour-market needs. Following the successful formal launch of micro-credentials in 2023/2024, academic year 2024/2025 has further strengthened UM's position as a leading provider of flexible, high-impact learning opportunities.

Demand remained consistent across disciplines, with several departments and centres becoming increasingly active in developing specialised offerings that respond to both public and industry-driven needs.

The University expanded its portfolio through enhanced collaboration with departments, greater visibility among stakeholders, and deeper alignment with industry expectations. This progress has contributed to higher engagement, more specialised offerings, and growing recognition at national and international levels.

During academic year 2024/2025, the University successfully implemented and managed the new micro-credential Awards framework, offering structured pathways that allow learners to bundle related study-units towards a thematic award.

Awards within the micro-credentials framework refer to structured groupings of related study-units that are combined to form a coherent, credit-bearing package. Unlike individual micro-credentials, which focus on a single, specific area of learning, Awards bring together multiple micro-credentials under a unified theme, enabling learners to deepen their knowledge within a particular field. During academic year 2024/2025:

- 7 Awards were approved
- 6 Awards were successfully delivered

This marks an important development in enabling progression routes and supporting learners in building cumulative knowledge through stackable credentials.

The uptake of micro-credential study-units (SUs) remains strong across semesters, demonstrating consistent public interest and sustained collaboration with external entities.

	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer
Exclusive study-units to specific Stakeholders	12	15	5
Non-exclusive study-units*	52	34	6

* Non-exclusive study-units are courses, modules, or subjects that can be taken as part of a programme of study without restricting or preventing the student from taking other similar or overlapping units.

The Department of Maltese remains one of the most proactive contributors to this initiative. Although undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments in the discipline are comparatively lower than in other areas, the department has successfully established itself as a leading provider of high-impact micro-credentials that respond directly to societal and professional needs.

The Centre for Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLT) continues to be an active and innovative contributor to the micro-credentials initiative. Notably, in academic year 2024/2025, the Centre expanded its portfolio by introducing its first Award, further consolidating its role in delivering structured and progressive learning pathways.

The Institute of Earth Systems (IES) also maintained its strong engagement with external entities and continues to play a vital role in sustaining its ongoing Master of Science in Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.

The Department of Insurance and Risk Management has been particularly active during the summer period of academic year 2024/2025, targeting both local and international audiences through specialised micro-credentials. The Advanced Enterprise Risk Management and Advanced Studies on Insurance Regulation courses attracted strong participation and positioned the department as a key contributor to professional upskilling in the financial and regulatory sectors.

Information technology based systems and applications

In order to offer students an improved service, the Office of the Registrar continually keeps abreast of the current technological developments by leveraging the latest systems available. Numerous projects in this area of focus have already been completed and are continuously maintained to ensure that all systems function as intended.

The Add/Drop option for study-units was automated, eliminating the previously labour-intensive manual system.

In the same vein, following a request from ACCESS – Disability Support Unit, the SIMS Office developed an online system on eSIMS for students to apply for access arrangements.

Meanwhile, students enrolled at the Junior College were able to activate their UM IT account directly through the use of the Maltese e-ID.

With regard to the Scientia Timetabling and Scheduling Software, following the launch of the software with a pilot project in 2022/2023, additional faculties and academic entities were incorporated for academic year 2024/2025 as follows: the Faculties of Arts and Social Wellbeing, the Institutes of European Studies and Linguistics and Language Technology, the School of Performing Arts (SPA), and the Centre for Academic Literacies and English Communication Skills (CALECS).

WISEflow

The Office of the Registrar has further expanded the use of the digital assessment platform WISEflow. The software was initially implemented remotely during the pandemic, and retained post-pandemic, both due to the advantages it provides in comparison to traditional Pen and Paper examinations, and also because a number of Examiners opted to keep using WISEflow to hold examinations remotely.

In 2024/2025, the number of exams held using WISEflow on Campus once again increased. Physical exams using WISEflow on Campus continued to significantly outnumber remote exams, a trend consistent with that observed in the previous academic year.

For the academic year 2024/25, examinations conducted through WISEflow (both on campus and remotely) amounted to 17% of written examinations in semester 1 and 20% in semester 2, compared to the previous academic year.

WISEflow on Campus exams	2024/25
Semester 1	
Malta	141
Gozo	90
Semester 2	
Malta	177
Gozo	95

During the 2024/2025 academic year, the use of the Submission (Invigilator) Password was introduced for on-campus examinations. The use of this feature provides enhanced controls, helping to secure the integrity of the examination process.

For both Scientia and WISEflow, the Office of the Registrar, in conjunction with the Office for Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD), organised numerous training courses for users across the various Faculties involved. In total, six dedicated training programmes were offered, catering to both academic and administrative staff.

Computer-assisted examinations

The Office of the Registrar has been organising Computer-Assisted Examinations (CAEs) for a number of years. In contrast to WISEflow examinations, CAEs are held at UM's computer labs, as they require the use of specialised software packages and therefore cannot be administered through WISEflow.

This format allows students to be assessed using real-life scenarios. The subject matter includes statistics, translation, engineering, ICT, and management. Just over 50 such examinations were organised during the academic year 2024/2025.

Student outreach

During the admissions period, typically held around June, the Student Advisory Services (SAS) delivered a series of online webinars to support the application process for hundreds of prospective students. This year, participants were given the opportunity to submit questions, which were addressed either live during the sessions or within two hours of their conclusion.

In addition, SAS took part in several open days organised by various schools, also participating in the 'I Choose' event, which targets secondary school students exploring their educational options before progressing to Junior College. As in previous years, one-to-one advisory sessions were held in Gozo during the weekend between the publication of results and the application deadline.

The Help Hub, located in the basement of Students' House, serves as a comprehensive one-stop shop for all students. The Help Hub collaborates closely with several key offices across the University, including SAS, the International Office, and the Chaplaincy team. It supports students in activating

their UM accounts, completing online forms, understanding their study progression, exploring resit opportunities and selecting suitable electives or optional study-units. One of Help Hub's aims is to ensure that students feel supported at every step of their academic journey.

Graduation ceremonies

Graduation ceremonies remain a cornerstone of the University's mission, affirming its role as the leading higher education institution on the island. Beyond marking individual achievement, these ceremonies help sustain and enhance the University's reputation for academic excellence.

The first graduation session for the academic year 2024/2025 was held between Monday, 11 and Friday, 22 November 2024. The session commenced with two thanksgiving masses celebrated by their Lordships Mgr Anton Teuma, Bishop of Gozo, and Mgr Joseph Galea Curmi, Auxiliary Bishop of Malta, at St John's Co-Cathedral on 11 and 12 November 2024. The attendance of the President of the Republic, H.E. Dr Myriam Spiteri Debono, during the first year of her presidency lent additional significance to the Thanksgiving Mass.

Graduation ceremonies for undergraduate programmes commenced on Thursday, 14 November at 14:00, with a member of staff from FEMA delivering the oration for this session and with graduands from the same Faculty opening the celebrations. A total of 10 graduation ceremonies took place across the span of five days, with the last two taking place on Wednesday, 20 November. A total of 1,875 students graduated, 1,152 female, 720 males, and 3 X-gender.

A Congregation for the Conferment of Honoris Causa Degrees was held on Friday, 22 November 2024, which also happened to be Foundation Day, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Safe Haven and St Dominic, Merchants Street, Valletta.



Congregations for the Conferment of Honoris Causa Degrees hold special significance, as they represent the University's recognition of individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to society, culture, science, and beyond. This academic year, the University honoured President Emeritus Dr George Vella by conferring upon him a Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa) Degree for his contribution to the State and the Maltese people as a parliamentarian, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Environment and Deputy Prime Minister, and as President of the Republic. In particular, the honorary degree was conferred on President Emeritus Vella in recognition of his invaluable contribution in the field of diplomacy with a particular focus on promoting peace and dialogue in the Mediterranean and beyond.

This Congregation also conferred upon Mr Nicky Camilleri a Master of Letters (Honoris Causa) Degree, in recognition of his contributions to philanthropy in support of medical research. Mr Camilleri is known as one of the founders of the ALIVE charity Foundation and for his indefatigable energy to raise substantial funds for cancer research in Malta, as well as for his benevolence and endeavours over the years, which resulted in a number of research projects and Ph.D. doctorates from the UM.

The second session for the academic year, this time for postgraduate courses, was held between 10 and 21 March 2025 in Valletta. For a second consecutive year, the University hosted the March session of graduations at the Basilica of Our Lady of Safe Haven and St Dominic due to ongoing restoration and conservation works at the University Church in Valletta.

The session commenced with a thanksgiving mass at St John's Cathedral, celebrated by His Lordship Bishop George Frendo O.P., held on Thursday, 6 March 2025. Ceremonies continued over a period of two weeks (18 ceremonies) and came to a close with the last ceremony held on Friday, 21 March 2025.

The streets of our capital, Valletta, came alive with the excitement of 1,527 Doctoral and Masters graduands (918 females and 609 males). This included a record number of Doctoral Degrees awarded this year, with a total of 77 graduands successfully obtaining their Doctoral Degrees. Amongst the Doctoral Degrees, 64 were research-based degrees (63 Doctor of Philosophy, 1 Doctor of Music). The graduating doctoral cohort was split as follows: 45 females and 32 males.

Improving the academic administration of doctoral programmes

During the past year, the Office of the Registrar continued to play a pivotal role in strengthening the governance and administration of doctoral education at the University of Malta, providing essential support to the Doctoral Academic Committee (DAC), the Professional Doctorate Sub-Committee, and the Doctoral School.

A central achievement this year was the revision and launch of the updated Ph.D. and M.Phil. examination procedures, jointly developed by the Office of the Registrar and the Doctoral School and published in January 2025. The updated document outlines the procedures to be followed when doctoral students wish to voluntarily stop their studies at the M.Phil. stage or when they have not successfully transferred to the Ph.D. and are permitted to continue their studies for consideration of the M.Phil. degree.

In its broader support role for the Doctoral School, the Office of the Registrar contributed to key initiatives designed to enhance doctoral studies at UM. This included co-organising, together with the Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) and the Doctoral School, two supervisor training workshops on doctoral regulations and procedures held on 17 October 2024 and 8 May 2025, attended by 42 academics and delivered by the Director of the Doctoral School, Professor Nicholas Vella, and the Academic Registrar, Dr Colin Borg.

The Office also participated in the Doctoral School's hosting of eight administrators from partner universities in Germany, Spain, and Poland between 26 and 30 May 2025, contributing to discussions on shared administrative challenges in doctoral education across Europe. Furthermore, the Office supported the annual networking meeting for FICS Doctoral Committee Chairs on 9 January 2025, where attendees were briefed on the Strategic Plan, updated examination procedures, and the need for discipline-specific professional development initiatives.

The Office additionally contributed to the review of the Joint Doctoral Programme in Marine and Maritime Sciences and Technologies, to be offered by the SEA-EU Alliance, which received approval from the rectors of all participating institutions in November 2024 and was subsequently endorsed by Senate in February 2025 following DAC review in January.

Stipends Office

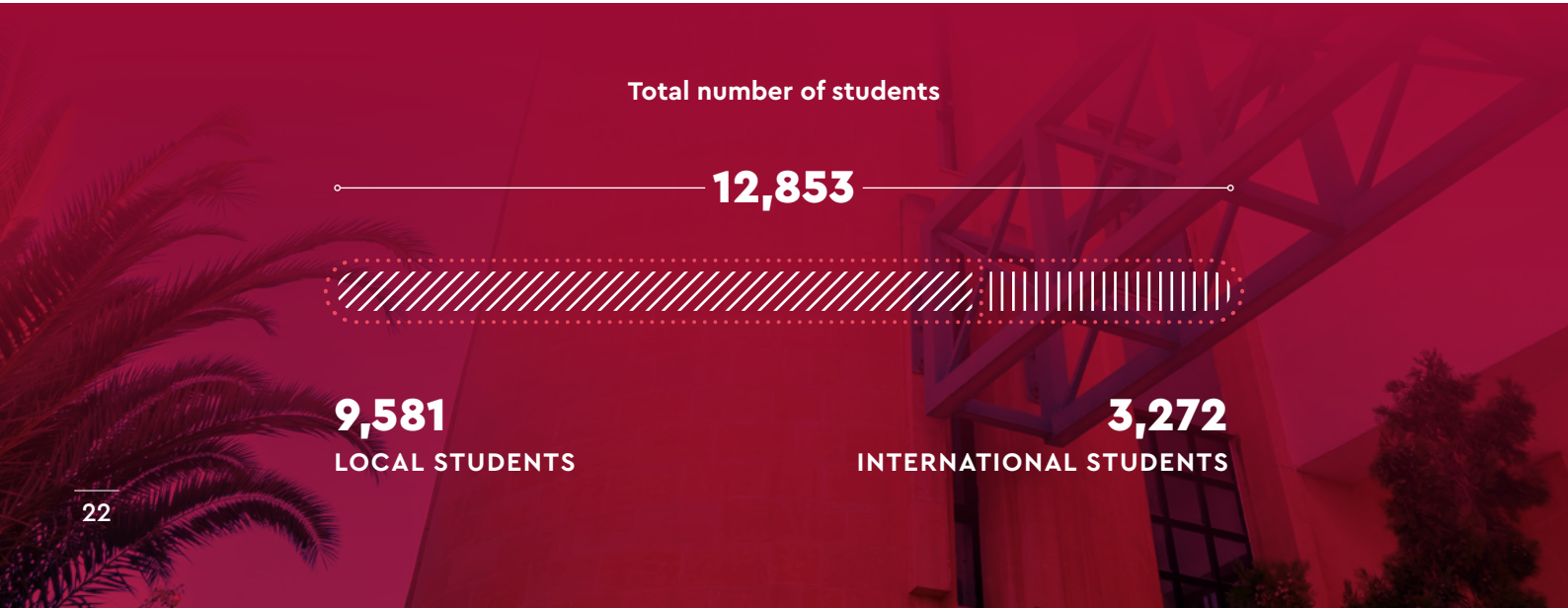
The Stipends Office provided ongoing guidance to ensure that all student grants and stipends were administered fairly and in full compliance with relevant legislation. This included assessing eligibility, advising on complex applications, and responding to queries from students and Faculties/Institutes/Centres/Schools alike.

Since the beginning of the academic year, staff in the Stipends Office vetted 3,635 applications, whereas 2,292 applications for continuing students with no changes from the previous year were automatically processed through the Students' Maintenance Grants Online system.

NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

STUDENTS (full-time and part-time)	2024/2025			
	F	M	X	TOTAL
Pre-Tertiary Certificates	13	6	-	19
Certificates	193	86	1	280
Diplomas	159	114	-	273
Undergraduate Degrees	3363	2177	9	5549
Postgraduate Certificates	8	2	-	10
Postgraduate Diplomas	16	14	-	30
Master Degrees	2476	1450	3	3929
Professional Doctorates	22	8	-	30
Doctoral Degrees	211	218	1	430
Other	319	353	1	673
Visiting	1028	599	3	1630
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	7808	5027	18	12853
Local Students	5662	3908	11	9581
International Students	2146	1119	7	3272

Student headcount includes all full-time and part-time students.





**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS**



**AMERICAS
STUDENTS**



**EU STUDENTS
(EXCLUDING MALTESE
NATIONALS)**



**NON-EU
STUDENTS**

PROGRAMME OFFERINGS*

CATEGORY	2024/2025
Pre-Tertiary Certificates	2
Certificates	9
Diplomas	21
Undergraduate Degrees	371
Postgraduate Certificates	3
Postgraduate Diplomas	3
Master Degrees	288
Master of Philosophy	95
Professional Doctorates	1
Doctoral Degrees	90
Other	26
TOTAL PROGRAMMES OFFERED	909

* Number of courses having current students as at March 2025.

CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES CONFERRED

	NOV 2025/MAR 2026*			
	F	M	X	TOTAL
Pre-Tertiary Certificates	9	3	-	12
Certificates	112	96	-	208
Diplomas	134	114	-	248
Undergraduate Degrees	962	574	3	1539
Postgraduate Certificates*	22	11	-	33
Postgraduate Diplomas*	34	14	-	48
Master Degrees	494	277	-	771
Professional Doctorates*	7	1	-	8
Doctoral Degrees*	9	14	-	23
TOTAL AWARDS	1783	1104	3	2890

* Expected to Graduate in March 2026

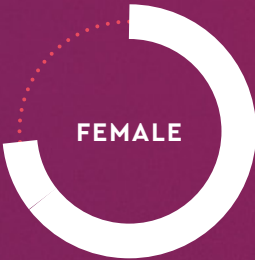
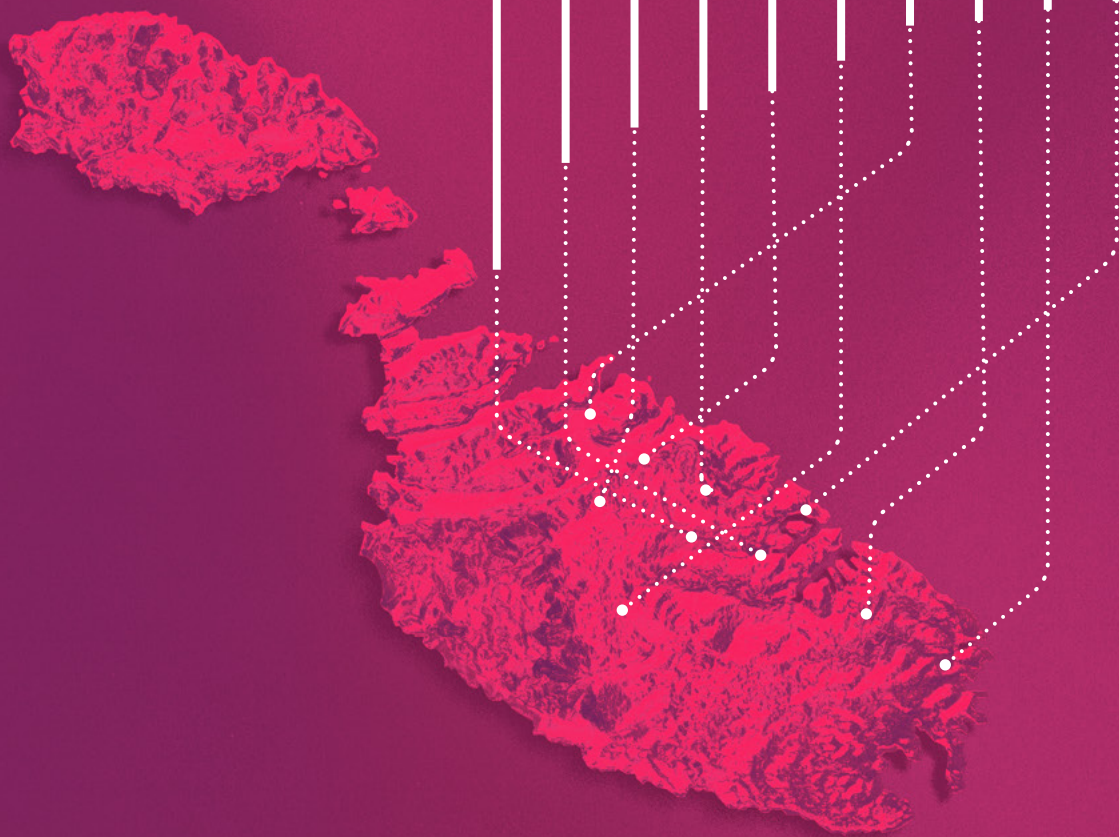
STUDENTS BY LOCALITY



Detailed list

Locality with
highest number of
students enrolled

BIRKIRKARA	MSIDA	MOSTA	SAN ĠWANN	NAXXAR	Ħ'ATTARD	ST PAUL'S BAY	ĦAŻ-ŻABBAR	MARSASKALA	SLIEMA
786	747	636	509	471	414	409	376	376	369



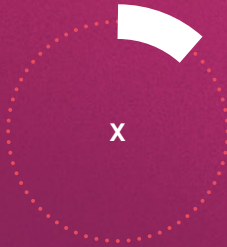
FEMALE

7,808



MALE

5,027



X

18

12,853

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS

CENTRE FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Overview of activities

During academic year **2024/2025**, the Centre for the Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) continued to expand its micro-credential portfolio, registering strong participation across both semesters.

In **Semester 1** (October 2024 – February 2025), **256** applications were received. The most popular units included The Art of Public Speaking, Beekeeping and the Art of Honey Making, Malta: People and History 2, and Artistic Treasures of the Knights of St John. A new unit, Mistakes: The Possible Precedent of Success, was introduced, while The Art of Maltese Bobbin Lace 1 was delivered at UM's Gozo Campus.

Semester 2 (February – June 2025) recorded further growth, with 313 applications. Strong interest was shown in Olive Tree Cultivation and Olive Oil: From Ancient Roots to Modern Uses, History of the Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus, How to Plan, Launch and Grow Your Own Business, and Financial Capability: Unveiling the Power of Money Management and Investment. The newly introduced Financial Capability and Entrepreneurship: A Development Program for Educators, delivered in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Financial Capability and Entrepreneurship, attracted 19 educators. Additional collaborative units included Care of the Elderly: Theory and Practice and Dementia Care Practice, offered with St Vincent de Paule.

Between **7 and 30 April 2025**, a photographic exhibition was held at the University Library foyer, showcasing selected works by 16 students who completed the Nature Photography micro-credential. The exhibition reflected the high standard of creative and technical achievement attained.

Two certificate presentation ceremonies were held during the year. On 18 June 2025, 19 educators were awarded certificates for completing the Financial Capability and Entrepreneurship programme.

Overall, academic year 2024/2025 was characterised by increased enrolment, new collaborative initiatives, and continued community engagement, reaffirming CLAS's commitment to accessible, high-quality lifelong learning.



ACCESS-DISABILITY SUPPORT UNIT (ADSU)

The ACCESS-Disability Support Unit (ADSU) is the operational arm of the ACCESS-Disability Support Committee (ADSC) and is responsible for the following functions:

- Providing support to students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.
- Processing applications for course and examination access arrangements at JC and UM, and for MATSEC examinations.
- Guiding JC and UM students on available support throughout their studies.
- Liaising with academic, administrative, technical staff, relevant professionals, and other stakeholders on access-related matters.
- Coordinating resources required to implement ADSC decisions.

Operations at SEC/MATSEC 2024–25

- The number of requests has been increasing considerably over the years, reaching nearly 20% of all SEC applicants and over 5% of all MC applicants in 2025 (see Tables 1 and 2 below). All requests for access arrangements were vetted and processed by ADSU, with a number being processed through discussion in a multidisciplinary working group.

Table 1: The total number of candidates applying for SEC and the number and percentage of candidates with AAs 2024–2025.

Year	Total number of SEC candidates	Candidates granted Access Arrangements (AAs)	Percentage of total candidates receiving AAs
2024	5378	1016	18.9
2025	5513	1064	19.3

Table 2: The total number of candidates applying for Matriculation Level and the number and percentage of candidates with AAs 2024–2025

Year	Total Matriculation Certificate (MC) candidates	Candidates granted Access Arrangements (AAs)	Percentage of total candidates receiving AAs
2024	3668	185	5.0
2025	3764	119	5.3

- At the same time, continuous communication is maintained with stakeholders and service users about access arrangements at secondary and post-secondary levels. Continuous liaison is also kept with the Examinations Department of the Ministry of Education, schools, and colleges regarding access arrangements.
- ADSU follows the *Guidelines for MATSEC Examination Access Arrangements* (2019). The process to start updating these guidelines was initiated in recent weeks. Online questionnaires were sent to professionals, and emails were sent to NGOs working within the disability sector, inviting them to provide feedback. The feedback received is being analysed and will be presented in January 2026 to the working group.

ADSU operations at University of Malta 2024–25

One of the main innovations undertaken during the year under review has been the development and implementation of an online system for Access Arrangements applications, designed to streamline student support services. Key updates include the following:

Online Application System for Access Arrangements

- The submission of applications for course or examination Access Arrangements (AAs) is now fully online and accessible via eSIMS
- Students who have already applied and received approval for their AAs no longer have access to the application form, thereby preventing unnecessary duplication
- Upon submission, students automatically receive an official acknowledgement
- Submission deadlines have been revised to ensure the timely collection and sharing of information ahead of examination periods
- A total of 569 applications for Access Arrangements were received from students in 2024–25 (see Table 3).

Course Access Needs Statement (CANS)

ADSU is introducing the Course Access Needs Statement (CANS), a tool designed to empower students to communicate their needs throughout their programme of study.

CANS will allow students to share relevant information regarding both course access and examination requirements. This information will be securely shared online with administrative and academic staff strictly on a need-to-know basis.

Student Support Resources

The ADSU has developed small marketing packs, including a basic sensory toolkit aimed at supporting students experiencing, but not limited to, mental health difficulties, dyslexia, or ADHD.

Table 3: Services offered by the ADSU to UM students and staff, and related activities in 2024–25

Applications received and processed, and the total number of students registered with ADSU on campus	569 total, of which 133 completed/graduated and 43 withdrew
Applications for Waiver at UM 2024–2025	7
Application for access arrangements from UM staff	2
Applications reviewed for access arrangements for Junior College	44
Staff training sessions delivered in collaboration with HRMD and OPAD	2
Seminar for prospective UM students	1
Visitors hosted through Erasmus Staff Mobility	4
ADSU Team Meetings	10
ADSC Meetings	3
ADSU presentations on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	4

MATSEC

Introduction

The academic year 2024–2025 marked a transformative period for the MATSEC Examinations Board, representing the culmination of years of strategic planning and consultation. This year witnessed the successful implementation of landmark reforms to the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) assessment model, shifting the focus toward a more holistic and continuous evaluation of student learning.

This report outlines the planning, administration, and review of the 2025 Main/First and Supplementary/Second sessions, highlights candidate performance under the new assessment structure, and summarises ongoing efforts in digitalisation and quality assurance. MATSEC aims to uphold educational standards, ensure fair assessment, and provide meaningful insights for continuous improvement.

Secondary Education Certificate (SEC)

Implementation of SEC Reforms

The 2025 SEC Main Session was the first to fully implement the new assessment model, transitioning from a purely final-exam format to a structure incorporating continuous assessment.

The Assessment Model

The SEC final grade now consists of:

- 70% Controlled Examination – the external assessment component
- 30% School-Based Assessment (SBA) for school candidates
- 30% Controlled Examination replacing for private candidates, replacing SBA

A total of 5,357 candidates sat for 42,034 subjects. Preliminary analysis shows that the SBA component offers a better picture of students' skills and competences, particularly benefiting candidates who excel in organisational and project-based tasks.

New Subjects and Assessment Levels

Two major changes were introduced in 2025, apart from the model of assessment itself:

1. New Subjects: Core Science, Chinese, Dance, Theatre, and Maltese as a Foreign Language
2. New Assessment Level: Level 1–2 was added alongside Level 2–3, ensuring that more students are formally recognised and awarded a SEC qualification.

Matriculation Certificate (MC)

Examination Sessions

The Matriculation Certificate (Advanced and Intermediate levels) examinations were administered successfully across both the First and Second sessions of 2025. A total of 4,738 candidates registered for 19,386 subjects, and 1,282 candidates were awarded the Matriculation Certificate.

Candidate Absenteeism

A key challenge remains the high rate of absenteeism, particularly among candidates who register for subjects before completing the required two-year programme. MATSEC continues to engage with stakeholders to emphasise the importance of adequate preparation and highlight the role of subjects such as Intermediate Systems of Knowledge, which supports critical thinking and interdisciplinary awareness.

Digital infrastructure and administration

Significant progress was made in the digital administration of examinations in 2024–2025:

- The new portal enabled efficient candidate registration
- Schools were able to monitor registrations more effectively
- Schools could directly input and verify SBA marks

These upgrades enhanced transparency and reduced administrative load for schools, whilst giving MATSEC a more professional image.

Conclusion

The 2024–2025 academic year represents a milestone in the development of Malta's national examination system. The successful implementation of SEC reforms, effective administration of SEC and MC sessions, and continued investment in digital systems demonstrate MATSEC's commitment to ensuring fair, reliable, and forward-looking assessment practices.



International Office

The academic year 2024/25 was marked by further achievement and growth in terms of international effort and engagement.

Key highlights included the University's formidable performance in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (WUR) 2025, with respect to increased inward mobility of degree and visiting students; stronger outward mobility participation; a best practice award for the International Office's management of the Erasmus+ project, and stronger engagement with the international student body.

Supporting and engaging with international applicants and the international student community

The introduction of new national D-visa procedures for long-stay students in 2024/25 presented significant challenges. The International Office (IO) worked intensively to establish new structures and procedures, ensuring that accepted applicants were supported step by step throughout the visa application process. Close and continuous liaison with the authorities was essential to ensure that all students requiring a visa were individually guided through the process.

Orientation programmes were held in September and February to welcome new students at the start of each semester. These well-attended sessions provided guidance on registration, immigration requirements, and available support services. The International Office continued to support students from pre-arrival throughout the entire duration of their studies.

Several initiatives were organised to enhance engagement with international students. These included celebrations for Chinese New Year, Kuwaiti National Day, St Patrick's Day, and Eid, as well as ongoing support for monthly free lunches at the UM Chaplaincy, which bring together local and international students in an informal setting to foster intercultural dialogue and inclusion.

International students also participated in an innovative second-semester initiative combining physical activity with Maltese language learning, organised by a student from the Institute of Physical Education and Sport. The International Office further supported student organisations in hosting events aimed at fostering integration between local and international students.

In collaboration with the Health and Wellness Centre, a series of workshops open to all UM students were organised focusing on living abroad, living in Malta, and life skills. These attracted strong participation from both local and international students.

In February 2025, a formal meeting was organised with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Hon. Ian Borg, for students supported through the UM/MFT scholarship scheme. The event was well attended, received extensive media coverage, and provided scholarship holders with an opportunity to share experiences and feedback directly with the Minister. A total of 23 students were supported through this programme during 2024/25.

Throughout the year, the International Office worked closely with other UM support services to assist international students facing difficulties or distress.

Erasmus+ and other visiting programmes

Erasmus+ Outgoing Student Mobility and Outgoing Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)

During 2024/25, Erasmus+ outgoing mobility increased compared to the previous year. Long-term mobilities rose by 9%, with 393 students undertaking study or traineeship periods abroad. Participation in Blended Intensive Programmes increased by 40%, with 98 students attending 15 BIPs.

Information sessions, pre-departure meetings, and workshops were organised throughout the year to support outgoing students. Erasmus+ Days were marked through student testimonials and the launch of the annual call for applications, with social media playing a central role in promotion and dissemination efforts.

The Office continued to address challenges affecting participation, including language barriers, limited English-taught programmes, accommodation constraints, and rising living costs. Staff also participated in international staff weeks, SEA-EU events, and training workshops, supporting knowledge-sharing and best practice.

The Erasmus+ outgoing team hosted visitors from partner universities and actively participated in EUPA meetings.

The KA131 2022 Project, managed by the International Office, was officially recognised by the EUPA as a 'good practice' example in its 2024 Annual Report published

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

21
OUTGOING

142
INCOMING



ERASMUS+ INBOUND & OUTBOUND + INCOMING & OUTGOING BIP STUDENTS

634
INBOUND

393
OUTBOUND

34
INCOMING
BIP STUDENTS

98
OUTGOING
BIP STUDENTS

The 661 students mentioned in the text below refer to the 627 students from EU countries + 34 incoming BIP students; there were also 5 Tunisians and 2 Ukrainians.

in 2025. This award reflects the University's ongoing commitment to impactful, high-quality international collaboration through Erasmus+, and its strong management of Erasmus+ funds.

Erasmus+ Incoming Students and inbound BIPs

In 2024/25, UM welcomed 661 incoming Erasmus students. Measures are being taken to address the imbalance between incoming and outgoing mobility.

Two Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) were organised at UM through Erasmus+ Funds – Carousel Week, organised by the Department of Systems and Control Engineering (Faculty of Engineering) and "Tourism Sustainability in Urban and Rural Areas", organised by the Department of Tourism Management (Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy) with the support of SEA-EU partners.

Erasmus+ staff mobility

A total of 146 UM staff members participated in Erasmus+ mobility, comprising 60 teaching and 86 training assignments, with total grant funding of €235,596. A further call launched in March 2025 attracted strong interest for 2025/26 mobilities.

SEA-EU

The IO handled Erasmus+ incoming students and staff and BIP activity organised through the SEA-EU Alliance, whilst monitoring new opportunities for UM students through the Alliance. The IO was actively committed to securing funding for mobilities to be allocated to support participation in the SEA-EU Joint Undergraduate and Master's programmes planned

for the next academic year. The Office actively participated in meetings of the Mobility Expert Group and supported several other initiatives and preparatory measures undertaken towards the development of the project's initiatives.

Erasmus+ international credit mobility

In February 2025, UM secured €195,953 in Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) funding for student and staff mobility with non-EU partners in Australia, Bosnia, China, China (Hong Kong), Egypt, Georgia, India, Mauritius, Palestine, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and South Africa. The programme continued to expand in scope and impact, with an increasing number of participating countries, agreements, and areas of study.

Multiple staff and student mobilities were completed during the year, with UM hosting staff and students from Universities in Australia, Bosnia, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Palestine, Tunisia, Ukraine and the USA.



UM staff received funding to carry out teaching and training assignments in Armenia, China, India, Kenya, Kosovo, Moldova and Tunisia. A key highlight was a very successful pilot project through which UM students were supported to take up ICM-funded exchange opportunities in Australia.

Visiting students

During 2024/25, IO received 139 visiting students through a range of programmes and agreements with both EU and non-EU partners, primarily on a fee-paying basis. This area continues to show consistent year-on-year growth.

Scholarships

The UM-MFT (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism) was renewed, supporting students from Palestine and Tunisia and expanded to include a number of new countries for students pursuing Diplomatic Studies at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC). The Islands and Small States Institute received a further number of scholarship holders in line with the present agreement covering students from Small Islands and Developing States.

Nine new students benefited from UM scholarships for Master's by Research and Ph.D. Programmes.

A pilot initiative with the Department of Public Health (Faculty of Medicine and Surgery) and HopeXChange, also supported by MFT and MEYR, enabled the enrolment of three senior medical/health practitioners working at the HopeXChange Medical Centre in Kumasi, Ghana, to enrol remotely in the Master of Science in Public Health. The three students were also given the opportunity to carry out an observational two-week visit to Malta in the summer of 2025.

Engagement with foreign governments, visits and diplomatic representations

The new Director of the Kuwaiti Cultural Bureau in Paris was invited to visit the UM at the end of April 2025. During his visit, numerous meetings were held focusing on current students and future plans for wider collaboration. Our relationship with the Embassy of Kuwait was further strengthened through the excellent working relationship with the current Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission.

Collaboration with the Australian High Commission extended to several new areas, and a number of engaging meetings and events were jointly organised for students and academic staff, bringing in Australian expertise and promoting new connections in different areas of study and research. The collaboration was further enhanced through the activation of student mobility agreements and Erasmus+ ICM funding to cover mobility to Australia.

We also engaged with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China on a number of occasions, including events led by the Confucius Institute at UM, and held meetings with visiting

delegations from Chinese universities and other government bodies and institutions.

We extended our collaboration with the Embassy of Ireland through several interventions and events supported by the Irish Ambassador. Engagement with the Italian Embassy was also evident through the number of activities, particularly in research areas where strong Italo-Maltese connections exist. Several departments and UM units hosted events supported by a range of embassies with local presence, including Spain, Germany, France, Japan, Austria, and the Netherlands.

Engagement on the Fulbright programme, with the support of the US Embassy in Malta, continued. UM academic staff continued to avail themselves of opportunities presented by the Fulbright Scholar and Senior Specialist programmes. We also received four Fulbright Teaching Assistants for a full-year attachment. Meetings, visits, and engaging sessions were also organised with the US Embassy, including activities involving students on the Dual Degree Programme with James Madison University (JMU), Virginia.

Close collaboration continued with Maltese diplomatic representations abroad, with a specific focus on Embassies located in China (including the Consulate in Shanghai), Kuwait, India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Ghana, Libya, the US, Canada, Japan and Brazil.

We were particularly active in receiving delegations from several Universities and state entities throughout the year, including China, Kuwait, Japan, the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, Poland, India, Albania, Australia, Ireland and Italy, just to name a few.

Several new MoUs and Cooperation Agreements were signed or renewed. We also entered into several new Study Abroad agreements, facilitating the recruitment of visiting students on a fee-paying basis.

In April 2025, a high-level UM delegation visited Beijing and Xiamen, strengthening collaboration with Beijing Foreign Studies University (supporting a programme in the teaching of Maltese language and culture) and Xiamen University (where we renewed the programme of collaboration and support for the Confucius Institute at UM).



Research and Innovation

The Research and Innovation (R&I) performance of the University of Malta (UM) during the past academic year, measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as research funding, number of research projects, number of researchers, publications, collaboration with external entities, and innovation actions, reflects that this important mission of the University is stable and robust.



OUTLOOK

UM's academics are highly active in securing national and international research grants through participation in competitive research funding schemes via submission of high-quality research proposals. These funds support research equipment and staff, including research support officers (RSOs) and Ph.D. students, that help to improve the quality and achievements of our research initiatives. During this year, UM continued to strengthen its activities in those research niches where it excels, as well as venturing into other promising areas that exhibit potential for research growth and impact.

Continuing on our strategy to encourage and support multidisciplinary research collaborations between different University entities, this period saw the approval of two new Research Clusters, leading to a total of five clusters running under this scheme that was launched in 2023. Every Research Cluster benefits from a grant of €100,000 per annum to implement a multidisciplinary thematic research programme that is structured over a five-year plan. The two new Research Clusters approved by Senate and Council during this period were the *AI@UM* cluster championed by the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (FICT), and the *Knowledge Intelligence and Security Research Cluster (INSIGHTS)* championed by the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences (MAKS).



RESEARCH FUNDING

The major portion of the operational budget of the University of Malta that is directed towards research is allocated to cover the salaries of our main researchers, namely the academics employed by the University. During this period, UM employed 784 academics with TR appointments, whose duties include contributions to research and innovation.

UM provides funding for research projects carried out by its academics through two programmes that are managed internally: the Research Seed Fund (RSF) and the Research Excellence Fund (REF) schemes. During this period, a total of €335,000 was distributed among 278 academics in RSF grants. For the REF scheme, five projects were awarded; one project in each of the following five thematic areas: Arts and Humanities; Engineering, ICT and Built Environment; Medical and Health Sciences; Natural Sciences and Knowledge Science; Social Sciences and Education. This scheme allocates an award of not more than €60,000 for each project, to be disbursed over two years.

In addition to the above, UM relies heavily on competitive external funds to fulfil its research mission. During the period, 145 new research projects were awarded local funds, and 48 projects were awarded international funds. These local and international awards amounted to €13.2 million and €3.9 million, respectively.



RESEARCHERS

UM's 784 academics on TR appointments are duty-bound to dedicate at least one-third of their time to research activities. These include management of research projects, conducting research, publishing, applying for research funds, supervising postgraduate research students, managing Research Support Officers, and mentoring postdoctoral researchers.

RSOs are funded directly by research grants; therefore, their duties are fully dedicated to research on projects. During this period, 516 RSO posts were filled, including 96 at postdoctoral levels.

Postgraduate students are also crucial to research at UM, particularly those undergoing Doctoral and Master's by Research studies. During this period, 535 students were registered on Doctoral and Professional Doctorate programmes; 213 full-time and 322 part-time. Additionally, 575 Master's by Research students were registered during this period; 214 full-time and 361 part-time. Postgraduate students contribute directly to UM research through their projects, theses, dissertations, and publications.



PUBLICATIONS

During this period, UM researchers published 1,088 articles indexed by Scopus and Web of Science. This data does not include other possible publications not targeted by these two indexing engines. Of these articles, 653 were published Open Access, representing 60% of the total.



RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

UM supports academics to apply for research funds through the Research Support Services Directorate (RSSD). During the period, RSSD supported the compilation of 298 national research grant applications, requesting funds totalling €33 million, and 247 international applications, requesting €93 million.

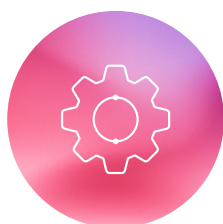
The Project Support Office (PSO) provides both pre-award and post-award financial support services to researchers. The pre-award section helped the RSSD to prepare budgets for the above 545 research grant applications. The post-award section helps academics with the financial management of awarded research projects. At the beginning of this period, the PSO was managing 375 projects, 241 locally funded and 134 internationally funded. By the end of the period, 438 projects were being managed, 281 locally funded and 157 internationally funded. The total amount of external research funds under management at the end of the period was €69.9 million.



INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) facilitates the transfer of knowledge, technology, results, and innovation generated from UM research into practical use for the benefit of industry and society. It also supports research collaboration between UM and non-academic external stakeholders, including industry, commerce, and the broader community.

During this period, the KTO coordinated 31 collaboration agreements with external stakeholders, attracting €2.1 million for research and innovation. Eleven patents were filed.



STRUCTURAL FUNDS

UM continued to manage two major research projects funded through European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes: the Transdisciplinary Research and Knowledge Engineering (TRAKE) project and the Sustainable Living Complex (SLC).

CORPORATE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OFFICE (KTO)

Introduction

The Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO)'s mission is to enhance the transfer of knowledge from the University of Malta to society, as well as to facilitate the technology commercialisation process by translating new knowledge and generated research results into practical applications for the benefit of our society and industry. One of the key roles of the Office is the management of the University's generated intellectual property. The Office also provides support for non-competitive research collaborations with external stakeholders, including industry partners and government entities.

The KTO also facilitates student placements with companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and public sector entities. Furthermore, the KTO works with Malta University Innovation Portfolio Ltd (MUIP) to assist in the creation and growth of UM's spin-out companies.

Third-party collaboration

From October 2024 to September 2025, the KTO oversaw the signing of 31 agreements with a total value of €2,078,086.75, ranging from annexes to framework agreements, with various external entities. These partners included industry, research institutions, government, and non-governmental organisations (e.g., voluntary organisations). Examples of agreements concluded during the period under review include:

- A collaboration agreement between Greenroads Ltd. and UM for contributions to the RoadEye project funded under the Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme 2024, with a value of €269,120.
- A collaboration agreement between the Ministry for the Notarial Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, and the Notarial Archives Foundation for the Notarypedia Research and Development Study, with €442,131 allocated to the three-year project.
- A specific agreement between the Ministry for Education, Youth and Research and UM supporting research in emerging technologies and the establishment of a National Uncrewed Aerial Systems Centre of Excellence, with €340,502.40 allocated to the two-year project.

Student placements

The KTO operates a placement scheme that provides UM students with opportunities for part-time, non-curriculum-based work placements with companies, government, and non-governmental organisations. The KTO supports these

organisations by posting placement opportunities on UM's Placement Opportunities portal, allowing students to apply.

Between October 2024 and September 2025, fifty-four placements were posted, and five hundred and forty-six student applications were received.

TAKEOFF Seed Fund Award (TOSFA)

The TAKEOFF Seed Fund Award (TOSFA) is a joint initiative between the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise, and Strategic Projects and the KTO, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation (CEBI), and the TAKEOFF business incubator. The Malta Digital Innovation Authority also joined the initiative, supporting research projects in the area of artificial intelligence (AI). The KTO coordinated the 2025 annual cycle and supported UM researchers who received proof-of-concept funding. For the 2025 cycle, a total of €150,000 was awarded jointly by the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise, and Strategic Projects and the Malta Digital Innovation Authority through a competitive call to one proof-of-concept project and six start-ups, with beneficiaries receiving grants ranging from €13,000 to €25,000 per project.

Research commercialisation

The KTO works with several research groups to help their research progress towards commercialisation. The KTO was involved in commercial agreements and the filing of a number of patent applications to protect intellectual property.

Four new invention disclosure forms were submitted directly to the KTO. The KTO also monitors inventions disclosed via funding calls, which do not necessarily reach the office until a later stage. The total number of invention disclosures submitted via funding calls was seventy-one, with twenty-eight of these awarded funding. These are likely to be processed by the Office if a new intellectual property right formal filing is needed.

In terms of patent protection, eleven filings were made, with five being Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) filings and six national filings (EPO).

In terms of licensing and assignment, during the 2024/2025 academic year, one intellectual property assignment agreement was signed.

Some projects with potential commercialisation outputs include:

- **ICECAP**

ICECAP, an acronym for Thermo-Electric Cooling for Electronics Applications, enables cooling for compact systems with significantly lower power consumption. The core technologies allow integration with various products, features, and services – all leading towards a vision of controlled cooling. The technology has patents pending for: **Method and system for power optimisation for system of thermoelectric cooling devices**; **Multilevel Thermoelectric Cooling Stack with Thermal Guard Rings**, filed in the US and EU. The team (Prof. Ing Marc Anthony Azzopardi, Andre Micallef, Thomas Galea, and Alec Fenech) is in the process of forming a spin-out based on the technology and has been accepted into the ChipStart EU incubator program, launched by Malta Enterprise and managed by Silicon Catalyst in Malta.

- **MALTI3D**

MALTI3D is an innovative multi-axis and multi-head 3D Printer technology, which allows for more affordable 3D printing, reducing the thermal loading of printing polymers through direct raw material processing and the use of cost-efficient components to achieve high-performance 3D printing. Led by Prof. Arif Rochman from the University's side, a **patent** application has been filed, and the team is working towards the commercialisation of the technology.

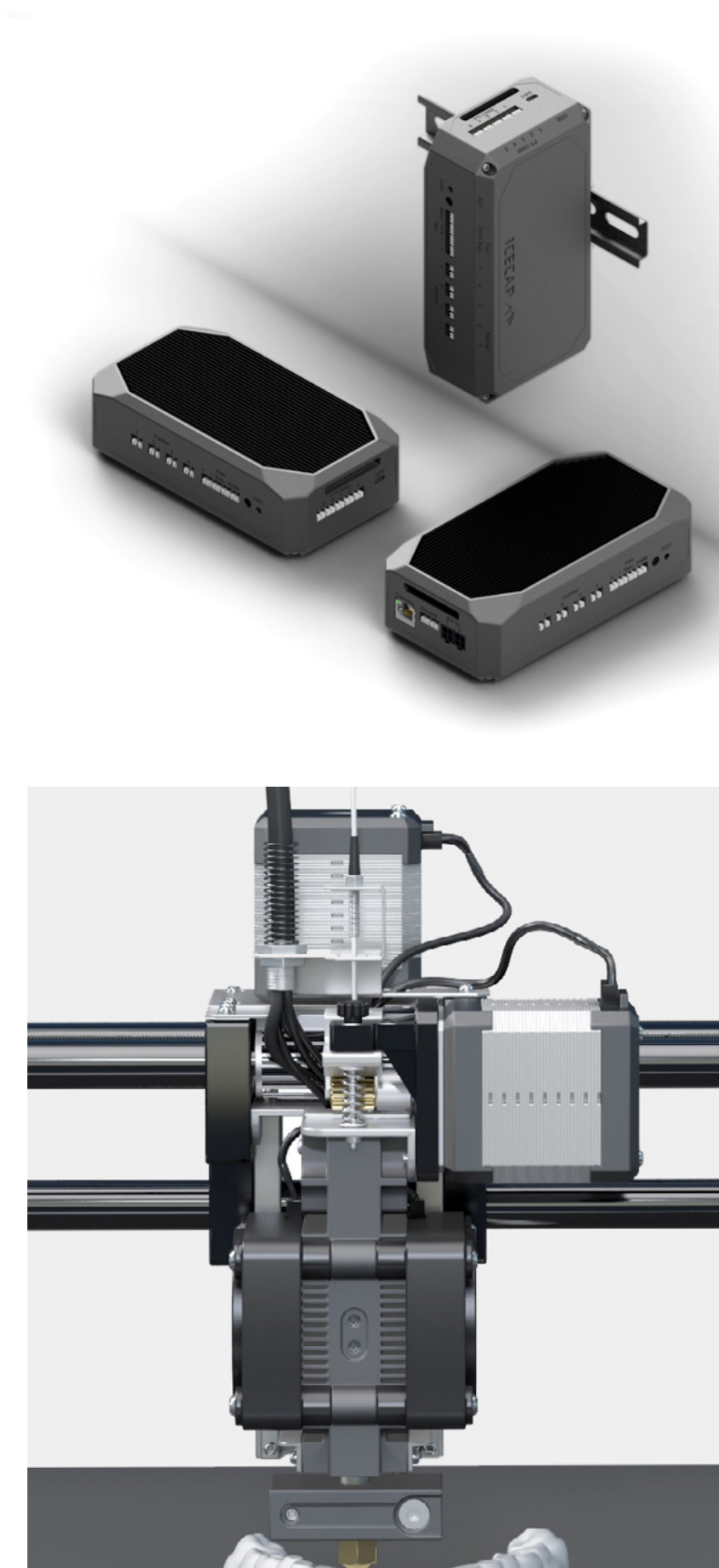
Post licensing management

During 2024/2025, the KTO identified the need for post-licensing management mechanisms for its signed licences. This role often requires a dedicated person overseeing compliance with milestones, monitoring invoicing, following up on reporting, and tracking deadlines. This role was assigned to one of the KTO Managers.

Funding and knowledge valorisation grants

Knowledge and Technology Transfer Offices throughout Europe are increasingly being integrated into publicly funded research and innovation (R&I) projects to strengthen knowledge valorisation. In 2025/2026, a total of €62,983.40 from the Xjenza Malta funding applications (TDP, GTM, and TDP Lite) was allocated to KTO at submission. From this, €19,979 was awarded and will be utilised to cover the claimed KTO hours for the approved projects.

The KTO also submitted two ERASMUS+ grant applications with a total value of €285,000 and participated in ESA PECS grant applications with €55,000 allocated to KTO-related activities. Unfortunately, these grant applications were not successful during the period under report.



Outreach and events

UM's KTO is the sole knowledge transfer entity in Malta and is actively engaged at EU level. The team includes members of the Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP) and of Registered Technology Transfer Professionals (RTTP).

Throughout 2024/2025, the KTO remained consistently active across national and international innovation environments, strengthening the University of Malta's presence in knowledge valorisation. Selected activities undertaken with external entities are summarised below:

Month	Activities
October 2024	- Coordinated UM participation in EPO MIPEF Entry & Advanced IP courses - Attended Start-Up Festival - Confirmed as National Contact Point for Knowledge Valorisation (ERA Policy Agenda 2025–27)
November 2024	- Participated in UM SCI3502 lecture - Attended ASTP EU Forum - Attended Web Summit with the Knowledge Fabric team - Participated in Malta Innovation Forum Stakeholder Meeting (MDIA) - Attended SuperCharger Ventures Demo Day - Met UK startup to explore NEVAC alignment - Attended EU Knowledge Valorisation stakeholder event in Brussels
January 2025	- Meetings with Malta Enterprise, academics & FDI prospects - Meeting with the local energy company for collaboration - Relaunched PES Young Professionals Programme with EPO & EUIPO
February 2025	- Supported 2 UM industry showcase events (Engineering & ICT) - Attended Festival of Genomics & Biodata (London) – networking with GSK, Boehringer, EMBL. - Participated in Malta Innovation Forum Stakeholder Meeting (Community & Engagement)
March 2025	- Delivered an IP session to FEMA students at PwC - Meeting with Xjenza Malta & Malta Development Bank - Spinout investment readiness pitches evaluated
April 2025	- Official acceptance of KTO as UM PATLIB Centre - Meetings with local banks on spinout funding pathways - Attended EU Startup Summit - Attended the EUA Expert Group on Innovation meeting in Brussels
May 2025	- Meetings with Malta Enterprise, academics & FDI prospects - Attended EIT/Xjenza Malta Workshop — led to EIT Innovation Booster pilot - Attended Blue Economy Climaccelerator Demo Day - Attended ILI Community of Practice Kick-Off - Met SuperCharger Ventures re: student training - Moderated panel + hosted Knowledge Stock Exchange at ASTP Annual Conference
June 2025	Presented KTO activities at Malta Innovation Forum – Dissemination & Engagement session
July 2025	- Participated in EUA Expert Group on Innovation (online) - Collaboration meetings with Innovate/Fujitsu, MCCA, MTCA & Tiny Science
September 2025	- Attended EUA Expert Group meeting on Innovation Act - KTO & IP presentation at the School of Performing Arts staff day - Participated in Pan-European Seal Programme Working Group 3

Malta University Innovation Portfolio Ltd (MUIP)

The Malta University Innovation Portfolio Ltd. (MUIP) is the University company that supports the KTO in setting up new spin-out companies that originate from research and innovation carried out at the UM. Once the spin-outs are incorporated, MUIP supports post-formation operations of these companies.

Although no new spinouts were formally established between October 2024 and September 2025, MUIP, in close collaboration with the KTO, is actively developing a pipeline of five potential spin-out ventures.

Meanwhile, the three spin-outs in MUIP's portfolio, namely FLASC B.V., Garland Surgical Ltd, and Smart Materials Ltd, continued to demonstrate significant growth and progress. FLASC is leveraging its €2.5M EIC Accelerator grant to build a full-scale prototype of the Energy Conversion Unit for its offshore energy storage technology, with work now underway at its new facility in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Garland Surgical Ltd is in the process of closing its Seed Investment Round, having raised close to €2M by September 2025. Over the period, the company significantly strengthened its team, further advanced the design of its MaltaHip prosthesis, and received positive validation of its regulatory pathway from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Smart Materials launched its new mattress brand Huggah, incorporating its novel Zetic® foam technology for optimum support and comfort. The product has attracted strong market interest, with pre-orders enabling the company to generate its first commercial revenues.



RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE (RSSD)

Overview

During the academic year 2024-2025, the Research Support Services Directorate (RSSD) consolidated its position as a central pillar of the University of Malta's (UM) research ecosystem. The Directorate focused on professionalising research management, streamlining operational workflows, and enhancing the visibility of UM research both locally and internationally.

Despite financial challenges, RSSD successfully navigated the year by prioritising strategic alignment with European standards, fostering cross-directorate collaboration and delivering tangible improvements in research infrastructure and support services.

Key achievements and developments

Strategic leadership and policy alignment

RSSD played a leading role in aligning the University's research strategy with the European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda 2025-2027. The Directorate acted as the Malta Leader for *Action 8: Empowering R&I – A new era in research management*, uniting key national stakeholders—including MCAST, Xjenza Malta and Malta Enterprise—to present a cohesive national front.

Furthermore, the Directorate successfully led the co-creation exercises for the Research Management (RM) Roadmap project. A major outcome was the adoption of the *Research Management Competence Framework (RM Comp)* at UM, a tool endorsed by the European Commission to professionalise the sector.

Operational excellence and infrastructure

A significant operational focus was placed on structuring assets and safety protocols to better serve the research community.

Laboratory support & safety

The Lab Support team completed a comprehensive upgrade of the Asset and Equipment inventory, finalising a definitive list of laboratories and uploading pre-2018 assets into the University's inventory system.

The Directorate also coordinated university-wide waste management campaigns, including the disposal of approximately 3 tonnes of chemical waste, biohazardous waste collections and the safe removal of unwanted chemicals from campus.

Additionally, a management system for all University fume cupboards was developed to ensure compliance with safety standards.

Insurance & risk

The Directorate successfully secured professional liability insurance coverage for UM services delivered to industry, such as laboratory testing and consultancy.

This initiative protects the University against liability claims and has enhanced stakeholder confidence.

Standardisation

To standardise research management, the team issued new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and made significant progress on the Principal Investigator (PI) Manual, now in its final review stages.

Research promotion and events

The Directorate drove initiatives to elevate the profile of UM research, achieving record engagement levels.

- **UM Research Expo 2025:** The event attracted 413 registrations, up from 280 the previous year and featured 203 projects, marking a 60% increase in projects presented across various formats.
- **International Staff Week:** For the second consecutive year, RSSD organised the Research Managers' International Staff Week, hosting 24 participants from across Europe to share best practices and foster networking.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The Directorate hosted high-profile visits to UM laboratories for stakeholders, including the Malta Chamber of Commerce and political representatives, bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Financial sustainability and funding support

In view of financial challenges, RSSD focused on maximising revenue generation through external grants and services to industry.

- **Performance Statistics:** For the period 01/10/2024–30/09/2025, the Directorate supported 545 proposals with a total budget of over €126 million. This resulted in 193 awarded projects generating €17,099,668 in income. Additionally, 357 sales orders to industry generated €167,026.

- **Internal Funding Management:** RSSD successfully administered the full lifecycle of the University's internal funding vehicles: the Research Seed Fund and the Research Excellence Fund. The administration of the latter was noted for its rigorous, independent international peer-review process to ensure fairness and transparency.
- **Interdisciplinary Clusters:** The Directorate contributed to the expansion of the University's interdisciplinary footprint by launching four new Research Clusters, bringing the total to seven active clusters by the end of 2025.

Innovation in research management systems

Rejecting cost-prohibitive external software, RSSD initiated a strategic partnership with the Faculty of ICT's Department of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to co-develop a bespoke *Research Management System (RMS)*. Once fully operational, this in-house solution will:

- Revolutionise due diligence workflows.
- Facilitate real-time interaction with academics.
- Enable local and international collaboration among researchers. Ensure a robust audit trail for research activities.

Professional development and training

The Directorate prioritised the professional growth of its staff and the wider community.

Training delivered

A robust training schedule was delivered, covering topics such as:

- Writing Effective SOPs
- Horizon Europe Pillar II
- Research Readiness.

Cross-directorate collaboration

- Two 'Research Support Get Togethers' were organised during the year, bringing together senior staff from RSSD, KTO, PSO, HR and the Legal Office.
- These sessions aimed to streamline support structures and reduce administrative bottlenecks.

International reach and community engagement

RSSD has maintained a strong international presence, ensuring the University of Malta remains at the forefront of the global research management profession. Evidence of this international standing and community engagement is the fact that, during the academic year under review,

the RSSD Director served as Treasurer and Board Member of the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) and as Co-Chair of the INORMS Council. These roles have allowed RSSD to influence European-wide best practices and place the University of Malta at the centre of international dialogue on research management.

Conclusion

The 2024-2025 academic year was characterised by resilience and strategic growth for RSSD. Through the optimisation of internal processes, the strengthening of safety protocols and fostering of a collaborative research culture, the Directorate continues to present itself as a solid driver for sustainable research growth.

Looking ahead, RSSD remains committed to supporting the University's vision, further professionalising its services, and securing the necessary resources to mitigate upcoming challenges.

THE RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT TRUST (RIDT)

During 2024, RIDT secured €645,372 in donations from the community. The donations came from private companies, NGOs, government agencies, individuals, and from fundraising events organised by the Trust itself.

The funds were disbursed in the form of project grants, Ph.D. scholarships, and conference grants for doctoral students. To date, RIDT has raised over €7 million, which has been translated into more than 90 projects and 14 Ph.D.

scholarships. The RIDT conference grants for Ph.D. students, launched in January 2024, have to date supported over 25 students who presented their research at international conferences under this new scheme. The scheme is financed through the University of Malta staff payroll contributions.

RIDT is thankful for the continued support shown by a number of regular donors, together with a growing number of new supporters.



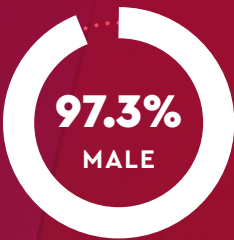
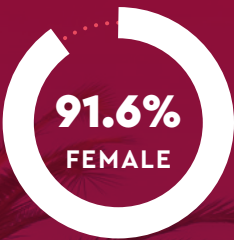
UM Staff, Training Workshops and Professional Development

UNIVERSITY STAFF

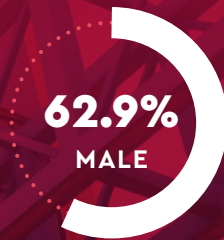
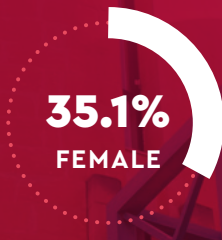
	2024/2025	
	F	M
Resident Academic Staff	391	555
Visiting Teaching Staff	266	443
Post-docs	6	19
Other Research Staff	195	218
Managerial, Admin, Technical, Support Staff	625	407
TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF	1483	1642
% of resident academics with Doctorates	76.2	88.6
% of resident academics who are Associate & Full professors	26.9	54.8

Note: Resident Academic Staff are calculated by headcount, including Junior College (JC) staff.

Percentage of resident academic staff
with Ph.D.s by gender*



Percentage of resident academic staff
who are Associate & Full Professor*



* excluding JC staff

POST DOCS

If we consider Research Support Officers III (RSOIII) as post-docs, there are 20 female and 52 male. Hence, the other research staff amount to 181 female and 185 male.

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: RECRUITMENT

Research remains at the very core of the University of Malta's mission, serving as the primary driver of academic excellence and institutional growth. By aligning recruitment strategies with the University's long-term vision, the Office ensures that the institution attracts specialised experts capable of advancing global research and innovation.

During the 2024/2025 academic year, the OHRM&D demonstrated significant operational agility by issuing **173 calls** for applications. This proactive approach resulted in the successful recruitment of **316 staff members** within the research stream, substantially reinforcing the University's human capital. These milestones reflect a strong commitment to building a diverse and agile workforce that sustains the University's standing as a leading research-committed institution.

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Strategic vision: A culture of lifelong learning

The University of Malta (UM) recognises its workforce as the primary engine driving its academic and operational success. At the core of the Office for Human Resources Management and Development's (OHRM&D) strategy is a steadfast commitment to the personal and professional growth of all employees. By fostering a culture of 'lifelong learning,' the University ensures its staff remain agile, empowered, and aligned with the institution's educational ethos.

Investing in employees is a strategic priority that serves several critical functions:

- **Adaptability:** In a rapidly changing global landscape, constant upskilling ensures that staff can navigate new pedagogical tools and administrative systems.
- **Empowerment:** Engagement levels and institutional loyalty increase when employees feel the institution is invested in their future.
- **Standard of Excellence:** High-quality professional development directly impacts the student experience, equipping staff to better cater to student needs and advance the University's strategic goals.
- **Inclusivity:** Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives run parallel to these programs, ensuring growth opportunities are accessible to everyone regardless of role or background.

Pillars of development

Pillar	Focus Area	Goal
Academic & Research	Sabbaticals, fee waivers, work resources, and doctoral support.	To maintain UM's standing as a global hub of academic excellence.
Professional Skills	Digital literacy, administrative efficiency, and leadership training.	To streamline operations and adapt to modern workplace technologies.
Personal Wellbeing	Mental health, work-life balance, health & safety, and physical fitness.	To foster a supportive environment that reduces burnout and encourages retention.

The UM HR strategy revolves around three major pillars designed to provide a holistic approach to growth:

Training performance and impact

The year 2025 saw significant growth in engagement across all training sectors, reflecting an increasing institutional appetite for upskilling:

- **Course Volume:** 150 training initiatives were organised in 2025, representing a steady increase from 117 in 2024.
- **Employee Participation:** A record 1,329 employees were trained in 2025, compared to 1,266 in 2024.
- **Breadth of Scope:** Training curricula covered critical institutional areas, including Quality Assurance, Sustainability, Data Protection, and Inclusivity.
- **Collaborative Framework:** The success of the Training and Development Programme is rooted in a culture of collaboration. The OHRM&D actively partners with various Directorates and Academic Entities, leveraging their expertise to guide and enhance training outcomes.

2024/25 key initiatives

To meet the demands of a constantly evolving global landscape in Higher Education Institutions, OHRM&D introduced several forward-thinking programmes:

- **Technology and AI:** Sessions focused on the integration of **Generative AI** within academic administration and strategy.
- **Social and Environmental Responsibility:** Workshops focused on recognising the signs of domestic violence, promoting EDI, and empowering staff to build a sustainable university.
- **Operational Excellence:** In collaboration with the Office of the Registrar, technical training was provided for critical systems such as **Scientia** (timetabling) and **WISEflow** (assessment management).

Community and wellbeing

The OHRM&D remains dedicated to building a cohesive campus community. Beyond professional training, the office collaborated with the **Conference and Events Unit** to deliver cultural and recognition events, including *Christmas on Campus*, *Cultural Tours* and *Retirement and Recognition* ceremonies. These initiatives strengthen intrinsic motivators and ensure that **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** goals run parallel to all initiatives offered to all UM staff.

OFFICE FOR PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (OPAD)

The 2024-2025 academic year marked the first full annual cycle of operations for the Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) following the appointment of its full-time Administrative Director. During this period, OPAD focused on establishing its operational structures and defining its role in supporting academic staff across the University of Malta. OPAD's remit is organised around five core areas: teaching and learning, research and scholarly activity, service and leadership development, career development and wellbeing.

Throughout the year, OPAD prioritised the establishment of internal processes and engaged regularly with the OPAD Advisory Committee to shape its strategic direction. The Office also engaged with academic departments, faculties, administrative directorates, and University committees to raise awareness of its services and coordinate professional development initiatives across the institution. A key outcome of this foundational phase was the launch of a semester-based staff training calendar.

Enhancing the teaching and learning experience

To support academics in their teaching practice and enhance the student learning experience, OPAD delivered a portfolio of courses and workshops, including Foundations of University Teaching and Learning, a semester-long programme for early-career academics, and Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units, a nine-week fully online asynchronous programme, tailored to academics transitioning to blended or fully online modes of delivery.

Complementing these programmes, OPAD launched several pedagogical workshops, such as:

- Embedding Education for Sustainable Development in Study-units
- Enhancing Teaching: Universal Design for Learning Practices for Impactful Learning
- Enhancing Zoom Lecture Delivery and Student Engagement
- Enhancing Marking and Feedback Practices Using Turnitin Feedback Studio

Responding to emerging technologies

In line with international best practice, OPAD placed significant emphasis on helping UM academics integrate Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into teaching, assessment, research, and administration. Over 320 academics participated in multiple iterations of three dedicated GenAI workshops:

- Exploring GenAI for Teaching and Assessment
- Academic Research and Writing Using GenAI
- Leveraging GenAI for Data Analysis and Interpretation

Research support, service and wellbeing

OPAD continued to strengthen the research capacity among academic staff and research support officers (RSOs) through sessions including:

- Navigating the UM Research Ethics and Approval Processes
- Postgraduate Research Supervision: Challenges and Styles
- Enhancing Your Digital Research Profile
- Applying for Research Funding – Introduction
- From Idea to Reality: Winning your Erasmus Project Proposal

Recognising the importance of supporting the “whole academic,” OPAD also delivered wellbeing-focused workshops addressing professional conduct and sustainable work practices, such as:

- Negotiating Professional Boundaries
- Nourish to Flourish
- Revitalise Your Routine: Strategies for a Healthier Work-Life Balance.

Additionally, OPAD coordinated and supported department-specific professional development sessions tailored to local needs.

Career development and mentoring

Recognising the need for structured career support, OPAD launched an Academic Mentoring Programme in November 2024. This initiative paired 25 early-career, tenure-track academics with experienced colleagues, providing a confidential framework for guidance on research, teaching, and administrative duties. The programme was led by two UM academics with expertise in mentoring, supported by an external consultant from a UK university. This programme concluded in September 2025 with a formal evaluation, including focus groups, to inform future iterations.

Conclusion

During its first full year of operation, OPAD focused on establishing core structures, strengthening institutional collaboration, and responding proactively to the evolving needs of UM academics. Building on this foundation, OPAD will continue to consolidate its programmes and expand its partnerships across the University to further enhance academic development in the coming years.

University Services

CHILD EDUCARE SERVICES (CES)

Strategic vision: Supporting work-life integration

Child Educare Services (CES) operates as a strategic HR instrument, providing comprehensive educational and enrichment services that support the University's mission to foster employee wellbeing and family-friendly practices. By offering reliable, high-quality care, CES reduces childcare-related stress and positions the University of Malta (UM) as an employer of choice that actively promotes gender equality and work-life integration.

Pillars of service

The CES service portfolio is designed to support families across all stages of childhood development:

Service Pillar	Focus Area	Strategic Goal
Early Childcare & Kindergarten	Children aged 1–5; sensory exploration and project-based learning.	To foster meaningful, real-world learning that builds strong foundations for young learners.
Extended Care Programmes	Afternoon Homework Club (ages 3–10) and Summer School (ages 3–14).	To bridge the gap between school schedules and employee work hours.
Professional Excellence	Staff CPD in sustainability, mental health, and emergent pedagogy.	To ensure high-quality service delivery aligned with modern educational research.

Impact and performance

During the 2024/2025 academic year, CES maintained high operational standards and professional growth:

- **Regulatory Success:** Successfully passed external reviews by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE), with positive feedback on the nurturing environment and child-centred practices.
- **Global Engagement:** Staff participated in prestigious international conferences, including the **EECERA Conference 2025** and the **EOE Conference 2025**, focusing on outdoor and place-based education.
- **Service Reliability:** Formal feedback highlighted strong parental satisfaction regarding the caring relationships between staff and children and the reliability of care in supporting working families.

2024/25 key initiatives

To enrich the educational experience, CES introduced several collaborative and community-focused projects:

- **Sustainability and Environment:** Through **Eco-Schools Malta** and **FestAmbjent**, children participated in recycling and gardening projects to foster civic responsibility.
- **Experiential Learning:** The **'Let's Talk Farming Malta'** initiative, in collaboration with CEER, introduced children to food production and healthy eating.
- **Parental Partnership:** 'Home-to-School' projects and parent-child collaborative workshops (e.g., scavenger hunts) strengthened the bond between the home and the learning environment.

Community and wellbeing

CES extends its impact beyond childcare by focusing on the holistic health of the family unit. In 2024/25, the office launched **parental wellbeing and health workshops**, providing UM staff with practical tools for stress management and physical activity. These initiatives align directly with HR objectives to support employees in balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family health.



EQUITY OFFICE

During the year under review, the Equity Office continued to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across the University of Malta by implementing a wide range of strategic initiatives, training programmes, and community-focused activities.

A major milestone was the launch of the University of Malta Women's Archive, a national first dedicated to preserving and providing access to the histories and contributions of Maltese women. The Archive, housed within the Library's Special Collections, was supported by significant donations and extensive media outreach, thereby strengthening public engagement and visibility.

The official launch took place on the eve of International Women's Day (8 March) at the Valletta Campus, in the presence of Her Excellency the President of the Republic of Malta, Myriam Spiteri Debono, and Dr Roberta Metsola, both of whom expressed strong support for the project. The event featured the announcement of several significant contributions, including archives from the Muviment għall-Emanċipazzjoni tal-Mara (donated by Prof. Michael Briguglio), Min-Naħa tan-Nisa (pledged by Ms Lorraine Spiteri), and the Gerald and Mabel Strickland Papers (pledged by the Strickland Foundation through Prof. Clare Vassallo). A digital copy of

Adelaide Cini's *Positio* was also donated by Rev. Dr Nicholas Doublet, Archivist of the Archdiocese of Malta. The Women's Archive was featured on local television programmes, radio interviews, and newspaper articles. Additional outreach activities were undertaken through television and radio interviews to raise awareness and encourage the public to contribute archival material. These media appearances provided a platform to highlight the importance of preserving women's stories and encouraged public participation in expanding the archive.

Throughout the year, the Office was involved in policy development processes, including revisions of the *Bullying and Harassment Policy*, the *Sexual Harassment Policy*, and the *Gender Identity and Expression Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)*. It also contributed to the review of the University's *Gender+ Equity Plan* during a session held in June by the Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee (GESDC).

The Equity Office strengthened community engagement through several awareness-raising campaigns, including activities for Pride Week, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and online awareness-raising campaigns.





Furthermore, to commemorate International Men's Day 2024, the University of Malta launched *Ragel fuq l-Irġiel*, a new initiative aimed at exploring masculinities within Maltese contemporary society. The launch took place during a Teach-In organised by the Equity Office, in collaboration with GESDC, reinforcing the University's commitment to promoting gender inclusivity and dialogue.

The Teach-in on 'Masculinities in Maltese Contemporary Society' took place on 19 November 2024 and featured a dynamic panel of speakers from various disciplines who shared insights on topics such as fatherhood, toxic masculinities, online hate speech, representation in digital gaming, education, and Maltese literature. The event provided a platform to reflect on shifting gender roles and the impact of social expectations on men's identities and behaviours.

Strengthening its commitment to making the University of Malta a safe and inclusive space, and in line with its *Zero Tolerance to Harassment* policy and principles, the Office implemented a new digital platform to facilitate reporting and access to support. Individuals can now report incidents and seek assistance immediately through the newly developed 'Seek Support and Report Harassment' web tab and the MyUM App reporting feature.

As part of its commitment to capacity building, the Office organised and delivered two workshop sessions on EDI training for staff, as well as thematic workshops on 'Recognising the Signs of Domestic Violence' in collaboration with the Counselling Services at the Health and Wellness Centre. In response to strong staff demand, this training was delivered on three separate occasions within one academic year and has now been included in the training calendar for continued delivery in the coming years. Advanced training in this regard is also underway.



The Office also continued its outreach on the Gender+ Equity Plan across Faculties, organising faculty-specific seminars aimed at embedding inclusive practices in teaching, administration, and student support services.

The University of Malta launched a new initiative titled *Assisting You in Supporting Others*. This factsheet series, developed collaboratively by the ACCESS-Disability Support Committee (ADSC), the Access-Disability Support Unit (ADSU), and the Equity Office, aimed to equip academic staff with practical strategies and essential information to better support their students. The launch edition, focusing on dyslexia, was introduced in November 2024, providing insights into inclusive communication and teaching practices. Such fact sheets are intended to enhance student engagement and promote more inclusive interactions across the University community. The initiative was well-received and represented a proactive step towards building a more supportive and accessible academic environment.

The Equity Office also expanded its outreach and research contributions, representing the University at local and international fora, participating in intersectionality and lifelong learning workshops, presenting research at global conferences, and hosting its first international intern.

The Equity Office took an active role during Freshers' Week by hosting an information stand at the Gateway Building, where the team engaged with new students, raised awareness of available support and initiatives, and organised dedicated information sessions to introduce its work in equity, diversity and inclusion.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate the Office's sustained progress in fostering an inclusive institutional culture grounded in fairness, dignity, and equal opportunity for all members of the University community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Strategic vision: A proactive safety culture

The University of Malta (UM) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its entire community. The Health and Safety Office focuses on moving beyond mere compliance toward a proactive safety culture where risk management is integrated into every operational activity. By prioritising emergency preparedness and specialised technical safety, the Office ensures that the University remains a resilient and secure institution.

A robust safety management system

The Health and Safety strategy is founded on a robust Safety Management System designed to systematically assess and mitigate the diverse risks present within a modern university campus environment. During the past year, particular emphasis was placed on three key priority areas:

Pillar	Focus Area	Strategic Goal
Policy & Governance	Policy updates, document retention, and tender specifications.	To establish a robust regulatory framework and clear safety standards across all entities.
Emergency Preparedness	Emergency Response Team training, 'Kids on Campus' safety, and first aid services.	To maintain high-readiness capabilities for medical, fire, and environmental emergencies.
Operational & Technical Safety	Chemical handling, fume cupboard testing, and site-specific risk assessments.	To ensure specialised environments (labs, engineering sites) operate under strict safety protocols.

Impact and performance

The 2024/25 period was marked by significant milestones in institutional safety and external validation:

- **Policy Modernisation:** Successfully finalised and updated the University's Health and Safety Policy, providing a contemporary roadmap for campus-wide safety.
- **Regulatory Excellence:** Became the first department to complete the University-wide 'Retention of Documents' exercise, improving administrative transparency and risk management.
- **Service Continuity:** Maintained consistent first aid services for students and staff throughout the academic year, including during high-demand peak periods.

2024/25 key initiatives

The Office launched several high-impact initiatives targeting both general preparedness and specialised technical risks:

- **Kids Emergency Preparedness:** Delivered emergency response training (medical, fire, and earthquake awareness) to over **300 children** during the 2025 "Kids on Campus" program.
- **Specialised Staff Training:** In partnership with OHRM&D and RSSD, launched new programmes in **Safe Chemical Handling and Spills** and **Compressed Gas Cylinder Safety**.

- **Technical Infrastructure:** Drafted specifications for the new **Chemical Stores** at the Chemistry Building and conducted airflow verification for fume cupboards in collaboration with RSSD.
- **Advanced Response Training:** The Emergency Response Team (ERT) completed specialised **communication and command team training** to enhance field coordination.

Community and wellbeing

The Health and Safety Office acts as a vital support system for the University's physical wellbeing. By providing safety inductions for Engineering and Archaeology students and developing site-specific safety plans for complex projects—such as the **Liquid Piston Module** and **Wind Turbine decommissioning**—the Office ensures that innovation and research proceed without compromising the health of the UM community.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE

Human resources

There are currently six full-time Health & Wellness Services Unit (H&WSU) professionals working at the University of Malta and two full-time H&WSU professionals at Junior College. The Unit is short of one full-time professional due to lack of office space, despite hotdesking.

In academic year 2024-2025:

- an administrator was employed to replace the receptionist who retired in academic year 2023-2024;
- a beadle was brought in to replace the former, who retired in the same academic year.

The full-time professionals at the H&WSU - University of Malta - consist of:

- Head of Unit (clinical psychologist, gestalt psychotherapist, EMDR trainer in training);
- a Health Psychologist (also an EMDR Practitioner);
- a CBT Therapist;
- a Systems and Gestalt Psychotherapist;
- two Social Workers (one of whom is on Maternity leave until October academic year 2026-2027. Two part-time professionals who are psychotherapists but also hold a social work warrant are currently replacing part of her workload).

The full-time professionals at Junior College consist of:

- a clinical psychologist (also a Gestalt Psychotherapist and EMDR practitioner)
- a Gestalt psychotherapist (who replaced the outgoing psychologist/ psychotherapist at the end of Academic Year 2023 - 2024).

In total, there are currently 14 sessional therapists:

- 4 psychologists (equivalent to 40 clinic hours) offering the intake interviews and therapy/psychological interventions;
- 4 psychotherapists (equivalent to 40 clinic hours) offering intake interviews and psychotherapeutic interventions)
- 6 counsellors (equivalent to 40 clinic hours) offering counselling services.

Professionals were supported through regular weekly meetings discussing administrative issues, providing peer support for complex cases, and engaging in continuous professional development through team-building sessions (four per year) with Prof. Paul Barber, an eminent and internationally recognised academic.

The website and other promotional tools

The website is continuously upgraded to conform to the UM brand, with the **H&W webpage** embedded within the Health and Wellness Centre services. It includes ongoing updated information about services, emergency contact details, and general information.

New tools to promote the service and to facilitate outreach initiatives were created in academic year 2024-2025. These include an updated leaflet, a new banner reflecting the equity and inclusion principles adopted by the Unit, and a promotional video about H&WSU.

In 2025, the Unit upgraded its reception area by introducing calming music and pleasant scenic imagery displayed on the on-site monitor. Positive feedback was received from clients. The filming of an updated promotional video is currently in progress and will hopefully be launched by mid-2026.

In 2025, the H&WSU joined other departments, including the Chaplaincy, Equity Office, and ADSU, in a fundraising campaign for the Student Solidarity Fund (SSF) on the Campus quadrangle.

The Unit's most effective promotional tool remains its workshops, as participants frequently request therapeutic services after attending.

The Unit was requested by Pro-Rector Prof. Valerie Sollars to participate in the Healthy Campus Campaign. Unit members participated in Cost Action 19117 – Mental Health Awareness in Academia (REMO). This led to the publication of articles and the delivery of workshops at several conferences organised by this COST Action. While raising the visibility of the University of Malta, this also brought the Unit to the attention of European university members wishing to establish a similar entity at their institutions.

The H&WSU auto-reply was updated to promote more services, helplines and chat services.

Therapy online and on-site

Therapy continued to be offered online and on-site as required by the client. Intake interviews were mandated to be carried out on-site to safeguard the professionals against potential client risk behaviours.

As of 2025, Unit Professionals were requested to apply for insurance coverage to conduct clinical interventions online. Such applications include the provision of an emergency number should a client display extreme distress during an online session.

The intake procedure, case management and decreasing the waiting list

The intake procedure continues to include the SCOFF questionnaire and the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS), facilitating initial screening for clients at risk and for those suffering from eating disorders, depression, suicidality, and other criteria. Clients are effectively prioritised, and referrals to appropriate services occur immediately following intake. There is increased uniformity and consistency to the intake procedure, which is now carried out by trained professionals rather than an intake officer, enhancing the Unit's professional standards and ensuring GDPR compliance through professional secrecy.

To support students with neurodiversity and promote inclusion, the Browns' Scales for Attention Deficit HyperActive disorder and the Diagnostic Interview for ADHD are used to screen students referred by ADSU.

In the academic year 2024–2025, responsibility for referrals was transferred to the Head of Department (HoD) rather than the Intake Officer, the role of which was discontinued, and an administrator was employed to coordinate professionals administratively, including:

- conforming client attendance by contacting them the day prior to their appointment;
- supporting professionals in rescheduling appointments;
- ensuring timely submission of salary returns
- coordinating clinic space availability for sessional professionals in collaboration with full-time staff.

Trained professionals now carry out the intake interviews. This resulted in the elimination of the waiting list by June 2025 and a fresh start in October 2025. Except during Christmas recess, the waiting now averages approximately three weeks, with priority cases receiving immediate attention.

The HoD holds monthly case management meetings with each professional individually to assign intake interviews and allocate clients for clinical interventions. Whenever possible, clients are assigned to the professional who carried out the intake interview; however, this is not always feasible when another professional's expertise is more appropriate.

This system has strengthened monitoring of the therapeutic process and significantly reduced the waiting list. The HoD, the social worker and the full-time professional at JC with managerial duties serve as focal points for cross-referrals to other Unit professionals and outside agencies, especially the Psychiatric Services.

Data and record keeping

Work on upgrading the procedures for the collection, upkeep, storage, and appropriate disposal of data continued in academic year 2024–2025 with discussions held in consultation with the Audit Office and the Data Protection Officer.

Workshops, focus groups and other services – an update

One of the Unit's greatest achievements over the past years, culminating in the current demand, has been the introduction of diverse and numerous psycho-educational workshops. Ongoing discussions between H&W professionals and Deans, HoDs and lecturers raised awareness regarding the services and workshops required. The Office for Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) coordinated the workshops, while the Equity Office requested collaboration. The effectiveness of the outreach can be seen in the increased number of workshops, participants and requests. (see Table 1)

Counselling Services – Client appointments 2024 to 2025

	2024	2025
New Cases	471	446
Workshop	7 workshops	16 workshops
Attendees	73 students 167 staff	111 students 170 staff
Social work cases including SSF	52	46
Total no. of clients reached	763	773

Table 1: Health and Wellness Unit Statistics

Sessions statistics

This section provides an overview of how the number of new cases has increased since 2018 and how the introduction of workshops supported cost-effective group work. Workshops were also offered at the Ġ.F. Abela Junior College, where the staff complement remained constant at two full-time professionals.

As of January 2020, the University of Malta, Counselling Services Unit, commenced the provision of social work services. Since this time, the Unit has employed two full-time social workers who provide social work support to students and staff at the University and Junior College. The social work interventions provided are part of the professional services clients can access when they apply for therapy; thus, social work interventions complement the therapeutic interventions.

Since September 2024, the two social workers, along with other UM H&WSU professionals, have provided a number of workshops and training sessions to reach more students and staff. This was undertaken to raise awareness of the help available within the Unit, but also to provide learning opportunities on specific topics. In collaboration with the

UM international office, the social workers, together with a UM Counselling Services professional, delivered the following workshops:

- Living in Malta Away from Home (for UM International Students arriving in Malta to study);
- Living Abroad Away from Home (aimed at UM students travelling abroad to study);
- Money Management;
- Life Skills (Stress and Time Management).

Since November 2024, in collaboration with the Equity Office and HRMD, during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, the UM Counselling Services social worker and the Head of UM CSU, delivered three workshops on Recognising the Signs of Domestic Violence, which reached a total of 46 staff members.

These sessions were well received, and following feedback from some of the attendees, follow-up sessions to the training

are now being delivered. The aim of these sessions is to provide participants with a safe space to discuss and share thoughts, concerns, and reflections arising from the training received.

The UM social workers also support the delivery of training given to UM and JC staff on Supporting Severely Distressed and Suicidal Students, focussing on the practical support social workers provide during crises.

Furthermore, during 2024–2025, the UM social worker, together with two other UM H&WSU professionals, in collaboration with the Faculty of Education, delivered sessions on management of anxiety to students in the different year groups, reaching a total of 60 students across five sessions.

The senior social worker offers supervision to the junior social worker and coordinates social work interventions, including networking with outside agencies.



INTERNAL AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

During 2024-2025, the Internal Audit and Risk Management Function (IARMF) executed and delivered a comprehensive body of work in accordance with the agreed plan and programme of work approved by the Audit and Risk Committee. The audit assignments focused on a range of University operations, providing independent assurance across key risk areas.

The charts below summarise activity undertaken during the 2024–2025 academic year. In total, 12 internal audit reports were issued, identifying 27 findings. Of these findings, 15% were assessed as high risk, 81% as medium risk, and 4% as low risk.



In addition to the planned audit activity, the IARMF conducted three investigations, delivering timely and independent assurance to management and Council. Regular follow-up reviews were performed to monitor the implementation status of agreed audit recommendations, supporting continuous improvement and strengthening governance and accountability.

The IARMF actively participated in meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee and, when requested, provided updates to Council on the progress of implementing audit recommendations. The function is also a member of the working group for a sustainable university, where it contributes to the development and implementation of sustainability initiatives.

LIBRARY SERVICES

During the academic year 2024-25, the Library continued to advance its mission of supporting research, teaching, and learning across the UM through initiatives that strengthened scholarly information provision, enhanced digital access, and reinforced the University's commitment to Open Science. The year was marked by continued investment in digital infrastructure, service innovation, and strategic development of collections, ensuring seamless access to high-quality resources for academics, researchers, and students.

The Library broadened its collections of ebooks, journals, and specialised databases, adopting an Evidence-Based Acquisition model to align licensed resources with actual user demand while optimising financial resources. Between October 2024 and September 2025, licensed platforms and databases recorded over 905,000 downloads, reflecting the sustained reliance on digital scholarly content.

Support for Open Access publishing was further strengthened through the expansion of Read and Publish agreements, enabling UM researchers to publish eligible articles openly while retaining full access to key journal portfolios. Publications were consistently deposited on the Institutional Repository OAR@UM, while research datasets were archived in the UM Data Repository, drUM, thus reinforcing the University's commitment to Open Science.

The digitisation and deposit of several local scholarly journals enriched Open Access content, and 122 newly created academic publication lists brought the total to 635, ensuring comprehensive visibility of UM research output. The successful integration of drUM with HyDi enabled users to retrieve datasets and related publications through a unified search interface, improving efficiency and enhancing the visibility and integrity of UM's research outputs.

A significant milestone was the drafting of the UM Research Data Management Policy, which was approved by Senate in September 2025. The Policy outlines a responsible lifecycle approach to managing research data and promotes transparency, integrity, long-term preservation, and, where possible, data sharing. It encourages the adoption of Data Management Plans and supports the deposit of datasets in line with the FAIR Data Principles.

Digital innovation remained a central focus. In December 2024, the Library implemented Transkribus, an AI-powered platform for transcribing historical manuscripts and documents. Over 36,500 pages from Special Collections were digitised, transcribed, and made accessible via OAR@UM, substantially enhancing discoverability of archival material. The establishment of a Digitisation Unit in late 2024 further supported preservation initiatives, advancing projects involving



transcription, metadata enhancement, and the development of AI-driven tools for improved text recognition.

Special Collections were enriched through notable donations, including the Prof. John Rizzo Naudi Collection, materials related to Prof. Aquilina's Dictionary, manuscripts from the Argotti Botanic Gardens and Resources Centre, and research papers from reputable local scholars. Additionally, 1,402 Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) were catalogued and deposited on OAR@UM.

User education and engagement expanded, with 161 training sessions delivered to 2,586 participants. Workshops covered HyDi, RefWorks, information literacy, systematic reviews, author support, and Open Science. Learning was further supported through an expanded suite of multimedia instructional tools, including online guides, digital manuals, and short-form social media videos.

The development of Leganto as the official platform for UM reading lists progressed significantly, with workflows finalised in collaboration with APQRU, enabling updated lists to be linked to CourseFinder and ensuring efficient acquisition of required resources. In line with the UM Strategic Plan 2020–2025, the Laws and Theology Library was reconfigured to create a more welcoming and flexible study environment, enhancing user experience and supporting collaborative learning.

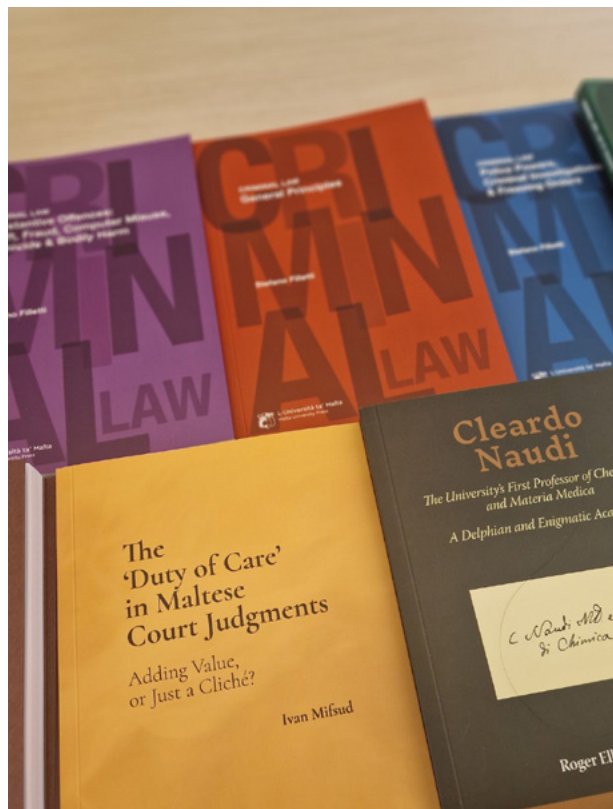
Collectively, these developments reflect sustained progress in expanding access to scholarly resources, advancing digital transformation, strengthening research support, and enhancing the impact of UM scholarship.

MALTA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Malta University Press (MUP) is the scholarly publisher of the University of Malta, specialising in producing high-quality and rigorously peer-reviewed works that embody the essence of exploration, analytical rigour, creativity, and cultural enrichment.

Over the past twelve months, MUP successfully published twelve titles, two of which were reprinted due to popular demand. In addition, MUP has organised and participated in several events, including the Malta Book Festival (University of Malta stand) and the Campus Book Festival, and enjoyed fruitful collaborations with other UM entities (the Department of Maltese, the Faculty of Education, *THINK Magazine*, The University of Malta Library, and Malta University Distributors (MUDis) as well as international entities (the Association of European University Presses, Berghahn Books and Project MUSE).

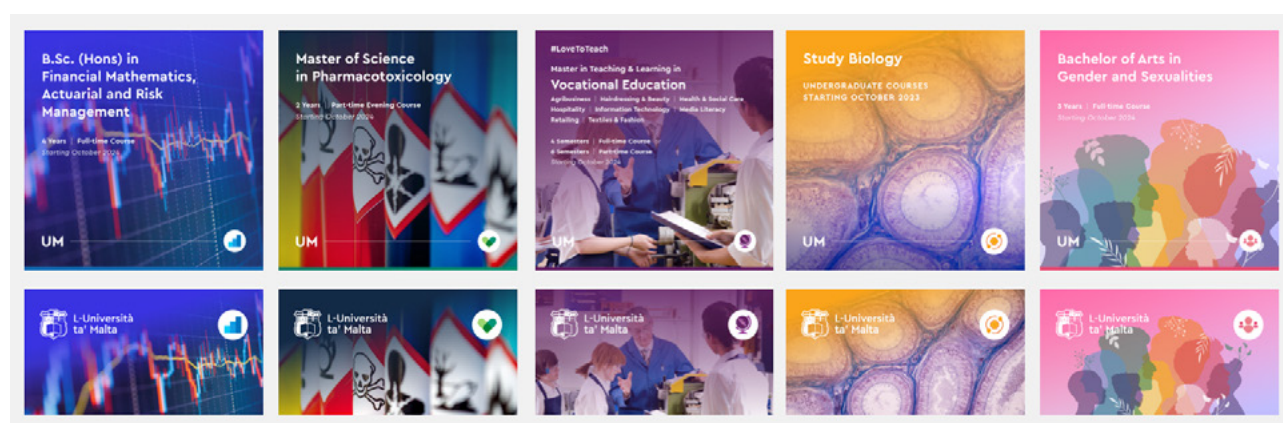
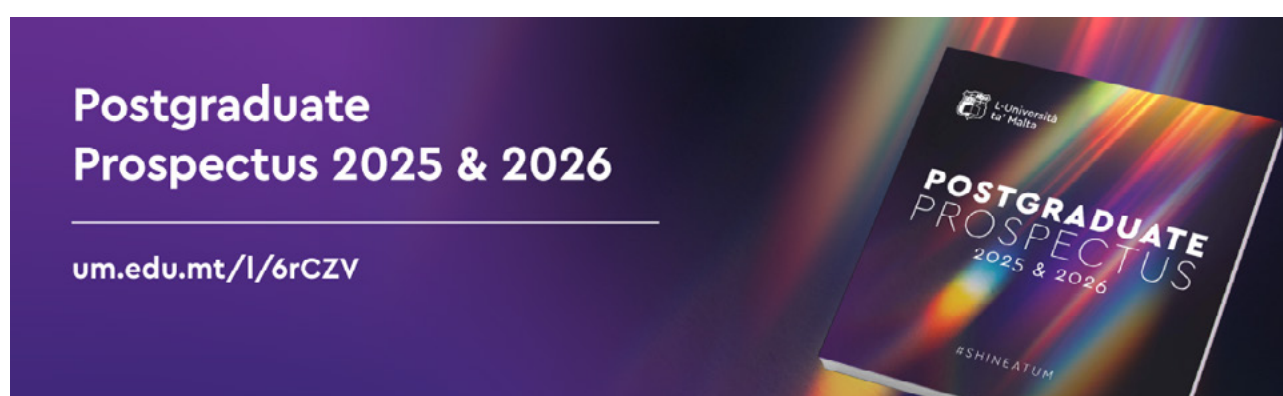
For the first time since its inception in the 1960s, three MUP publications were shortlisted for the National Book Prize, with one title winning the Research category: “So We Can Do Our Best.” *Care in Children’s Relationships with Teachers* by Professor Mary Darmanin.



MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND ALUMNI OFFICE

Throughout the academic year 2024-25, the **Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office** (MCAO) executed a wide range of strategic initiatives. These efforts prioritised student recruitment and streamlined internal and external communications, while reinforcing the University's brand identity.

The Design section of the AV and Graphic Design team at MCAO managed a high volume of deliverables: a large combination of digital assets for UM webpages, formatting of academic journals, marketing campaign materials and day-to-day deliverables defined another successful year of design output. Design tasks completed by the two-member design team reached a total of 801 between 1 October 2024 and 30 September 2025.



To capture and transmit UM-driven initiatives, information, promotions and research at both an internal (within the University itself) and external level (the general public), a total of 223 videography assignments were logged and completed by the two-member team, with approximately 20 completed requests per month. The two-member team also worked on a total of 308 photography assignments.

The Student Recruitment Office (SRO) team focused on internationalisation and prospective student engagement for the 2025/6 intake and organised a total of 24 webinars: 18 focused on general admission to UM courses for prospective students, and another 6 webinars were dedicated to the course applicants accepted by UM. During the academic year 2024-25, 28 campus tours were held for students interested in studying at UM. These initiatives resulted in 3157 first-preference applications from applicants with overseas qualifications for the UM courses starting in October 2025.



A total of 291 online campaigns were executed across Google Ads (70), Meta (201), and LinkedIn (20). Although the vast majority of these campaigns dealt with promoting courses to boost course application rates, there were also several general campaigns to promote various UM initiatives.

The Student Recruitment Team handled a large number of enquiries via telephone, email, and social media messages. The emails received at info@um.edu.mt, 30,707 in total, covered a variety of aspects including local/international admissions; scholarships and internships; fees; visas; Erasmus+; international projects; career advice; vacancy postings; accommodation; queries related to MATSEC; enquiries received from UM's academic entities; enquiries received from Governmental entities and other internal Offices (including the Junior College, the Conference and Events Unit) and other generic emails (including mailshots received). 9,739 emails were received through the request information form; these consisted of queries on admissions, which came in through the online form on the MCAO website and through third-party portals.

During the 2024-25 academic year, the MCAO was instrumental in promoting science and research through high-impact events like the UM Research Expo 2025, THINK Soapbox, and Malta Café Scientifique. In November 2024, the Unconventional Science Careers (USC) event engaged approximately 1,000 students and educators from 13 schools, showcasing diverse career paths in STEAM. Another event related to STEAM, the She Can Exhibition, continued on its tour during academic year 2024-25 and was hosted at MCAST in October 2024, at the Engineering, Research and Innovation Laboratories (ERIL) at UM for the third edition of Unconventional Science Careers and the International Day of Women and Girls in Science and Technology on 11 February 2025. It also visited the Science in the Citadel festival on 27 April 2025 at the Ċittadella in Gozo.

The STEAM@UM Office was also involved in other events during the same academic year, such as Science in the City 2024, Brain Awareness Week (BAW) 2025 and organised STEAM@Kids on Campus during the summer, where students of all ages had the opportunity to engage in exciting, hands-on activities across Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. The Office also facilitated the participation of UM at St Edward's College Career's Fair in March 2025, FestaSTEM, which was held in April 2025 at St Monica School in Gżira, and St Michael's School's Science Fest in St Venera held in May 2025.

NEWSPOINT, *redefined.*

A *fresher, faster, and smarter* news experience for the UM Community.

Dive in and explore

um.edu.mt/newspoint



During the academic year 2024-25, 1,526 articles were published on **NewsPoint**, UM's new portal, with 90 of the articles sent to local news media. A major digital milestone was the September 2025 launch of the revamped NewsPoint, which also marked its 10th anniversary. The portal was migrated to the TerminalFour (T4) Content Management System (CMS), improving site speed and user experience. While web development was outsourced, MCAO Design managed the layout, and IT Services provided staff training.

The weekly e-newsletter, branded NewsPoint Update, sent on a Wednesday, issued 42 editions during this period alongside 614 targeted mailings to UM staff, students and alumni relating to training opportunities for career and self-development, job prospects, general notices, events, surveys, and educational programmes, while 52 mailings branded NewsPoint Extra were sent out. Some of these notifications were sent via the My UM app, which primarily targets students. A total of 21 obituary announcements were disseminated to UM members of staff who opted to receive them.

Strategic content creation through the tireless work of the marketing team at MCAO led to record-breaking engagement metrics. The number of returning viewers on Facebook achieved a 2.7% increase from the previous year. Additionally, there was a 110.2% increase with regard to engaged followers. On Facebook, the post that received the most views, during the academic year 2024-25, compared to other UM posts, was that of Nathan Zahra Piscopo, Malta's first-ever male midwife, published on 24 July 2025. This post had 59,121 views and 1889 interactions. Instagram also saw an increase in the number of followers. The viral post 'The ride-or-die exam buddy energy', published on 26 June 2025, achieved an unprecedented 4,103,811 views and over 473,000 interactions.

UM's research magazine, THINK, worked on expanding its reach through creative collaborations with entities like Xjenza Malta and the Arts Council. THINK collaborated with the Department of English to publish student work and also established a mentorship programme for new writers. Other than the THINK website, the THINK editor also handles the magazine's social media to actively engage with the general public through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X. For both Instagram and Facebook, the biggest increase in interactions and views came from collaborative posts with UM socials and other collaborators.

During academic year 2024-25, THINK co-organised UM's presence at the Malta Book Festival. Another event was Serving Kotba on Campus – THINK, along with the Library, Malta University Press (MUP), and Malta University Distributors (MUDis) hosted a mini book festival focused on research publications on the Library Terrace in April 2025. Issues 46 (Species), 47 (Disciplines), and 48 (Voices) were released during the academic year 2024-2025, together with a special edition dedicated to the UM Research Expo. The THINK editor was also engaged with co-writing and co-editing the first two chapbooks in a children's series entitled *Kekko the Kitteen's Great Campus Adventure*.

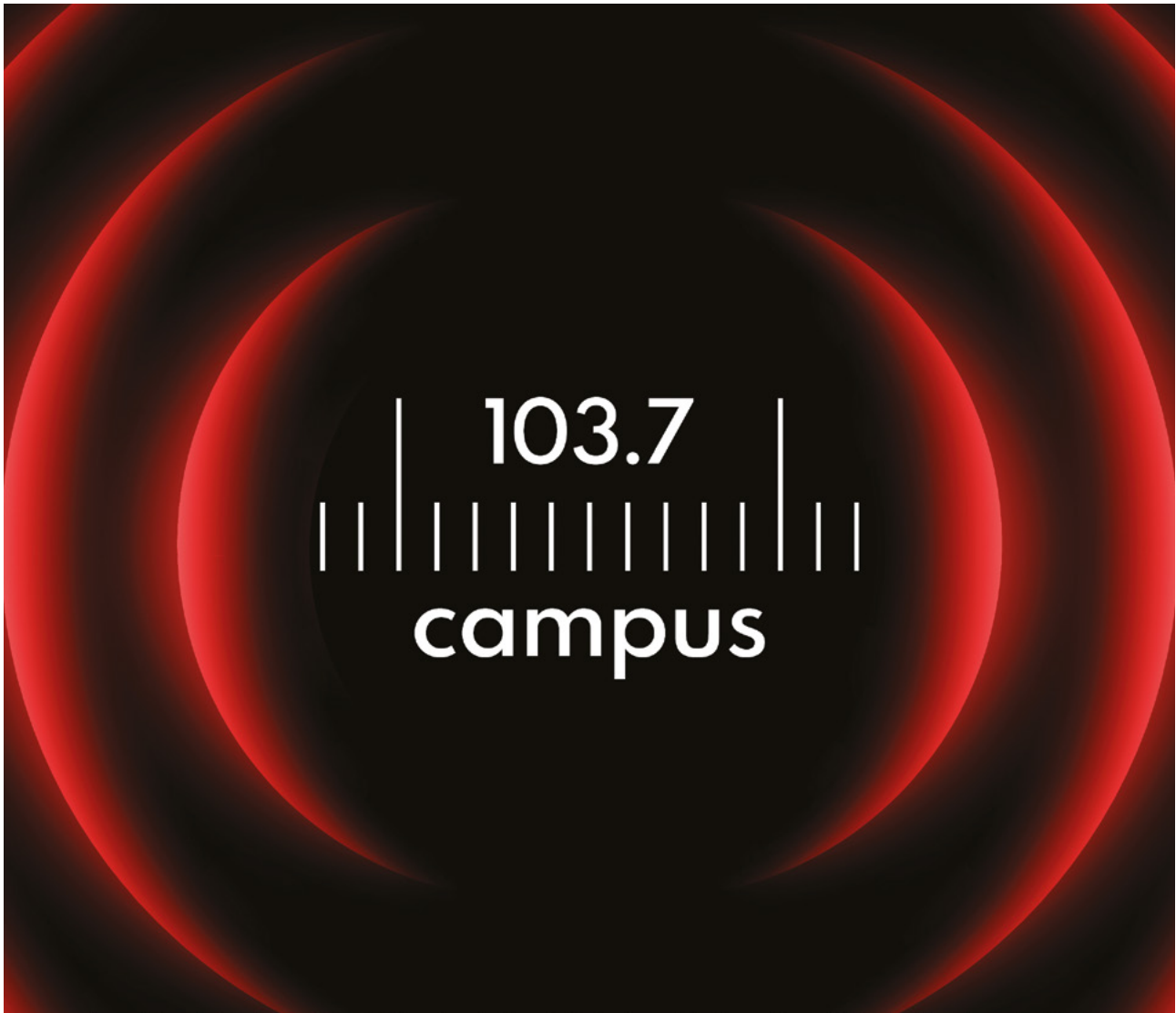


As part of the Web Policies Team, MCAO continued to manage the aesthetic and content standards of UM-branded websites, providing guidance on style and content for various entity, project, and conference subsites. The team also successfully migrated a 400-page archive of Campus 103.7 from the old Campus FM site to T4 within three weeks. A full website revamp for the station was initiated for the new site to be launched during the academic year 2025-26.

Campus 103.7

A landmark accomplishment was the formal integration of the radio station Campus 103.7 into the MCAO structure on 1 October 2024. This move strengthened the station's institutional positioning while maintaining its broadcasting license under Malta University Holding Company Ltd (MUHC). Campus 103.7 remained fully committed to its mission, with a strong focus on cultural and educational broadcasting. The station continued to prioritise content that highlights and promotes research activities, initiatives, and events taking place across UM. One of the station's flagship programmes, which has significantly reinforced the station's mission to inform, educate, and engage the public in matters of social relevance, education, and civic dialogue, *Andrew fuq 103.7*, was launched in September 2024.

Through a series of strategic collaborations and sponsorship agreements, Campus 103.7 successfully attracted a growing number of companies interested in advertising on the station. This strategic initiative not only contributed to the station's sustainability, enriching its cultural and artistic content, but also enhanced listener engagement through high-value promotions, including a cruise holiday giveaway. According to Broadcasting Authority surveys, listenership grew significantly, with the audience rating rising from 1.5% to 3.6%.



QUALITY SUPPORT UNIT

The **Quality Support Unit** (QSU) was set up in 2015 to serve as the administrative arm of the **Quality Assurance Committee** (QAC) by supporting the expansion and enhancement of the quality culture of and at the University of Malta (UM).

During the academic year 2024/2025, the QSU continued to play a central role in the strengthening and development of the University's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) framework under the guidance of Professor Frank Bezzina. Operating under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), the QSU guided the development and implementation of IQA processes in line with the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area** (ESG 2015) and the **National Quality Assurance Framework and Standards for Higher Education** as established by the **Malta Further and Higher Education Authority** (MFHEA). In doing so, the Unit supported UM in fulfilling its responsibilities as a self-accrediting institution while nurturing a quality culture grounded in accountability, transparency, and continuous enhancement.

A primary area of activity for the QSU during the academic year was the ongoing monitoring and review of academic programmes, notably through the **Periodic Programme Review** (PPR) and the **Annual Programme Review** (APR). The 2024/2025 PPR cycle represented the most extensive review exercise undertaken to date, with fifty programmes reviewed across multiple Faculties, Institutes, Centres, and Schools (FICS). The QSU played a key coordinating and supportive role throughout the process, supporting Internal Quality Review panels, ensuring methodological consistency, and promoting alignment with institutional, national, and European quality standards. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening reflective self-evaluation practices, improving the quality and coherence of Self-Evaluation Documents, and embedding systematic follow-up mechanisms to drive the implementation of action plans approved by the Senate. These measures reinforced both institutional accountability and the enhancement dimension of the review process.

Alongside the PPR, the QSU continued to consolidate the APR as a core mechanism for continuous programme enhancement. Throughout the year, the Unit provided targeted support to FICS to encourage more meaningful engagement with the APR process. A significant development during this period was the collaboration with Professor Joel Azzopardi to introduce and pilot a dedicated digital APR platform, designed to streamline submission, peer review, archiving, and reporting. This platform supported the further development of a peer-review approach through the Academics for Quality Assurance (A4QA) initiative, shifting

the emphasis of APR from procedural compliance toward reflective practice, professional dialogue, and enhancement-oriented evaluation.

In parallel, the QSU continued to advance the use of Microsoft Power BI dashboards to support evidence-informed quality assurance and strategic decision-making. These dashboards contributed to the systematic integration, analysis, and visualisation of institutional data, enabling more effective evaluation of quality-related indicators and enhancing transparency across programme improvement. This development aligned closely with ESG expectations regarding information management and the use of data to support quality assurance and enhancement.

The **Quality Mailshot Initiative** remained an important enhancement-focused activity during 2024/2025. Through this initiative, the QSU disseminated examples of good practice identified during programme reviews. The mailshots served to highlight innovation, promote shared learning, and demonstrate how quality assurance processes translate into tangible enhancement outcomes. In doing so, the initiative contributed to closing feedback loops and strengthening institutional awareness of effective practices.



Quality Assurance Committee

UM maintains rank, improves scores in THE 2025



The University of Malta has maintained its position in the 801-1000th band of the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) World University Rankings \(WUR\) 2025](#) for the fourth consecutive year. This achievement is particularly notable given the addition of nearly 700 new institutions since 2020, bringing the total number of ranked universities to 2,092.

Furthermore, UM has continued its trend of consistently increasing its scores in the ranking's five key areas, with a net improvement in all five when compared to last year's ranking. Of particular note is the University's formidable performance in the **International Outlook** area. With a score of 57.8 (compared to last year's 53.8), UM is ranked in **673rd** place in this particular area.

The University is committed to consistently improve its rankings to 'nurture and disseminate the University's good name', in line with one of the main commitments of the [International Outlook](#) theme of the [Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#).

Through this [Quality Mailshot Initiative](#), the **QAC** aims to disseminate best practices at UM that align with both national and European standards for quality in higher education. If you have an example of good QA practice which you would like us to share, please get in touch with us at qac@um.edu.mt

um.edu.mt



Recognising students as key stakeholders in quality assurance and the continuous improvement of academic programmes, the QSU actively promoted the Students for Quality Assurance (S4QA) initiative during the 2024/2025 academic year.

Through S4QA, students were formally integrated into PPR processes as trained members of Internal Quality Review panels, contributing the learner's perspective to evaluative discussions on programme design, delivery, and relevance. Participation in S4QA is formally recognised through a DegreePlus study-unit, reinforcing the value of student engagement in institutional quality processes. By embedding student participation within peer-review structures, this initiative strengthens the role of the student voice in shaping programme enhancement and supports informed, collaborative dialogue between students and staff.

UM views external quality assurance (EQA) audits as a valuable and complementary mechanism to its internal quality assurance processes, reinforcing the continuous enhancement of academic quality and the upholding of institutional standards. Throughout the academic year 2024–2025, the QSU maintained regular engagement with all relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the EQA audit action plan. This included a series of meetings with key offices, as well as ongoing communication and collaboration to monitor progress and provide support as needed. All updates have been systematically tracked in a master document, complemented by a comprehensive repository of supporting evidence. These records will form the basis for the follow-up review by the MFHEA. The QSU is pleased to report a constructive and collaborative approach across the institution, with notable progress already made in implementing several of the recommended actions.

During 2024/2025, the QSU continued to support the UM's engagement with major **international university rankings**, ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and integrity of institutional data submissions. UM recorded a number of positive outcomes, including improved or sustained positions in key global rankings such as the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings, Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR), Webometrics, and the Clarivate Global Institutional Profiles Project. Notably, UM improved its overall scores and ranking bands in several exercises despite increased global competition, reflecting incremental gains in areas such as research impact, international outlook, employability, and data quality. The QSU's work in this area focused on coordinating data collection, supporting internal stakeholders, and promoting a more strategic, evidence-informed approach to rankings as part of the University's broader quality enhancement and internationalisation agenda.

The QSU team places strong emphasis on its own continuous professional development (CPD), recognising that the ongoing enhancement of staff competencies is essential to effectively

support the University's quality assurance agenda. In line with this commitment, the team actively prioritises CPD opportunities both within UM and through external training and development initiatives. During the academic year 2024–2025, QSU staff members participated in a range of key training and professional development events focused on areas directly relevant to their roles. These included accreditation of higher education institutions, Times Higher Education and QS World University Rankings, creative classroom practices, building sustainable universities, recognition of prior learning (RPL), environmental data management systems, external quality assurance of research in higher education institutions, and instructional design engagement and support.

Across all areas of activity, the QSU placed strong emphasis on professional dialogue as a defining feature of its developmental approach to quality assurance. Engagement with academic and administrative stakeholders was characterised by constructive, reflective conversations aimed at improvement rather than compliance alone.

Overall, the work of the QSU during the 2024/2025 academic year reflected a careful balance between assurance and enhancement. Through the continued development of monitoring and review mechanisms, the strategic use of data analytics, the dissemination of good practice, and the promotion of reflective professional engagement, the QSU made a substantive contribution to the ongoing strengthening of UM's IQA framework in alignment with both European and national quality standards.

UM within SEA-EU

The SEA-EU Alliance

European Universities Alliances are a central pillar of the European Strategy for Universities, promoting sustained transnational cooperation across higher education. The initiative now includes 73 Alliances and almost 650 institutions, fostering integrated approaches to education, research, and innovation.

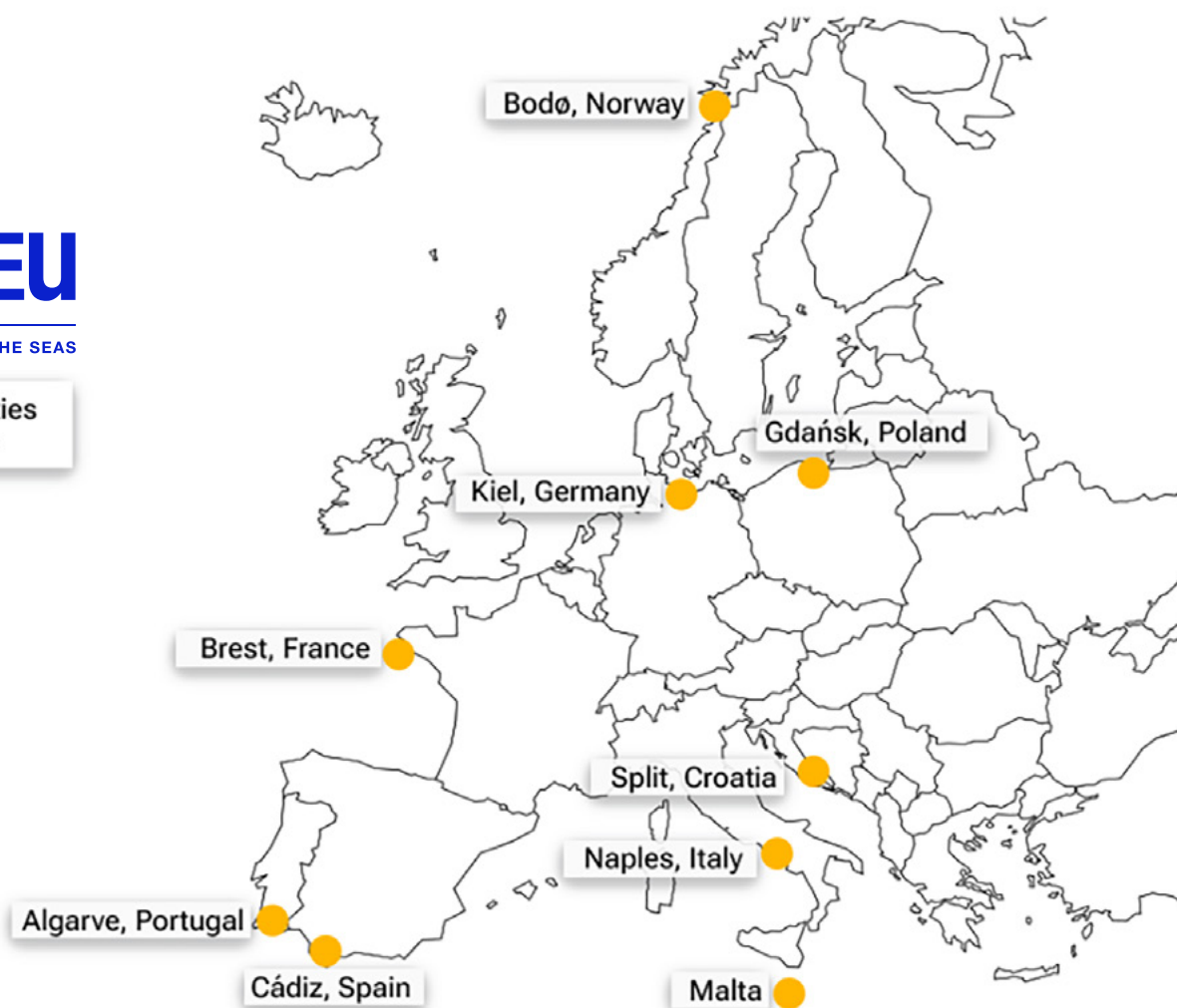
The European University of the Seas, SEA-EU, brings together nine coastal universities. L-Università ta' Malta (UM), University of Cadiz (UCA), University of Brest (UBO), Kiel University (CAU), University of Split (UNIST), University of Gdansk (UG), Parthenope University of Naples (UPN), University of Algarve (UALG) and Nord University (NORD) seek to build an international, interdisciplinary, and multilingual European University with a coastal focus, supported by 77 associated partners across public authorities, cities, ports, companies, and civil society.

Within the Alliance, the University of Malta plays an active governance and implementation role, contributing to joint education, mobility, multilingualism, communication, research collaboration, and societal engagement. The Alliance aligns with UM's strategic priorities in internationalisation and academic development, while also strengthening internal coordination and institutional capacity for sustained European cooperation.



EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF THE SEAS

9 partner universities
9 coastal cities



Key achievements in the reporting year

At governance level, this year was significant for the further consolidation of Alliance structures. Rectors' and Pro-Rectors' coordination was strengthened through the SEA-EU Rectors' Council, the Vice-Rectors for Education and the Vice-Rectors for Research. Discussions progressed regarding the Alliance's long-term sustainability and the establishment of a potential legal entity for the Alliance.

SEA-EU's institutional positioning at UM was strengthened. In February 2025, the SEA-EU Office was formally integrated as an independent entity within the University and placed under the Pro-Rector for Strategic Planning and Sustainability. This step reinforced the Alliance's alignment with UM's strategic planning framework.

Joint programmes

Work on SEA-EU joint programmes progressed significantly, with one undergraduate programme, two postgraduate programmes and one joint doctoral programme advancing during the year. The three taught programmes reached an advanced preparation stage, while discussions on the joint doctoral framework continued.

The development of these programmes represents a structural step towards integrated European degree delivery within the SEA-EU Alliance, involving shared governance arrangements, coordinated curriculum development, and cross-institutional academic collaboration.

Overview of SEA-EU joint programmes and UM contribution:

Programme	Coordinating Faculty / Unit	UM Academics Involved	SEA-EU Partners	Status
Joint Bachelor in Sustainable Blue Economy (SeaBlueE)	Faculty of Science and Office of the Registrar – Department of Geosciences	10	UCA, UNIST, UG, UALG, NORD	Advanced preparation stage
Master's in Sustainability Transition for Organisations and Resilience Management (STORM)	Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy – Department of Public Policy	6	UM, UCA, UG, UNIST, NORD	Advanced preparation stage
Master's in Port Management and Logistics (MIPMAL)	Faculty of Laws - Department of Environmental and Resources Law	8	UCA, UG, UNIST, UALG, UM	Advanced preparation stage
Joint Doctoral Programme: Marine and Maritime Sciences and Technologies	Doctoral School	14	UNIST, UCA, UM, UBO, NORD, UALG, UPN	Discussions in progress



Mobility participation

Total participations: 75
30 students | 21 academic staff | 24 administrative staff

Participation spanned BIPs, staff weeks, Governance Meetings, conferences, and expert meetings across the nine partner universities. These engagements strengthened UM's academic collaboration, staff capacity, and Alliance coordination, while expanding student access to short-format international learning opportunities. The summary below highlights the main areas of impact arising from UM's work in mobility, governance, research, and thematic collaboration within SEA-EU.

STUDENTS	ACADEMIC STAFF	ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
Access to short-term international learning beyond semester mobility. Stronger intercultural and collaborative skills through BIPs and thematic activities. Greater exposure to transnational academic environments and Alliance learning.	Strengthened collaboration across the nine partner universities in joint programme development and research networking. Enhanced experience in blended and cross-institutional teaching formats. Increased academic exchange and visibility through conferences and expert meetings.	Direct exposure to governance and coordination models across partner universities. Practical insights from Staff Weeks and thematic meetings to refine local processes. A broader understanding of European higher education systems and administrative models.

Research funding

SEA-EU Research Seed Fund:

Three funded projects | Grants of up to €3,000 per project

The SEA-EU Research Seed Fund was implemented across the Alliance and coordinated locally at UM through the SEA-EU Office, including dissemination, applicant guidance, and submission support. The scheme supported early-stage collaboration between UM academics and SEA-EU partner universities, helping to generate new joint research initiatives aligned with Alliance priorities.

SEA-EU Student-Led Projects:

Three funded projects | Grants of up to €3,000 per project

The SEA-EU Student-Led Projects initiative was promoted and supported locally through outreach and application guidance, including dissemination of the call and related webinar opportunities. The projects strengthened student participation in Alliance collaboration and supported practical engagement with SEA-EU priority areas such as inclusion, sustainability, multilingualism, and digitalisation.

Events

The UM SEA-EU Office hosted and supported a series of Alliance activities that strengthened collaboration and institutional visibility, spanning academic exchange, capacity building initiatives, and public engagement, with several initiatives delivered in collaboration with academic and administrative colleagues across the University.

SEA-EU Short Film Festival - Local Screening (15 participants). The SEA-EU Office organised a local screening at the KSU Common Room featuring shortlisted entries from across the Alliance, including UM. A UM-produced short film placed third at Alliance level, highlighting UM's cultural contribution to the Alliance.

DiveIn to the Future - Marine Life Exhibition (approximately 100 Alliance representatives). The exhibition was launched at Esplora Interactive Science Centre, as part of the SEA-EU Governing Week and promoted ocean literacy through immersive digital tools, including VR and 3D visual elements.

SEA-EU Theology Staff Week (16 participants). Hosted across the Valletta and Msida campuses by the Faculty of Theology, the Staff Week strengthened academic collaboration with partner universities and supported sustained thematic exchange within the Alliance.

Tourism Sustainability Blended Intensive Programme (35 participants). UM delivered its first SEA-EU BIP, organised by the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, with virtual and physical components under Erasmus+. The programme strengthened joint teaching experience and academic coordination across institutions.

SEA-EU Turns 5 - UM Anniversary Event (450 participants across the Alliance) (joint online celebration). UM marked the anniversary on 21 February 2025 through a local hybrid-linked event. At UM, the celebration brought together senior leadership and institutional representatives and marked a significant milestone for the SEA-EU Office in its new institutional set-up.

SEA-EU Lifelong Learning Workshop (30 participants). UM hosted a workshop on the professionalisation of adult educators, bringing together SEA-EU representatives and Maltese stakeholders. The event supported alignment between Alliance-level and national lifelong learning priorities.

SEA-EU Multilingualism Coordination Event (32 participants). As the lead institution for multilingualism within SEA-EU, UM hosted a coordination event focused on common language policy and virtual language initiatives. The meeting reinforced Alliance alignment and highlighted UM's strategic role as the only SEA-EU member operating in an English-language environment.



Governance development and institutional integration

SEA-EU advanced key governance and structural milestones at Alliance level, while UM strengthened the institutional embedding of the Alliance within its own structures. These developments supported long-term sustainability, clarified coordination mechanisms, and reinforced UM's strategic positioning within SEA-EU.

SEA-EU Governing Week Malta November 2024

A major governance milestone was UM's holding of the SEA-EU Presidency between June 2024 and November 2025, culminating in the SEA-EU Governing Week hosted in Malta. The event brought together around 100 representatives from across the Alliance, including Rectorates and academic and administrative staff from all nine partner universities. Participants attended meetings of nine governance bodies, including the SEA-EU Governing Board and Executive Committee. The week serves as the Alliance's principal forum for strategic alignment and implementation follow-up.

The SEA-EU Governing Week in Malta marked a pivotal stage in the Alliance's development, centred on consolidating and strengthening its governance framework. During the week, governance structures were reinforced through the formalisation of new bodies, including the SEA-EU Rectors' Council and the SEA-EU Vice-Rectors' Committees.

Discussions also advanced the Alliance's long-term governance model, including the exploration of a potential legal entity as part of its next phase. These exchanges helped align partners on future legal and operational frameworks and to prepare institutions for more structured, sustained cooperation. For UM, this has direct relevance for institutional planning and for positioning the University effectively in future Alliance negotiations and decision-making.

A further milestone was the formal signing of cooperation agreements for SEA-EU joint programmes, marking the transition from programme design to institutional commitment. The meetings also supported alignment on mobility and funding arrangements linked to the implementation of these programmes.

The SEA-EU Office

Building on the governance advances achieved at Alliance level, UM reflected this progress internally through the institutional integration of the SEA-EU Office.

The SEA-EU Office serves as the University's central coordination point for the Alliance, supporting the management and implementation of externally funded SEA-EU activities and acting as the primary interface between UM staff and external Alliance partners across teaching, student engagement, and collaborative initiatives.



Resource Centres

ARGOTTI BOTANIC GARDENS AND RESOURCE CENTRE

During the academic year 2024–2025, the Argotti Botanic Gardens and Resource Centre continued to enhance its role as a vital institution for botanical conservation, research, and public engagement. The Centre focused on the meticulous management of its living plant collections, herbarium, and seed bank while maintaining active involvement with students, key stakeholders, and the general public. Regular engagement was fostered through weekly guided tours for tourists and special group bookings, alongside participation in prominent community events such as the Ġenna ta' Ġonna festival organised by the Floriana Local Council and the hosting of an artistic exhibition together with the Australian High Commissioner. The Centre's commitment to education was further evidenced by its collaboration with Ambjent Malta for Biodiversity Day in May 2025, the hosting of three gardening workshops with Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar (FAA), and the facilitation of a Science in the City pre-festival event in September. Additionally, the Centre provided valuable training grounds for international scholars, hosting internships for students from Germany and France.

Significant progress was achieved in the area of infrastructural development and digitisation. Restoration works on the Nymphaeum proceeded under the guidance of the Department of Conservation and Built Heritage, while a

large hall within the Argotti Villa was successfully refurbished to serve as a multi-purpose lecture and exhibition space. General garden amelioration continued with the systematic replacement of plant labels with anodised aluminium versions and a major upgrade to the irrigation system, which included the completion of the main piping network and the installation of advanced filters and a fertiliser injector. In an effort to modernise its research capabilities, the Centre initiated the digitisation of its Herbarium following the acquisition of specialised photographic equipment. This digitisation project extended to the university Library's Melitensia Archives, where forty manuscripts belonging to former curators and scientists were also preserved in digital format.

In the realm of botanical research and environmental stewardship, the Centre published and distributed its 2025 Index Seminum, resulting in seed exchange requests from seventeen international institutions. A two-year agreement was also established with the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) for the propagation of plants intended for population reinforcement and reintroduction in sand dunes over the next two years. The academic year also marked a leadership transition; following the retirement of Mr Tony Meli in August 2025, Mr Christian Borg assumed the role of Curator-Manager to lead the Centre's future initiatives.



COTTONERA RESOURCE CENTRE (CRC)

During the year under review, the Centre remained committed to its mission to foster educational support and community engagement within the region, taking into account the diverse demographic ranging from youth to older adults.

Community outreach, children and youth

Revision classes for Year 10 and Year 11

The revision classes supported students in Year 10 and Year 11 in preparation for SEC examinations. This year marked a significant achievement for the Centre, with a record number of 50 applicants registered from the Cottonera region and beyond. All sessions were held online. The subjects offered were English, Maths, French, Biology, Chemistry and Home Economics.

L-Università ta' Malta
Cottonera Resource Centre

SEC Revision Classes for Year 10 and Year 11 students

Revision classes starting from October 2024 until May 2025 at Cottonera Resources Centre.
Classes are held online or hybrid, depending on the needs of the subject.

Subjects

Malti | English | French | Italian | Maths | Physics | Chemistry | Biology | Home Economics*

Applications are now **OPEN** - send an email on crc@um.edu.mt or call **2340 7801/2** for registration.

Students can choose **one or more subjects**, for a **one time fee of €35** which covers the period from October 2023 until May 2024.

*Additional charges may apply

XjenzaMania 2025

The summer of 2025 saw the successful organisation of XjenzaMania, a science-themed summer school aimed at engaging younger students (ages 8–12 years) in STEAM activities. The program was very varied and well-staffed to ensure high-quality outcomes. The summer school was held over six weeks, from 7 July to 14 August 2025.

For this summer school, there was one class mentor, one coordinator overseeing the project, as well as four other mentors and fourteen students participating.

Community outreach and adult learners

Lifelong learning courses

In line with its commitment to continuous education, the Centre hosted Lifelong Learning courses during the academic year. These courses provided adult learners in the community with opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge, reinforcing the Centre's role as a hub for accessible education. The courses offered during this academic year were Maltese Lace and Digital Literacy.

University of the Third Age (U3A)

The Centre continued to serve as a designated venue for the University of the Third Age (U3A). By hosting these sessions, the CRC supported the active participation of older adults in educational and social activities, promoting lifelong intellectual engagement.

Legal Clinic

The Centre provided essential legal guidance to the community through law students.

Counselling sessions

Counselling sessions were provided to individuals in need by Masters in Counselling students.

Maintenance and general upkeep

Office revamp and library

Significant improvements were made to the Centre's facilities, including the renovation of the main office as well as works on the new library premises, which were carried out in collaboration with the Main Campus Library. The library was inaugurated on Friday, 5 September 2025.

Towards the future

TRANSITIONING FROM ONE STRATEGIC PLAN TO THE NEXT

The academic year 2024/2025 was a particularly busy one in terms of strategic planning. As the 2020-2025 strategic plan was coming to an end, plans for the subsequent strategy (2026-2030) were simultaneously being developed. A strategic plan which is to be fully embraced and enacted necessitates direct involvement and contributions by all actors. Articulating the vision of the stakeholders and the mission of the institution must reflect their views and aspirations to ensure ownership and subsequently facilitate the implementation of the new strategy.

Individual meetings were organised with each Faculty (Deans and Heads of Department) and with Directors from Institutes and Centres to ensure widespread engagement. Entities were invited to consider ways of strengthening their roles and contributions within the University's overall mission through teaching/learning, research, and outreach. Each entity was presented with specific data reflecting a snapshot of their achievements. This included statistics about graduates from all programmes of study at undergraduate and postgraduate level; international and local student distribution; doctoral graduates, students and RSOs; and members of staff, new recruits and the distribution of staff by grade and gender.

Meetings with administrative members of staff from as wide an array of entities as possible were also organised. Additional meetings were organised with staff from the University's central administrative bodies, including the Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office, the International Office, the Registrar's Office, Finance, Human Resources, the Doctoral School, and the Conference and Events Unit.

Gathering insights about the institution and its potential mission took on a different format with some stakeholders: students were invited to respond through an online survey, which was drawn up by a student representative on the University's Strategic Committee and which included items addressing the eight main themes set out in the Strategic Plan. External stakeholders, particularly from different industries, were invited to participate in focused meetings with the Rector and members of Senior Management with a view to sharing and exchanging information and expectations about operations, aims, objectives, and synergies between industry and the University.

In addition to meetings, data were collated to gauge and record achievements pertaining to each of the strategic themes and accruing over the five years between 2020 and 2025. Staff employed at the Projects Support Office and the Research Support Services Directorate, the Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer Office, the Legal Office, the University Library, the SIMS Office, the International Office, RIDT, HRMD, the Doctoral School, and Campus 103.7 collaborated and contributed data, which served to illustrate the University's achievements.

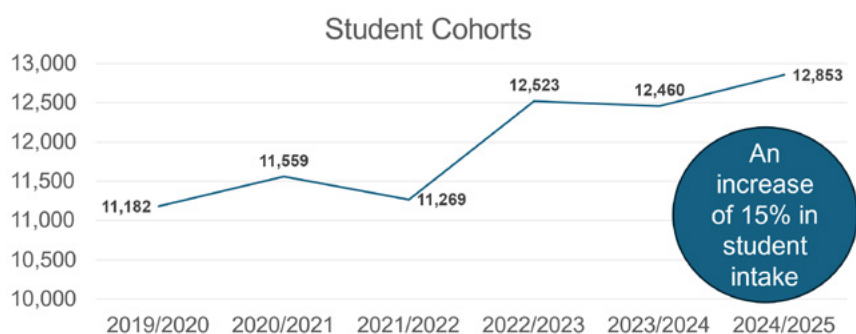
Achievements for the University of Malta 2020–2025

The following section highlights some achievements associated with the eight strategic themes. This section is not an exhaustive list but serves as a snapshot, testament to the unstinting work and engagement of all staff engaged at UM. Some themes lent themselves more readily to quantifiable records, while others are evidenced through qualitative information.

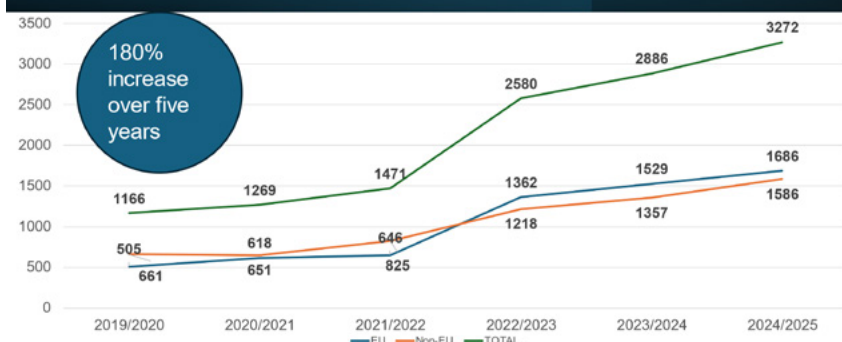
Themes 1 and Theme 6: Learning and teaching and internationalisation

The information below illustrates the number of students, graduates, and international students who chose to study at the University of Malta to follow any of the undergraduate and/or postgraduate programmes offered by the 14 Faculties, 16 Institutes, 12 Centres, and 3 Schools.

Student intake at UM (2019 – 2025)



International student intake



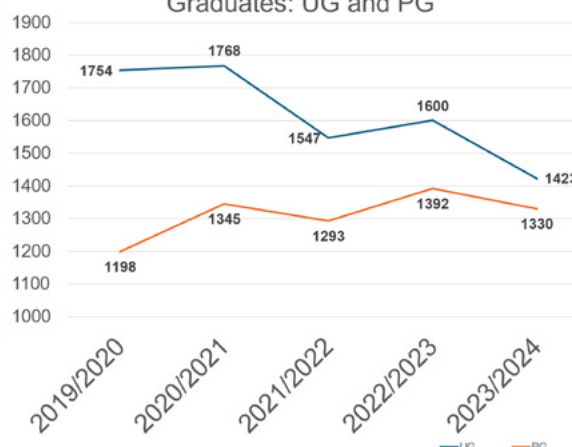
Graduates from UM (2019 – 2024)

6558 students graduated with a Masters

8092 students graduated with an Undergraduate

Approx 3000 students graduate each year

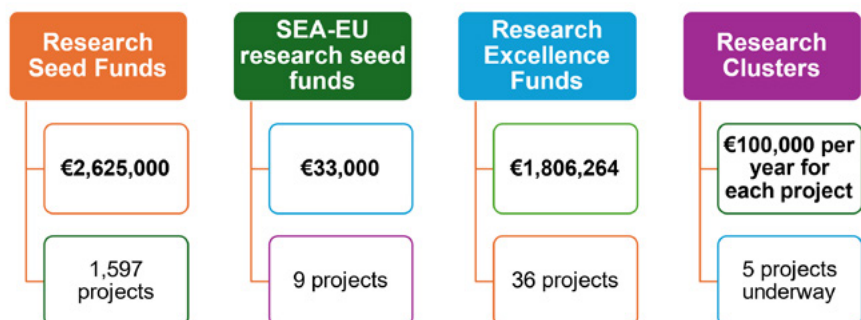
Graduates: UG and PG



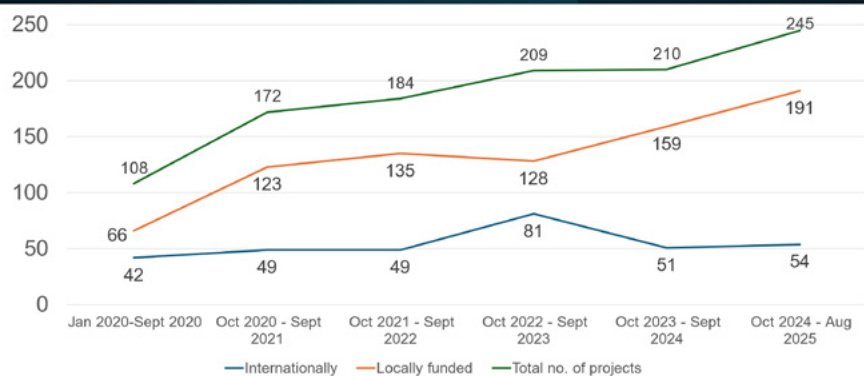
Theme 2: Research and knowledge transfer

The following set of graphs illustrates internally and externally funded (competitive) research secured over the past five years. Funding for research commitments was also secured through agreements and contracts with local and international entities, including Government agencies, NGOs, and foundations.

Internally-funded research (2020-2025)



Externally-funded competitive research... 127% increase



External Funds awarded

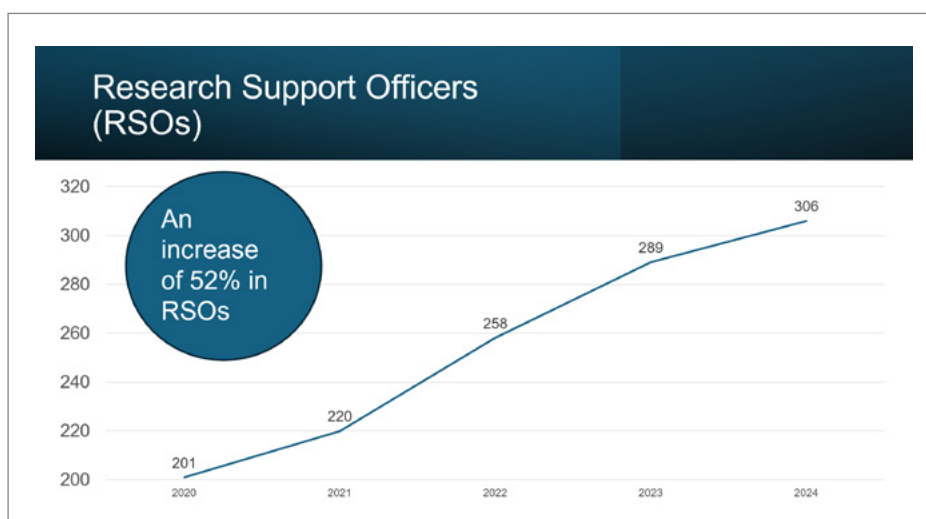
1128 externally funded projects	Projects Jan 2020- Aug 2025	Funds awarded
Internationally funded	326	€59,043,612.98
Locally-funded	802	€54,092,952.84
RIDT	33	€1,748,537.03



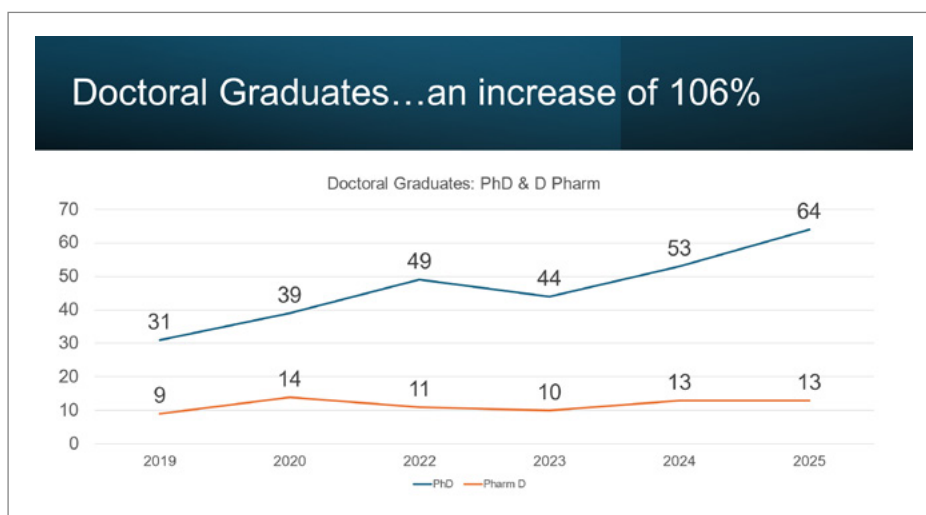
Project Collaboration/participation (External Funding)

- Collaboration, participation with various entities:
 - Local or foreign Charities; Government, Govt agencies and Research Institutes
- **267 agreements**
- **Funding total €12,783,696.**

In many instances, the research projects undertaken are supported by Research Support Officers.

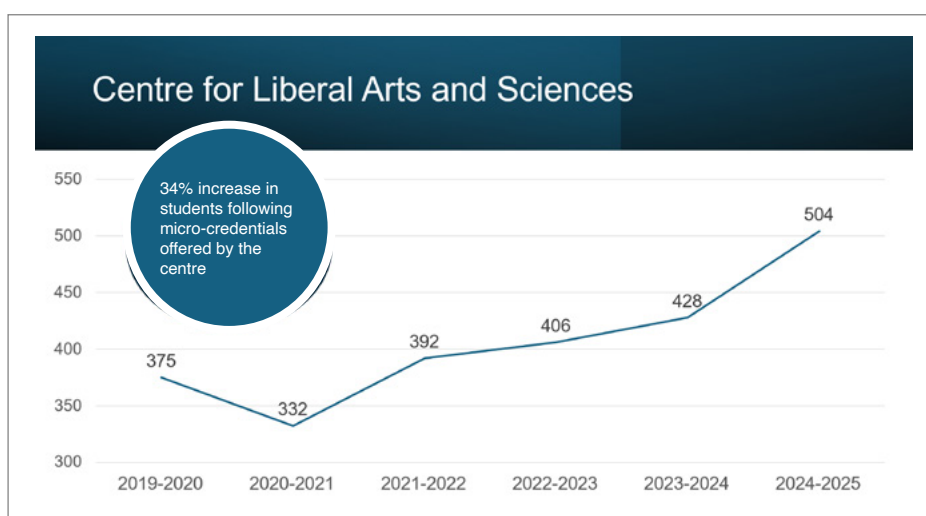


We are particularly pleased to note a year-on-year increase in the number of doctoral graduates, as well as students pursuing their doctoral studies.



Themes 3, 4, 5, and 7 from the UM Strategic Plan 2020-2025 were strongly associated with outreach. Achievements included events, activities, publications, and initiatives that sought to have an impact not only on the University community but also on society at large. Whether external stakeholders, prospective students, industry partners, members from society at large, the plan had considered the institution's impact at a societal and national level, with our industry partners, as well as through sustainable initiatives.

For example, the Centre for the Liberal Arts and Sciences offers micro-credentials which are accessible to the wider public. Such micro-credentials give individuals the possibility to choose from an eclectic cadre of topics that can be followed within self-determined timeframes. Depending on the number of micro-credentials completed over time, individuals may therefore build towards a personalised programme of study.



Similarly, another aspect which was a focus for Theme 3 (Societal Impact) addressed issues concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Initiatives associated with National Impact (Theme 5) included a range of outreach events involving engagement with the public of all ages through both on-campus activities and community-based initiatives led by University staff and students.

Over the period 2020-2025, great strides were made in promoting Sustainability (Theme 7) through various initiatives that led to tangible incomes, including the retrofitting of existing buildings, improvements in waste management and recycling policies, procedures and resources, enhanced facilities supporting the green travel plan, and increased activity in teaching, research and outreach related to sustainability.

The University of Malta Strategy for 2026-2030 was approved by Council in November 2025 and launched officially in January 2026.

Designed and published by the
Marketing, Communications
and Alumni Office

April 2026

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