

Student enrolments in post-secondary and tertiary institutions during academic year 2020-2021 increased by 3.3 per cent over the preceding academic year, totalling 27,944.

Students in Post-secondary and Tertiary Education: 2020-2021

Post-secondary students

Post-secondary students enrolled in sixth forms and other post-secondary institutions totalled 9,608 during academic year 2020-2021, a decrease of 0.1 per cent over the previous academic year (Table 1). The largest proportion of post-secondary students (88.4 per cent) were aged 19 years and under (Table 2). Foreign students enrolled in such institutions amounted to 1,150, accounting for 12.0 per cent of the total students enrolled at post-secondary level (Table 3).

The share of 16-17-year-old students at the post-secondary level accounted for 78.7 per cent of the 16-17-year-old resident population, increasing by 1.8 percentage points from the previous academic year (Chart 2).

The vast majority of students at the post-secondary level were enrolled in state-run institutions (85.8 per cent). Half of the students at the post-secondary level were enrolled in general orientation, whereas the other half were enrolled in vocational orientation (Table 4).

The most popular field of study among vocational students was 'Services' (22.7 per cent), followed by 'Engineering, manufacturing and construction' (16.3 per cent) and 'Business, administration and law' (14.6 per cent) (Chart 4).

Tertiary students

Students enrolled in tertiary level courses numbered 18,336 during academic 2020-2021, an increase of 5.2 per cent when compared to academic year 2019-2020. Female students made up 59.1 per cent of the total students enrolled at the tertiary level. The number of students at this level who were studying on a full-time basis amounted to 11,995, or 65.4 per cent of the total. Part-time enrolments showed an increase of 9.4 per cent over the previous academic year (Table 5).

The largest proportion of tertiary students (50.8 per cent) were engaged in courses at ISCED level 6 (Bachelor's or equivalent), followed by ISCED level 7 (Master's or equivalent) at 33.0 per cent (Table 5). Most tertiary students were aged between 20 and 24 years (39.1 per cent), followed by those under 20 years (17.6 per cent) (Table 6). Female students outnumbered their male counterparts at all tertiary ISCED levels (Chart 6).

During academic year 2020-2021, foreign students following courses at a tertiary level institutions totalled 3,233, equivalent to 17.6 per cent of all tertiary enrolments. This accounted to an increase of 1.1 percentage points over the previous academic year (Table 7). At the tertiary level, the most popular fields of study were 'Business, administration and law' with 4,927 students or 26.9 per cent of the total, and 'Health and welfare' with 3,291 students or 17.9 per cent of the total. The least popular fields of study at the tertiary level were 'Generic programmes and qualifications not further defined' with only 4 students and 'Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary' scoring an uptake of only 0.4 per cent (Chart 7) ■

Figures for tertiary student enrolments for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised, following new information provided by tertiary-level institutions.

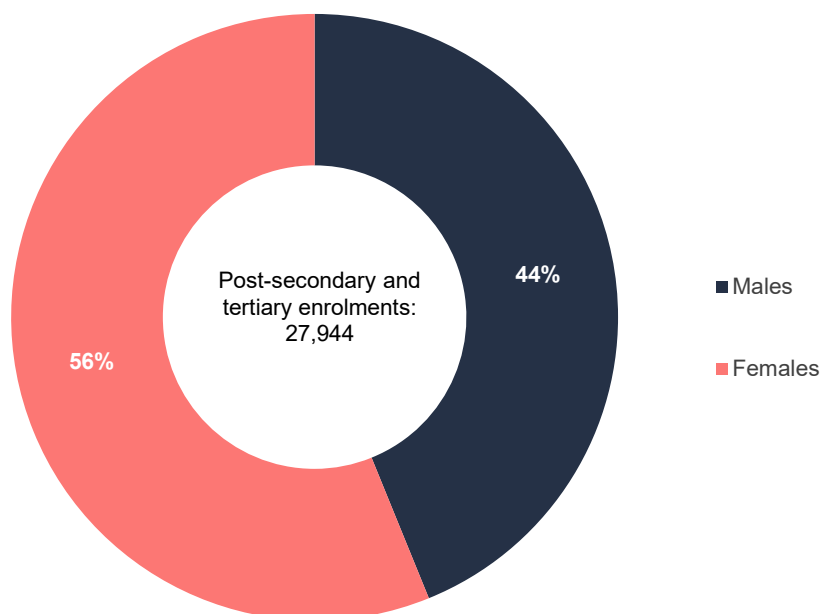
Table 1. Post-secondary and tertiary¹ level students by academic year and sex

Education level	Academic year			Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019 ¹	2019-2020 ¹	2020-2021		
	Males				
Post-secondary	4,949	4,681	4,758	77	1.6
Tertiary	7,097	7,497	7,497	-	-
Total	12,046	12,178	12,255	77	0.6
	Females				
Post-secondary	4,846	4,939	4,850	-89	-1.8
Tertiary	9,345	9,933	10,839	906	9.1
Total	14,191	14,872	15,689	817	5.5
	Total				
Post-secondary	9,795	9,620	9,608	-12	-0.1
Tertiary	16,442	17,430	18,336	906	5.2
Total	26,237	27,050	27,944	894	3.3

¹ Data for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised.

Note: For more information on post-secondary and tertiary education levels refer to methodological notes 4 and 5.

Chart 1. Percentage distribution of post-secondary and tertiary level students by sex: academic year 2020-2021



Note: For more information on post-secondary and tertiary education levels refer to methodological notes 4 and 5.

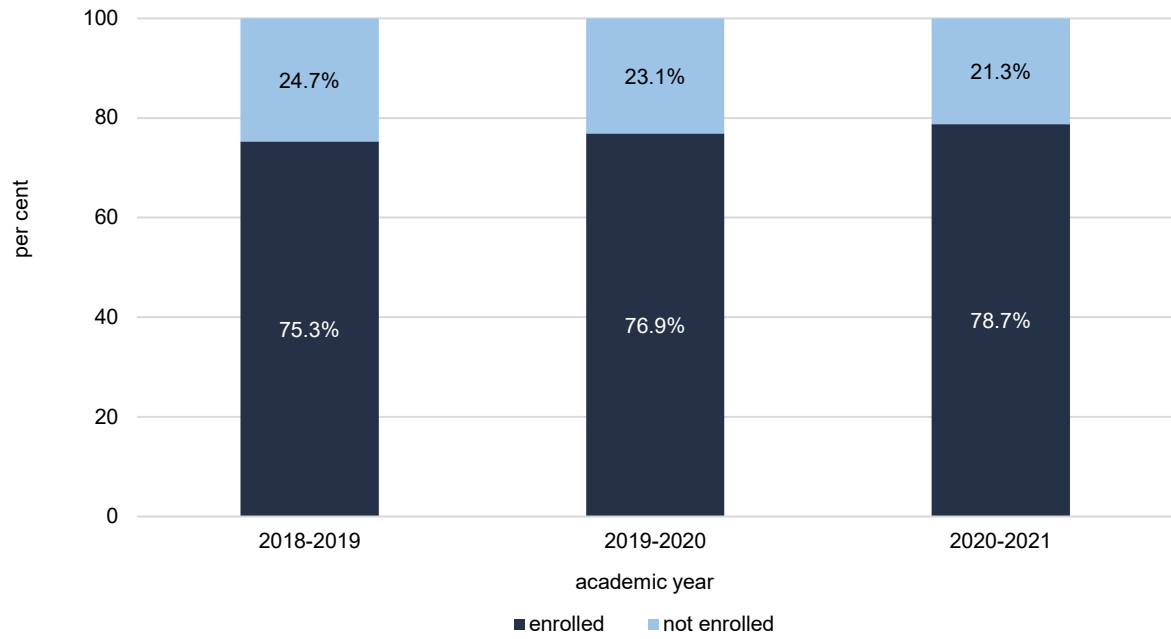
Table 2. Post-secondary level students by academic year, sex and age group

Age group	Academic year			Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2020-2021/2019-2020	
Males					
19 and under	4,268	4,194	4,241	47	1.1
20-24	553	403	382	-21	-5.2
25-29	81	44	62	18	40.9
30-34	22	22	25	3	13.6
35-39	12	7	19	12	171.4
40-44	7	7	12	5	71.4
45-49	c	c	10	c	c
50+	c	c	7	c	c
Total	4,949	4,681	4,758	77	1.6
Females					
19 and under	4,126	4,249	4,250	1	0.0
20-24	373	338	320	-18	-5.3
25-29	107	87	80	-7	-8.0
30-34	69	73	61	-12	-16.4
35-39	68	74	56	-18	-24.3
40-44	44	65	42	-23	-35.4
45-49	37	30	27	-3	-10.0
50+	22	23	14	-9	-39.1
Total	4,846	4,939	4,850	-89	-1.8
Total					
19 and under	8,394	8,443	8,491	48	0.6
20-24	926	741	702	-39	-5.3
25-29	188	131	142	11	8.4
30-34	91	95	86	-9	-9.5
35-39	80	81	75	-6	-7.4
40-44	51	72	54	-18	-25.0
45-49	39	32	37	5	15.6
50+	26	25	21	-4	-16.0
Total	9,795	9,620	9,608	-12	-0.1

c - confidential figure - less than 3 reported counts in a specified category are suppressed due to confidentiality.

Note: Post-secondary refers to ISCED 2-4; refer to methodological note 4.

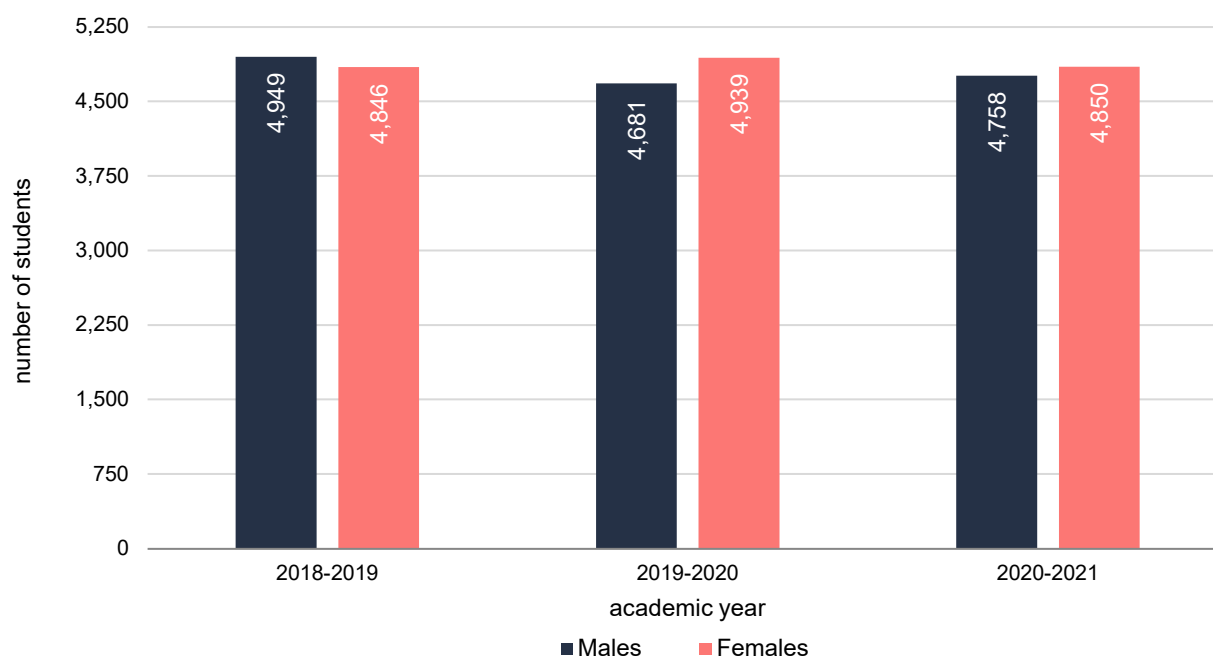
Chart 2. Share of 16-17-year-old students enrolled at post-secondary level by academic year



Notes:

1. Post-secondary refers to ISCED 2-4; refer to methodological note 4.
2. The share of 16-17-year-old students is worked out in relation to the resident population figures within the same age bracket. For definition of 'Maltese residents' refer to methodological note 8.

Chart 3. Post-secondary level students by academic year and sex



Note: Post-secondary refers to ISCED 2-4; refer to methodological note 4.

Table 3. Post-secondary level students by academic year and nationality

Nationality	Academic year		
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Maltese	8,923	8,625	8,453
Other EU	306	327	430
<i>of which:</i>			
Italian	73	102	134
Bulgarian	48	50	69
Romanian	19	23	37
Hungarian	13	24	30
British ¹	47	n/a	n/a
Non-EU	566	668	720
<i>of which:</i>			
Libyan	80	95	92
British ²	n/a	63	85
Serbian	46	62	75
Russian Federation	48	42	49
Chinese	41	47	48
Unspecified	-	-	5
Total	9,795	9,620	9,608
% foreigners	8.9	10.3	12.0

¹ UK is excluded from 'Other EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

² UK is included in 'Non-EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

Notes:

1. Post-secondary refers to ISCED 2-4; refer to methodological note 4.

2. n/a = not applicable

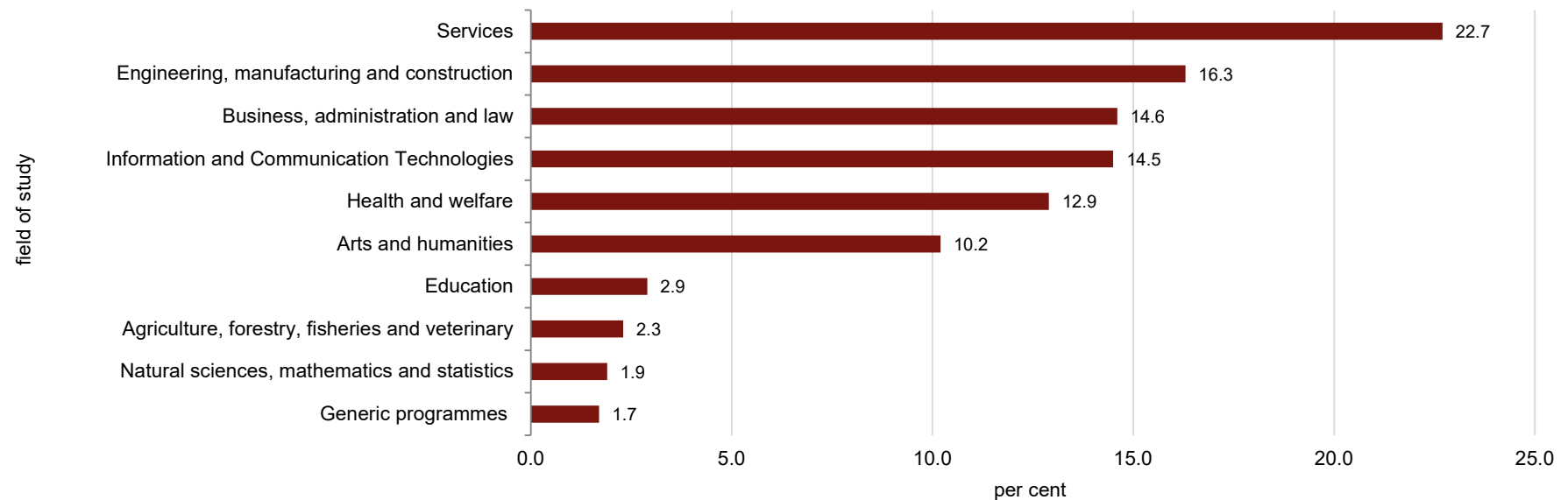
Table 4. Post-secondary level students by academic year, course type and type of institution

Type of institution	Academic year									Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021				
	General	Vocational	Total	General	Vocational	Total	General	Vocational	Total	2020-2021/2019-2020	
State	3,705	4,496	8,201	3,640	4,413	8,053	3,665	4,582	8,247	194	2.4
Church	778	-	778	778	-	778	779	-	779	1	0.1
Independent	439	377	816	352	437	789	363	219	582	-207	-26.2
Total	4,922	4,873	9,795	4,770	4,850	9,620	4,807	4,801	9,608	-12	-0.1

Notes:

1. Post-secondary refers to ISCED 2-4; refer to methodological note 4.
2. For definitions of General and Vocational education refer to methodological note 8.

Chart 4. Percentage distribution of vocational post-secondary level students by field of study: academic year 2020-2021



Notes:

1. Post-secondary vocational includes ISCED 25 and ISCED 35 only.
2. For information on General and Vocational education refer to methodological note 8.

Table 5. Profile of students enrolled in tertiary¹ level courses by academic year

Characteristics	Academic year			Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019 ¹	2019-2020 ¹	2020-2021		
					2020-2021/2019-2020
Sex					
Males	7,097	7,497	7,497	-	-
Females	9,345	9,933	10,839	906	9.1
Age group					
Under 20	3,259	3,241	3,220	-21	-0.6
20 to 29	9,307	9,546	9,678	132	1.4
30 to 49	3,303	3,992	4,610	618	15.5
50 and over	573	651	828	177	27.2
Nationality					
Maltese	14,083	14,556	15,103	547	3.8
Other EU ²	1,067	1,049	1,415	366	34.9
Non-EU ³	1,292	1,825	1,818	-7	-0.4
District of residence					
Southern Harbour	2,230	2,375	2,397	22	0.9
Northern Harbour	4,745	4,699	4,786	87	1.9
South Eastern	2,426	2,598	2,744	146	5.6
Western	2,507	3,038	2,660	-378	-12.4
Northern	2,668	2,740	2,968	228	8.3
Gozo and Comino	1,338	1,157	1,676	519	44.9
Foreign residence/Unspecified	528	823	1,105	282	34.3
Education Level (ISCED 2011)					
ISCED 5 - Short-cycle tertiary education	2,055	2,237	2,389	152	6.8
ISCED 6 - Bachelor's or equivalent	8,850	8,912	9,321	409	4.6
ISCED 7 - Master's or equivalent	5,029	5,693	6,053	360	6.3
ISCED 8 - Doctoral or equivalent	508	588	573	-15	-2.6
Intensity of participation					
Full-time	11,422	11,632	11,995	363	3.1
Part-time ⁴	5,020	5,798	6,341	543	9.4
Total tertiary students	16,442	17,430	18,336	906	5.2

¹ Data for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised.

² UK is excluded from 'Other EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

³ UK is included in 'Non-EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

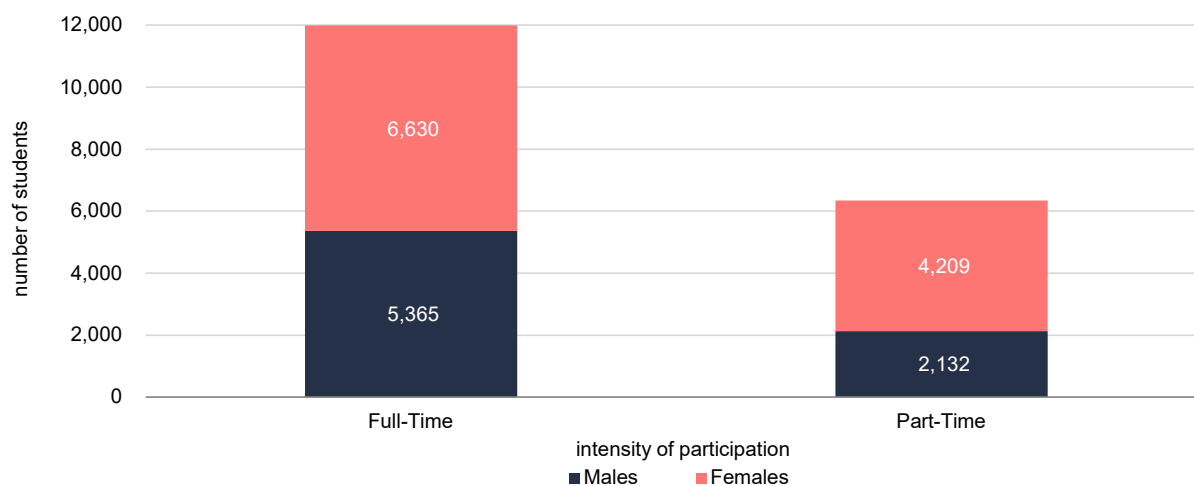
⁴ Excludes short courses. Refer to methodological note 2.

Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.

2. For ISCED information refer to methodological notes 8 and 11.

Chart 5. Tertiary level students by intensity of participation and sex: academic year 2020-2021



Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.

Table 6. Tertiary¹ level students by academic year, sex and age group

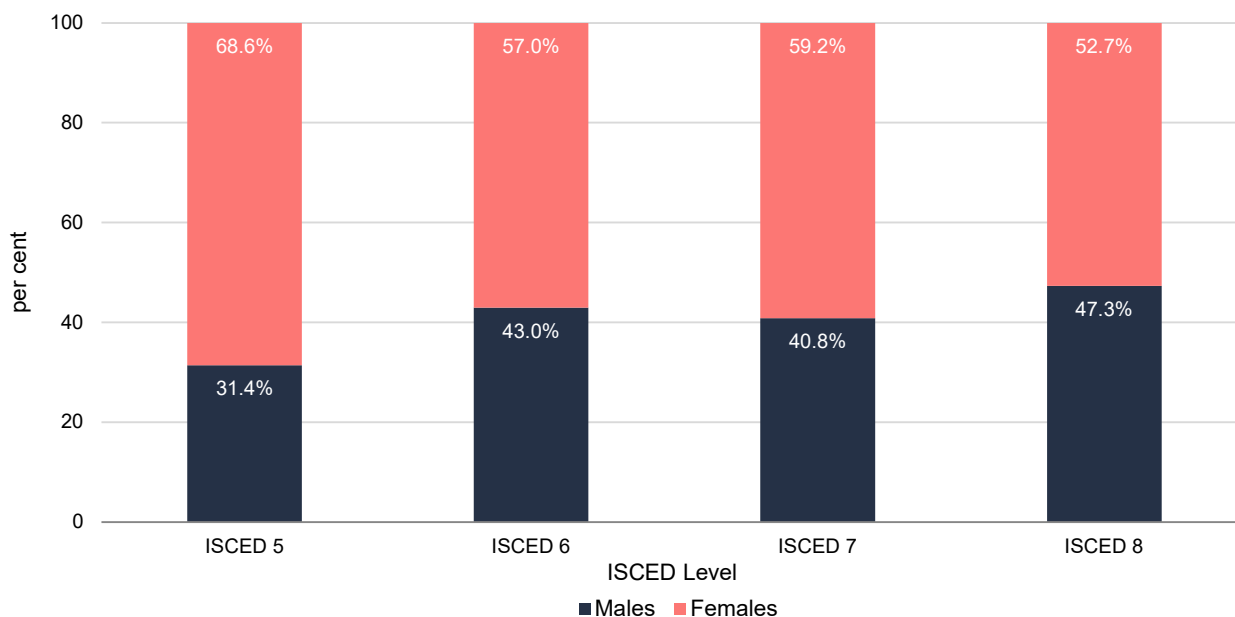
Age group	Academic year			Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019 ¹	2019-2020 ¹	2020-2021		
Males					
Under 20	1,361	1,380	1,389	9	0.7
20-24	3,090	3,156	3,104	-52	-1.6
25-29	1,055	1,133	1,002	-131	-11.6
30-34	510	616	641	25	4.1
35-39	376	412	454	42	10.2
40-44	274	302	333	31	10.3
45-49	169	215	238	23	10.7
50-54	130	137	153	16	11.7
55-59	69	87	103	16	18.4
60-64	34	33	49	16	48.5
65+	29	26	31	5	19.2
Total	7,097	7,497	7,497	-	-
Females					
Under 20	1,898	1,861	1,831	-30	-1.6
20-24	3,871	3,775	4,066	291	7.7
25-29	1,291	1,482	1,506	24	1.6
30-34	725	926	1,063	137	14.8
35-39	517	656	797	141	21.5
40-44	421	475	596	121	25.5
45-49	311	390	488	98	25.1
50-54	194	222	275	53	24.1
55-59	76	101	152	51	50.5
60-64	27	32	44	12	37.5
65+	14	13	21	8	61.5
Total	9,345	9,933	10,839	906	9.1
Total					
Under 20	3,259	3,241	3,220	-21	-0.6
20-24	6,961	6,931	7,170	239	3.4
25-29	2,346	2,615	2,508	-107	-4.1
30-34	1,235	1,542	1,704	162	10.5
35-39	893	1,068	1,251	183	17.1
40-44	695	777	929	152	19.6
45-49	480	605	726	121	20.0
50-54	324	359	428	69	19.4
55-59	145	188	255	67	35.6
60-64	61	65	93	28	43.1
65+	43	39	52	13	33.3
Total	16,442	17,430	18,336	906	5.2

¹ Data for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised.

Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.

**Chart 6. Percentage distribution of tertiary level students by ISCED level and sex:
academic year 2020-2021**



Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.
2. For ISCED information refer to methodological notes 8 and 11.

Table 7. Tertiary¹ level students by academic year and nationality

Nationality	Academic year		
	2018-2019 ¹	2019-2020 ¹	2020-2021
Maltese	14,083	14,556	15,103
Other EU	1,067	1,049	1,415
<i>of which:</i>			
Italian	495	534	694
German	72	99	114
French	25	35	106
Bulgarian	79	52	62
British ²	161	n/a	n/a
Non-EU	1,292	1,825	1,818
<i>of which:</i>			
Indian	268	456	301
British ³	n/a	152	189
Nigerian	72	77	112
Libyan	120	95	94
Pakistani	41	69	90
Total	16,442	17,430	18,336
% foreigners	14.3	16.5	17.6

¹ Data for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised.

² UK is excluded from 'Other EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

³ UK is included in 'Non-EU' as from 2019-2020. Refer to methodological note 7.

Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.
2. n/a = not applicable

Table 8. Tertiary¹ level students by academic year, sex and field of study

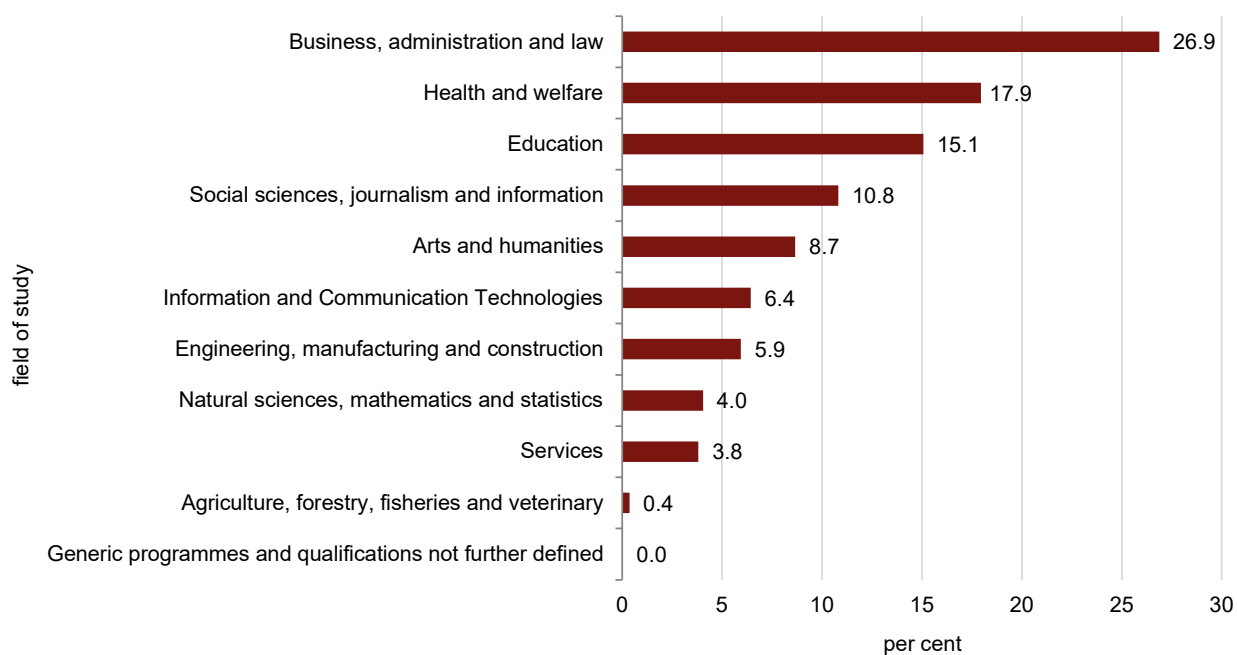
Field of study	Academic year			Change	Percentage change
	2018-2019 ¹	2019-2020 ¹	2020-2021		
Males					
Generic programmes and qualifications not further defined	-	-	3	3	100.0
Education	232	342	399	57	16.7
Arts and humanities	692	706	681	-25	-3.5
Social sciences, journalism and information	585	600	687	87	14.5
Business, administration and law	2,112	2,374	2,145	-229	-9.6
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	316	303	336	33	10.9
Information and Communication Technologies	963	941	970	29	3.1
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	931	928	786	-142	-15.3
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	21	26	28	2	7.7
Health and welfare	929	921	1,088	167	18.1
Services	316	356	374	18	5.1
Total	7,097	7,497	7,497	-	-
Females					
Generic programmes and qualifications not further defined	-	-	1	1	100.0
Education	1,446	2,106	2,365	259	12.3
Arts and humanities	962	920	908	-12	-1.3
Social sciences, journalism and information	1,058	1,137	1,295	158	13.9
Business, administration and law	2,428	2,507	2,782	275	11.0
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	347	349	406	57	16.3
Information and Communication Technologies	177	187	211	24	12.8
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	347	349	303	-46	-13.2
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	38	40	39	-1	-2.5
Health and welfare	2,273	2,061	2,203	142	6.9
Services	269	277	326	49	17.7
Total	9,345	9,933	10,839	906	9.1
Total					
Generic programmes and qualifications not further defined	-	-	4	4	100.0
Education	1,678	2,448	2,764	316	12.9
Arts and humanities	1,654	1,626	1,589	-37	-2.3
Social sciences, journalism and information	1,643	1,737	1,982	245	14.1
Business, administration and law	4,540	4,881	4,927	46	0.9
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	663	652	742	90	13.8
Information and Communication Technologies	1,140	1,128	1,181	53	4.7
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	1,278	1,277	1,089	-188	-14.7
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	59	66	67	1	1.5
Health and welfare	3,202	2,982	3,291	309	10.4
Services	585	633	700	67	10.6
Total	16,442	17,430	18,336	906	5.2

¹ Data for academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 have been revised.

Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.
2. For Fields of study information refer to methodological notes 8 and 11.

Chart 7. Percentage distribution of tertiary level students by field of study: academic year 2020-2021



Notes:

1. Tertiary refers to ISCED 5-8; refer to methodological note 5.
2. For fields of study information refer to methodological notes 8 and 11.
3. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Methodological Notes

1. Education statistics presented in this news release are processed by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on an annual basis in accordance with European Regulations (EC) 452/2008 and (EU) 912/2013. These regulations establish the basis of information to be collected from educational institutions at all levels of education and all economic sectors. By adhering to these regulations, all education statistics collected and processed by the NSO are comparable to other European countries following the same regulatory standards.
2. This news release includes students enrolled in formal education with a minimum duration of one semester of full-time study (or the equivalent in part-time) and that are delivered in Malta.
3. Data collection covers all students enrolled in the respective institutions as at 31st March of the reference academic year.
4. For the purpose of this news release, post-secondary level refers to students enrolled in Sixth Forms, MCAST, ITS, University of Malta, and public and private institutions offering courses at ISCED levels 2 to 4.
5. For the purpose of this news release, tertiary level refers to students enrolled at MCAST, ITS, University of Malta, and public and private institutions offering courses at ISCED levels 5 to 8.
6. Education Statistics data is provided by NSO to Eurostat on an annual basis in a dedicated Questionnaire.
7. Owing to the UK's exit from the European Union (with effect from 1 February 2020), UK data is statistically classified as Non-EU from academic year 2019-2020 in the tables relating to nationality. Comparability between periods should be treated with caution.

8. Definitions:

- **Formal education** is an institutionalised, intentional and planned type of education which is provided by public organisations and recognised private bodies. It consists primarily of initial education designed for children and young people before their first entry to the labour market. It also includes other types of education such as vocational, special needs and adult education provided they are recognised as part of the formal education system by the relevant national education authorities.
- **The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011** is a framework for assembling, compiling, and analysing cross-nationally comparable statistics on education. ISCED belongs to the United Nations International Family of Economic and Social Classifications and is the reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields of education. ISCED is designed to serve as a framework to classify educational activities as defined in programmes and the resulting qualifications into internationally agreed categories. For more information refer to the ISCED 2011 manual at <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>
ISCED levels are based on ISCED 2011 classification:
ISCED 0 - Early childhood and pre-primary education
ISCED 1 - Primary education
ISCED 2 - Lower secondary education
ISCED 3 - Upper secondary education
ISCED 4 - Post-secondary non-tertiary education
ISCED 5 - Short-cycle tertiary education
ISCED 6 - Bachelor's or equivalent level
ISCED 7 - Master's or equivalent level
ISCED 8 - Doctoral or equivalent level
- **Age** is calculated as at 1st January of the reference academic year.
- **General education** is defined as educational programmes that are designed to develop learners' general knowledge, skills and competencies, as well as literacy and numeracy skills, often to prepare participants for more advanced education programmes at the same or a higher ISCED level and to lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These programmes are typically school- or college-based. General education includes education programmes that are designed to prepare participants for entry into vocational education but do not prepare for employment in a particular occupation, trade or class of occupations or trades, nor lead directly to a labour market-relevant qualification.
- **Vocational education** is defined as educational programmes that are designed for learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies specific to a particular occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades. Such programmes may have work-based components (e.g. apprenticeships, dual-system education programmes). Successful completion of such programmes leads to labour market-relevant, vocational qualifications acknowledged as occupationally-oriented by the relevant national authorities and/or the labour market.
- **Fields of study: ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013** classifies educational programmes and related qualifications by fields of study. A field is the broad domain, branch or area of content covered by an education programme or qualification.
- **Maltese Residents** persons that have lived in Malta for a continuous period of at least twelve months before the reference day, or who arrived in Malta during the twelve months before the reference day with the intention of staying in Malta for at least one year.

9. Totals/percentages may not add up due to rounding.
10. Data for 2020-2021 may be revised.
11. More information relating to this release may be accessed at:

Sources and Methods:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_C4/Education_and_Information_Society_Statistics/Pages/Education-ISCED_2011: <https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/classificationdetails.aspx?id=ISCED%202011>

ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013:

<https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/classificationdetails.aspx?id=ISCED%20Fields%20of%20Education%20and%20Training%202013>

LAU Classification: [https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/classificationdetails.aspx?id=Districts%20\(Local%20Administrative%20Unit\)](https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/classificationdetails.aspx?id=Districts%20(Local%20Administrative%20Unit))

12. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
13. A detailed news release calendar is available on:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx

European statistics related to students are available at:

[EUROSTAT Website/Homepage/Statistics Database](#)

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