

L.N. 103 of 1990

**EDUCATION ACT, 1988
(ACT NO. XXIV OF 1988)**

**National Minimum Curriculum Regulations, 1990
(Secondary Level)**

IN exercise of the powers conferred by section 45 of the Education Act, 1988 the Minister of Education and the Interior has made the following regulations:—

1. These Regulations may be cited as the National Minimum Curriculum Regulations, 1990 (Secondary Level), and shall come into effect as from the 1st of September, 1990. Citation and commencement.
2. The national minimum curriculum of studies for Secondary schools, for the purposes of section 5 of the Education Act, 1988, shall be that set out in the Schedule to these regulations. National Curriculum.

SCHEDULE

**National Minimum Curriculum
(Secondary Level)**

There is no real hiatus between the Primary and Secondary level of Education, and none should be artificially created, but the higher age bracket and the different phase of psychological development of the students at this level, point to a difference in aims, functions and methods.

1. The aims of Secondary Education

The aims of this level of Education are threefold:—

- (a) the further development within widened dimensions of each student's intellectual, affective and physical abilities and potentialities;
- (b) the training of the young mind in the pursuit of knowledge and reason, and the provision of a sufficient body of notions which would form each individual's basis for right judgement and proper value formation;
- (c) the initiation into the process of qualification at a later stage for a working life.

It has to be emphasised that education at this level should not be deemed to be terminal or complete but should be considered as an important transitional phase in the whole process of formal education.

2. The functions of Secondary Education

Secondary Education is to be considered against the background of a legal compulsory requirement and as such encompassing the whole mass of students who are not mentally handicapped. A wide range of abilities and needs have to be catered for, but

its function is not merely that of quickening the pace of each person's development and formation, but also that of moulding the nation, establishing a new cultural and technological profile for the whole country.

Although only the first two years of the Secondary level are common to all pupils in the present set up of state schools, (the goal is to have at least three in the immediate future) certain core subjects are to continue throughout the full five (or six) years of the 11–16 school age period. The present set up for options to be made on entry and at third year is not being disturbed, subject to scrutiny of the educational effects of this time frame.

We have today a bipartite branching into a broad tripartite system in the Government School System, but this streaming exercise, accentuated by a similar phenomenon in non-Government schools, should not be deemed as a point of arrival, but should be continually reviewed so as to establish a structure which can best achieve:—

(a) a workforce, in greater proportion literate and trained, qualified and specialised, as well as able and flexible to retrain, re-specialise or specialise later in a narrower field;

(b) a citizenry adhering to a wide ethical and cultural consensus on an increasingly higher level.

3. Methods

At this stage, the diversity of sources of knowledge, the exercise of options in certain subjects or group of subjects of learning and the differentiation of approach required by the different disciplines, stimulate inquisitiveness, pluralism, tolerance of diversity and independence. Whilst in the primary school, knowledge and instruction are usually derived from one single source, in the secondary level the sources of knowledge and training are several, and instead of being taught and instructed, the student is trained in the process of self-learning and self-education and in becoming convinced of the importance of accepting (and not merely conforming to) norms of conduct. From activity and project work, the students will be led to arrive at conclusions through research methods and problem solving.

Ultimately the student should be educated to exercise freedom with responsibility.

4. Core subjects and options

The five divisions into

- (a) normative,
- (b) communicative,
- (c) cognitive — scientific,
- (d) cultural accretion, and
- (e) action — work oriented

which were used as a general frame within the Primary Schools Minimum Curriculum, are to be kept in mind.

A. *The normative core:*

1. Religious Education.
2. Civics and Environmental attitudes.
3. Sport.

It is essential that this normative core should be common to all schools and all through the stages. However, it must also be emphasised that parents, on behalf of their children, must be given the choice of opting out of Religious Education on grounds of conscience.

B. The communicative core:

1. Maltese.
2. English.
3. Mathematics.

Options: Another language at first year from those offered (Italian, French, German and Arabic), and yet another language at third year from a wider choice which would also include Latin, Spanish and Russian.

Particular courses in Trade Schools might opt for Technical English in lieu of a third foreign language.

C. The cognitive — scientific core:

1. Integrated Science with a Physics base.
2. Geography.

Options: At third year, choice of Biology, Physics and Chemistry.

D. The cultural accretion core:

1. Maltese history within a wider context.
2. Appreciation of Literature, Art and Music.

Options: More detailed study of the particular literature of a country or period.

E. The action — work oriented core:

1. Life-skills.
2. Technical design.

Options: Home Economics and particular commercial or trade choices.

5. Examinations

While every effort should be made to introduce cumulative assessments and to play down the negative aspects of examinations, these should include an oral element in languages and the normative core subjects, and a component of practical testing in the sciences and action-work oriented options. The greater reliance on oral testing should be aimed at preparing a more pronounced, oral communicative ability in our students.