

Public consultation online

Consultation on English Language Teaching (ELT) Council Regulation

Display name: LC-MEDE-ELT-03

OPINION

The proposed constitution of the said ELT Council is as follows:

The Council will be composed of nine members appointed by the Minister as follows:

- (a) a Chairperson appointed by the Minister;
- (b) a member appointed by the Minister from among persons with competence in teaching English from the National Commission for Further and Higher Education;
- (c) a member nominated by the Minister responsible for tourism,
- (d) a member nominated by the Minister responsible for tourism from among persons with industry experience from the Malta Tourism Authority;
- (e) a member nominated by the Rector of the University of Malta from among persons with competence in teaching English;
- (f) two members nominated by the Association;
- (g) two members elected by the licensed Schools

The proposed ELT Council has regulatory and executive powers such as:

- Issue, suspend or withdraw licenses
- Monitor compliance by Schools, home tuition providers, distance learning providers, teachers, etc.
- Carry out quality assurance
- Determine and levy fines or penalties
- Gather any data necessary for the advancement or enhancement of the sector

The main fault of the proposed Act is that it does not distinguish between the Regulator and the Operator (in this case the Language Schools and other stakeholders). On the contrary, the Regulator and Operator are merged together which is contrary to other legislations regulating other sectors such as MRA, MGA (formerly LGA), MEPA, MFSA, etc. This might also potentially be in conflict with EU regulations.

Another fault is that a member is appointed by the Rector of the University of Malta, which University operates its own English School. The Education Act was amended some years ago appointing NCFHE as the Regulator rather than the University of Malta.

Another fault is that the Act assumes that there shall be one Association, discarding the possibility that there might be other Associations in future. As a side note, I confirm that we are members of FELTOM and so my comment here is purely based on consistency.

Another fault is that the new Act mentions English teachers, home tuition providers, distance learning providers, etc which are not directly represented on the proposed ELT Council. Even other stakeholders (such as host families, leisure activities providers) are not taken into consideration.

Our suggestion is that there is a basic and direct distinction between the Regulator and the Operator and thus a two-tier system is implemented such as:

Tier one (regulator) - ELT Council consisting of:

- Chairperson appointed by the Minister of Education
- Member appointed by the Minister of Education with experience of the sector
- Member appointed by the Minister responsible for Tourism
- Member appointed by the Minister responsible for Tourism with experience in the sector
- Member appointed by NCFHE

Tier two (operator) – ELT Consultative Council consisting of:

- Member appointed by FELTOM
- Member appointed by other EFL Associations (having a minimum number of members in the Association)
- Elected member by full time EFL Schools (would not be required in a scenario with more than one Association)
- Elected member representing Host families
- Elected member representing the EFL teachers
- Elected member representing the home tuition providers
- Elected member representing the distance learning providers
- Elected member representing the leisure activities providers

The above members' composition is just a proposal with the main objective being the distinction between the Regulator and Operator. Another objective is a wider and more effective representation of the sector (operators). One needs to understand that the EFL sector evolved as a major industry with various stakeholders going beyond the purely academic aspect.

In a two-tier system it would be critical that the Act specifies the relationship between the Regulator and Operator including the number of meetings to be held between the two.
