

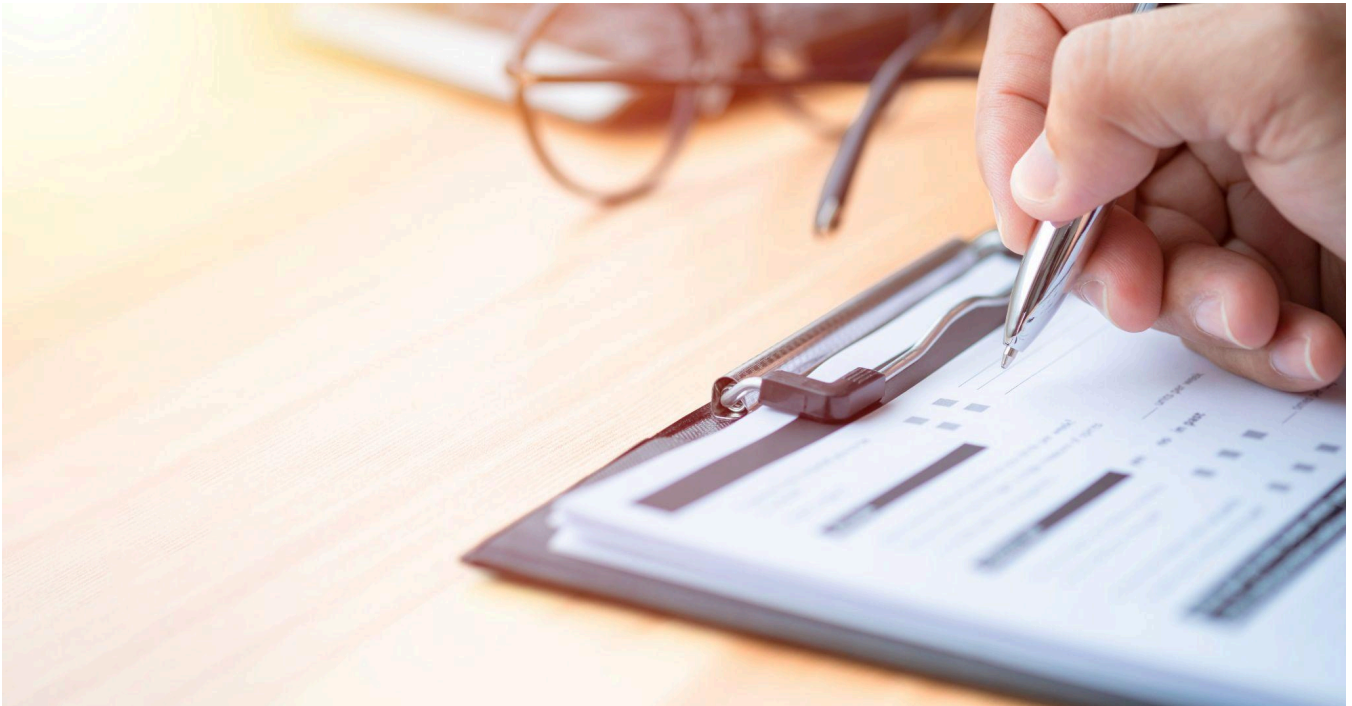


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**Survey Results for Action 42  
“Mode of Training Delivery”  
October 2024**

**HRS4R - Renewal Phase**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
Part One – Demographics	4-6
Part Two – The Preferred Method of Delivery	7-12
Part Three – The amount of training courses available for the UM researchers	13-17
Appendix I - Sections 3 and 4 of the Questionnaire	18-19



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## INTRODUCTION

Following the favourable report received by the European Commission in July 2023, regarding the implementation of the [Human Resources Strategy for Researchers \(HRS4R\)](#), a questionnaire has been developed in connection with Action 42 of the [Renewal Phase Period 2023 - 2026 Action Plan](#).

Action 42 is concerned with the preferred method of delivery for the various training courses offered by the UM for its resident academic and Research Support Officers. As such, the questionnaire served to have the researchers' views, as well as to identify any essential training courses that the researchers wish that the UM provides in the future.

The questionnaire included a section (Section 3 as per Appendix I) requesting feedback on the preferred mode of delivery in terms of training courses offered by the UM, as well as a section (Section 4 as per Appendix I) on whether the UM is offering enough training for its researchers.

The questionnaire was available online through Google forms and the participants were also encouraged and able to include any other feedback and suggestions in a designated space.

### Part One - Demographics

The questionnaires were distributed to 1,222 researchers ranging from R1 to R4<sup>1</sup>. A total of 149 responded (131 academics and 18 Research Support Officers) as per Table 1 below:

	Amount	Percentage of Total Participants
Responses:	149	12.19%
<u>Gender</u>		
<b>Male:</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>50.3%</b>
Female:	74	49.7%
Prefer not to say:	0	0%
<u>Age Group</u>		
18-24:	2	1.3%
25-39:	33	22.1%
<b>40-59:</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>57%</b>
60+:	29	19.5%
<u>Title of Post</u>		
Assistant Lecturer:	5	3.4%
Lecturer:	32	21.5%
Senior Lecturer:	40	27%
<b>Associate/Full Professor:</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>34.2%</b>
Research Support Officer <sup>2</sup> :	21	14.1%

**Table 1**

<sup>1</sup> The definitions of R1 to R4 are as follows:

**R1: First Stage Researcher** (up to the point of PhD);

**R2: Recognised Researcher** (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent);

**R3: Established Researcher** (researchers who have developed a level of independence);

**R4: Leading Researcher** (researchers leading their research area or field).

<sup>2</sup> The participants did not specify the level of Research Support Officer (e.g. I, II, III or IV).

Additional information on respondent affiliations is provided in Tables 2 to 4 below:

TITLE OF FACULTY	Amount of Respondents	Percentage amount of Total Participants
Faculty of Arts	16	10.7%
Faculty for the Built Environment	3	2%
Faculty of Dental Surgery	1	0.7%
Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy	8	5.4%
<b>Faculty of Education</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21.1%</b>
Faculty of Engineering	11	7.4%
Faculty of Health Sciences	18	12.1%
Faculty of Information & Communication Technology	8	5.4%
Faculty of Laws	1	0.7%
Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences	4	2.7%
Faculty of Medicine & Surgery	8	5.4%
Faculty of Science	7	4.7%
Faculty for Social Wellbeing	16	10.7%
Faculty of Theology	5	3.4%

**Table 2 - Number of Respondents from Faculties**

TITLE OF INSTITUTE	Amount of Respondents	Percentage amount of Total Participants
Institute of Aerospace Technologies	1	0.7%
Edward de Bono Institute for Creative Thinking and Innovation	2	1.3%
Institute of Digital Games	1	0.7%
Institute of Earth Systems	3	2%
Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology	3	2%
Institute for Physical Education and Sport	2	1.3%
Institute for Sustainable Energy	3	2%

**Table 3 - Number of Respondents from Institutes**

TITLE OF CENTRE/SCHOOL	Amount of Respondents	Percentage amount of Total Participants
Centre for Biomedical Cybernetics	2	1.3%
Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation	1	0.7%
Centre for Literacy	1	0.7%
Centre for Molecular Medicine and Biobanking	3	2%
School of Performing Arts	3	2%

**Table 4 - Number of Respondents from Centres/School**

**Part Two – The preferred method of delivery**

Mode of Delivery	Amount of Respondents	Percentage amount of Total Participants
Blended Learning (A combination of online and face-to-face training)	66	44.3%
Synchronous Learning (Training that is delivered wholly in real time remotely)	37	24.8%
Asynchronous Learning (Delivery of training materials through instructional videos/manuals)	35	23.5%
<b>Discussions/Workshops (A delivery method involving open communication between a trainer and trainees)</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>55.4%</b>
Classroom Based (The traditional face-to-face training)	63	42.3%
<b><i>Other Preferred Methods:</i></b>		
Fieldwork and lab-based training, apart from blended	1	0.7%
Training delivered face-to-face with the option of following remotely/recording the sessions which can then be accessed at a later time/date	1	0.7%
A mix such as a prep lecture which is asynchronous, and a short follow up session with a Q&A at the end	1	0.7%
All modes are valid, and a combination provides flexibility and practicality.	1	0.7%
Practical Workshops	1	0.7%
Online and distance modes of delivery that incorporate flipped classroom methods, peer learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, research-based learning - methods that are compatible with critical (digital) pedagogies, open educational pedagogies and networked learning principles.	1	0.7%

**Table 5**



A number of suggestions and feedback has been received regarding the mode of delivery of training courses. In general, the participants indicated that the method of delivery depends on the type of training, as well as the topic, such as the statements provided below:

- *If the topic is mostly applied work, then it is better to have face-to-face training. If it is more theoretical, then online is more suitable, with a few face-to-face sessions.*
- *For mental health training I'd say always classroom based and workshops; same for those requiring networking (e.g. academics doing admin training, or for newer academics etc. it might be good to meet in person); other things like new resources being made available or VLE tools and so on, maybe can afford to be online.*
- *The ideal mode of teaching for the MD Course of Studies is to concentrate on small-group teaching involving clinical attachments, simulation workshops, tutorials and case-based discussions. The theoretical aspect traditionally delivered by synchronous face-to-face lectures can best be served using asynchronous learning with pre-narrated videos.*
- *The method of delivery will depend on what is being taught. For example, training relating to the use of specific software is best delivered hands-on (at least partly).*
- *For Masters courses a lot of nurses are looking for purely online due to challenges of being released to attend lectures -thus we might need to reconsider and offer online courses with maybe an induction and closing week?*
- *For my subjects ( Creativity, drama and the arts) - it is important to have face-to-face workshops also because there is much physical and improved teamwork. However, I also send students materials to watch online and to read. I also have created panopto lectures which are online and free for all to see - students know about them but these are usually extra to the lectures/workshops.*
- *I prefer a traditional face to face mode especially when the course offers sessions of a practical nature.*
- *I like all of them depending on the topic. For me what is important is that there is no waste of time, and that we have some notes or handbooks to refer to after the course.*

Other suggestions included that the training sessions should have an adequate number of participants to allow for more interaction and communication - even between the trainees, something which some of the participants indicated as important, and that recordings are made available following each training session. Additionally, some participants reiterated that (i) a training session is ideally offered more than once at different times due to the researchers' different availability to attend; and (ii) the level of knowledge required by the trainees should be indicated in the programme, as per comments below:





- *I am interested in courses sometimes but cannot attend due to the early time of delivery.*
- *Training is sometimes scheduled on Wednesdays/Fridays between 12:00 and 14:00. For academics teaching language classes, it would be difficult to attend sessions taking place in these slots due to teaching commitments (Certificate in Language Proficiency).*
- *Offer transport to/from campuses for staff not working at Msida.*
- *Some sessions I've attended included people with mixed abilities, a lot of time was 'wasted' by the trainer in answering basic questions. This is fine if the session is advertised as 'basic' or 'for beginners' but more advanced sessions should specify the minimum background knowledge required to follow the session with profit.*
- *The ideal would be for participants to be provided an option. I find some training paces to be too slow for someone who grasps the materials quickly e.g. tech tools like Wiseflow.*
- *To first engage with the information and knowledge of the students related to the topic.*
- *Consider the opportunity for discussions between trainees themselves, moderated by trainers to be a useful and productive aspect of training. This might not be applicable for all training topics though.*

Below is a list of specific suggestions or feedback that are considered to be essential regarding the various types of training:

Blended Learning (A combination of online and face-to-face training):

- *I think that Blended Learning is more convenient.*
- *Blended learning for me is the worst option because you are tied to a physical location in the classroom (I sometimes need to roam the classes during work exercises).*
- *Besides blended learning sessions, I would suggest another (shorter) session, held some time after the blended one, so that participants can air their views and ask questions after having tested the waters themselves.*
- *For the case of blended learning designs and implementations, it is highly recommended that we think through the "blend" as a seamless integration of the online and the offline as deemed most suited for the learning (and teaching) activities that ensue when designing and implementing courses and study programmes. It is ridiculous to continue coming across cases where blended courses are interpreted in design and implementation as half the contact meetings online and half the contact meetings offline (or worse still one contact meeting online and the next meeting offline) and the course as a series of*



*traditional lectures (limited to synchronous lecturer's orations online or offline) without any attempt to problematize adult learning, suited (critical) pedagogies for adult learning and the course knowledge area themes and intended learning outcomes.*

Synchronous Learning (Training that is delivered wholly in real time remotely):

- *This preferred method of delivery was selected due to the satellite nature of the campus where I am based.*
- *When training courses involve online sessions, it is always useful for the trainer to have a second person on hand to manage sessions where feedback is being sought from participants.*
- *Having remote open discussions will enhance learning in a more flexible manner.*
- *If synchronous or blended learning is used, then "screens on" should be a condition for attendance.*

Asynchronous Learning (Delivery of training materials through instructional videos/manuals):

- *Asynchronous is useful only for more technical stuff which I might forget if I don't use it on a daily basis, but may need to refer back to from time to time (e.g. Nvivo or SPSS and so on).*
- *Asynchronous is convenient due to timetable issues.*
- *Any training material used should also be included in Maltese. This to respect our cultural heritage which is being tarnished on a daily basis by our institutions.*

Discussions/Workshops (A delivery method involving open communication between a trainer and trainees):

- *This mode of delivery is engaging and acknowledges the experiences and expertise of the attendees.*
- *In addition to learning from the course facilitator, I see training courses as a way to meet and learn from other academics/UM staff. This is the reason that I value in-person workshops.*
- *It is important that during workshops there is time allocated for hands-on work.*

Classroom Based (The traditional face-to-face training):

- *Don't abandon physical, face to face training because of the alleged convenience and comfort of 'online'.*



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*Nothing beats the physical experience of real time training. Thousands of years of evolution have primed us to benefit best in this way.*

- *Face to face training offers benefits where students can ask directly.*
- *Some face-to-face courses would be beneficial to increase networking and inter-faculty communication.*

Comments and Feedback on Other Methods of Delivery:

*I also highly recommend the opening of more possibilities for flexible web-based learning for the case of graduate and professional development courses and study programmes. This does not mean that the greater focus on asynchronous learning is limited to independent study (as the "asynchronous learning" option above is interpreted) but works at designing and implementing interhuman connectedness as much as human and non-human connectedness for learning.*



**Part Three - The amount of training courses available for the UM researchers**

The chart below indicates that 71.1% (103 respondents) think that there are enough training courses available for the UM academics and researchers, whilst 20.8% (31 respondents) do not think that there are enough training courses. The remaining 8.1% (12 respondents) replied that they do not know.

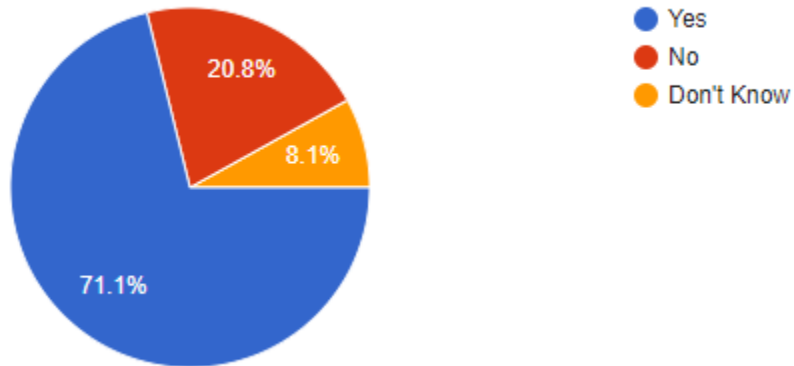




Table 6 below illustrates a list of other training courses, which the researchers would like to be offered by the UM in the future, as well as remarks provided for each.

Topic	Participants' Remarks
<p>Administrative and Academic Issues, including Leadership</p>	<p><i>How to collaborate better with other departments. The Do's and Don'ts.</i></p> <p><i>Training courses which would be good to offer relate to any new roles that academics may take on, for example; being part of a doctoral committee, headship roles etc.</i></p> <p><i>Responsibilities of Head of Departments. Sometimes, many of us take up these roles as we're the next in line but we learn of the duties only through experience and the hand over we're given. I believe it's good for an aspiring HOD to be given some training.</i></p> <p><i>Team building - for departments and faculty wide.</i></p> <p><i>Courses on lab leadership and mentoring skills would be useful.</i></p> <p><i>Activities to support networking among academics at the University -especially researchers from different Faculties.</i></p> <p><i>Professional interpersonal relations.</i></p> <p><i>How to present yourself on LinkedIn.</i></p>
<p>AI and its Implications for Academia</p>	<p><i>Assessing the use of AI in student assignments; coaching students on use of AI; training/workshop on collaborating in research groups (social sciences)</i></p> <p><i>Pedagogies for AI in education.</i></p> <p><i>Use of digital media and AI to prepare lectures.</i></p> <p><i>A follow-up/more advanced training course on the use of generative AI in higher education.</i></p> <p><i>Use of software packages, such as: R, Python, as well as how AI tools can be used to further support academics/students.</i></p>



<p>Assessment Methods</p>	<p><i>The types, scopes, design, and their attainable targets. Design of assessment rubrics. The balance between the objectivity in assessing student material and the subjectivity of allowing students to express their own opinions/takes on the subject, even though the assessor may be of a different opinion.</i></p> <p><i>Modes of Assessment including assessing a Dissertation.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment skills as an examiner.</i></p>
<p>Biomaterials and Blue Economy</p>	<p><i>None.</i></p>
<p>Inclusion and Special Needs</p>	<p><i>Topics related to inclusion of multicultural and multi-faith students.</i></p> <p><i>Multicultural personnel / students management, diplomacy, sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>Changes in student culture and learning.</i></p> <p><i>How to deal with students having any form of special needs. Sometimes we are not even aware of these students and no one has ever told us how to handle such situations if these students are in our class.</i></p> <p><i>How to manage students with learning disabilities especially if taking the role of supervisor for a dissertation.</i></p>
<p>Pedagogy</p>	<p><i>Tutors should be encouraged to attend courses in teaching methods. Support should be given to the different faculties to ensure that tutors [especially newly appointed ones] are trained in educational philosophy and this attendance should be made mandatory for all new academic employees before their post is confirmed [generally after one year of employment].</i></p> <p><i>Using LLMs, handling students with 'issues' (on the spectrum, etc.), creating proper lecture content, etc.</i></p> <p><i>How to teach today's generation.</i></p>
<p>Project Management</p>	<p><i>For researchers and academics include budgeting and grant writing.</i></p>



	<p><i>For academics - most of us juggle multiple projects, lectures, admin and a lot of meetings...so a course on managing multiple projects and another on managerial skills (since we find ourselves frequently behaving like managers as Principal Investigators), would really help.</i></p>
Research and Data Analysis	<p><i>Continue to strengthen innovative approaches towards research and data analysis.</i></p> <p><i>More on research methods for non-experts, for example Data Management, Python, etc for academics whose expertise is on qualitative such as ethnography, and vice-versa.</i></p> <p><i>Use of specialized software; Publishing on lien, open source access.</i></p> <p><i>Training to fill in URECA forms.</i></p> <p><i>1) - The advantages of having a Google Scholar Profile and 2) - Building an Awesome H-Index.</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to LaTeX.</i></p> <p><i>IP and Knowledge Transfer.</i></p> <p><i>More courses for Doctoral students, with site visits (or practical hands-on experiences).</i></p>
Supervision of Students	<p><i>Both at Master and Doctoral levels.</i></p> <p><i>CPD workshops to build on topics included in the Foundations of University Teaching &amp; Learning Course, such as supervision of dissertations including undergraduate dissertations, assessment and feedback.</i></p>
Technology-based Training in Teaching Methods	<p><i>Specific application courses for tools used or created by the different Faculties/Departments/Institutes/Schools, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Anything revolving about technology and how it can be used in the classroom to enrich our subject delivery experience.</i></p> <p><i>Using technology to enhance lecture production; how to create a video lecture.</i></p>



	<p><i>There is a need for short learning courses relating to (critical digital pedagogies) and adult learning and teaching that unsettle traditional lecturing methods for staff members. It would also be good to find ways to attract established academic staff members who are leading blended and/or online courses but show little understanding of digital learning and teaching. I would also recommend courses on study skills and digital learning/research competencies for students.</i></p> <p><i>Online content design for wholly online or blended teaching.</i></p>
<p>UM Regulations and Bye-Laws</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Wellbeing</p>	<p><i>Bullying and institutional bullying at the workplace.</i></p> <p><i>More courses on self care (such as mindfulness etc..).</i></p> <p><i>Physical Activity-based, Well-being courses, Physical Literacy and Investments.</i></p> <p><i>Addressing Mental Health Issues - raising awareness.</i></p>

**THE END**





**Appendix I**

**Sections 3 and 4 of the Questionnaire:**

**Section 3 of 4**

The preferred method of delivery ✕ ⋮

Description (optional)

What is/are your preferred mode of delivery in terms of training courses offered by the UM? \*

- Blended Learning (A combination of online and face-to-face training)
- Synchronous Learning (Training that is delivered wholly in real time remotely)
- Asynchronous Learning (Delivery of training materials through instructional videos/manuals)
- Discussions/Workshops (A delivery method involving open communication between a trainer and trainee...)
- Classroom Based (The traditional face-to-face training)
- Other...

Please include any suggestions or feedback that you consider to be essential regarding the mode of delivery of training courses (optional):

Long-answer text  
.....



Section 4 of 4

Training and Development Courses



Description (optional)

Do you think that there are enough training courses available for the UM academics and researchers? \*

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

List any other training courses which you would like to be offered by the UM in the future.

Long-answer text

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