



**Role and Responsibilities and Guidelines of
Learning Support Assistants/Educators
(LSA/LSE)**

By

**DONINU (MALTA)
INTERNATIONAL**

Professional Report: Role and Responsibilities of Learning Support Assistants/Educators (LSA/LSE) in Supporting Students with Disabilities in Malta

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is not only a human right but also a cornerstone for achieving social justice and equity. In Malta, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), also known as Learning Support Educators (LSEs), play a pivotal role in ensuring that students with disabilities receive equal access to quality education. This report outlines, in a comprehensive and professional manner, the roles, responsibilities, and legal frameworks that govern LSA/LSE duties in Malta.

2. Purpose of the Role

The LSA/LSE role is designed to:

- Support the educational, emotional, and social development of students with disabilities.
- Facilitate inclusive classroom practices.
- Ensure compliance with national and international disability rights and education laws.
- Promote equity, autonomy, and meaningful participation within the school environment.

3. Core Responsibilities

3.1 Direct Student Support

- Provide one-to-one or group-based assistance to students with disabilities.
- Help students follow classroom instructions and participate in all school activities.
- Encourage independence and assist in daily living skills (e.g., mobility, hygiene, communication).

3.2 Educational Adaptation

- Modify and adapt educational content and materials to meet the student's individual learning needs.
- Support the implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Use alternative communication methods (e.g., PECS, Makaton, AAC) where applicable.

3.3 Monitoring and Documentation

- Maintain accurate records of student progress, challenges, and achievements.
- Contribute to multidisciplinary team meetings.
- Communicate regularly with educators, school leadership, and parents.

3.4 Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with class teachers, inclusion coordinators, and specialized therapists.
- Participate in continuous professional development and inclusion-focused training.

3.5 Promoting Inclusion and Social Integration

- Foster positive peer relationships and prevent social exclusion.
- Support school-wide efforts to create an inclusive culture.
- Promote respect and understanding among students.

4. Levels of LSA/LSE Support

- **LSE 1:** Basic support under close supervision.
- **LSE 2:** Moderate independence with specialized task support.
- **LSE 3:** High level of autonomy, supporting complex cases and contributing to educational planning.

5. Legal and Policy Framework

5.1 Maltese Legislation

- **Constitution of Malta** – Article 32: Right to non-discrimination.
- **Education Act (Cap. 327)** – Ensures inclusive education for all learners.
- **Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413)** – Mandates reasonable accommodation and equality in education.

5.2 International and Regional Instruments

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):**
 - Article 24: Right to inclusive education.
 - Article 5: Right to equality and non-discrimination.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** – Article 23: Educational support for children with disabilities.
- **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** – Equality and non-discrimination in education.

5.3 National Policies

- **National Inclusive Education Policy (MEYR, 2019)** – Framework for supporting all learners inclusively.
- **IEP Guidelines and Access Arrangements Policy** – Tools and structures for personalized education.

6. Ethical and Professional Expectations

- Uphold the dignity and confidentiality of the students.
- Promote independence and not create dependency.
- Remain student-centred while collaborating with the family and educational team.

7. Additional Considerations

- **Transport Accessibility:** LSEs may help ensure safe transport arrangements are in place for students.

- **In-School Therapy Access:** LSEs collaborate with occupational therapists, speech therapists, and psychologists.
- **Wheelchair Usage:** Students should not be left seated for extended periods. Provide regular repositioning, encourage physical movement when possible, and include inclusive physical activities.
- **Personal Hygiene & Nappy Changing:**
 - Follow safeguarding procedures including dignity, privacy, and consent.
 - Use designated changing areas and ensure hygiene and infection control standards.
 - Always have another adult within visibility if possible.
- **General Syllabus Adaptation:** Avoid overloading students with all subjects; adapt curricula to support engagement and success.
- **Inclusion Awareness:** Promote awareness that disability is a form of diversity, not a deficit. Encourage empathy, inclusion, and respect among all students.

8. Recommended Activities to Promote Inclusion and Engagement

- **Interactive Learning:** Use games, visual aids, and manipulatives for active participation.
- **Creative Arts:** Facilitate expression through art, music, and drama.
- **Peer Buddy Systems:** Pair students to promote friendships and peer learning.
- **Inclusive Sports:** Organize wheelchair-friendly games and adaptive physical education.
- **Story Time and Role Play:** Help build language, empathy, and imagination.
- **Sensory Breaks and Quiet Time:** Provide calm zones and movement activities to support sensory needs.

9. Guidelines for LSEs Working with Students with Disabilities

1. **Know the Student:**
 - Understand the student's diagnosis, strengths, needs, and preferences.

- Familiarize yourself with their IEP and support plans.
- 2. Respect and Dignity:**
 - Treat students with disabilities with the same respect as their peers.
 - Avoid infantilizing or over-assisting; foster independence.
- 3. Communication:**
 - Use clear, age-appropriate, and supportive communication.
 - Learn and use alternative communication methods when required.
- 4. Adapt and Differentiate:**
 - Use differentiated teaching strategies.
 - Provide visual aids, structured routines, and task breakdowns.
- 5. Encourage Participation:**
 - Include students in all classroom and school activities.
 - Promote group work and social interaction.
- 6. Behaviour Management:**
 - Use positive behaviour support strategies.
 - Collaborate with behavioural therapists when needed.
- 7. Work as a Team:**
 - Communicate effectively with teachers, therapists, and families.
 - Attend team meetings and contribute actively to planning.
- 8. Promote Inclusion:**
 - Support peer education about disability and inclusion.
 - Challenge stereotypes and foster an inclusive classroom environment.
- 9. Self-Care and Professional Growth:**
 - Seek support when experiencing challenges.
 - Participate in training and keep up with best practices.

10. Conclusion

LSAs and LSEs are vital agents of inclusion. Their work is guided by a framework of national and international legal obligations aimed at creating equitable educational opportunities for all students. It is essential that they are fully supported with the necessary training, respect, and resources to continue fostering dignity, independence, and inclusion for students with disabilities in Malta.

Prepared by: Chev. Jean Pierre Calleja
leader / Founder
Doninu (Malta) International