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## S-Cubed's position on the National Curriculum Framework 2011: A Vision for Science Education in Malta

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The Science Students' Society (S-Cubed) wishes to express its concerns about the proposed changes to the National Curriculum Framework, in particular reference to the consultation document "A Vision for Science Education in Malta".

While the reforms point towards a healthy change in the outlook towards the education of students and the importance of appreciating science in today's developed world, there are several issues which, our society believes, require clarification prior to the changes coming into effect.

It must be mentioned that changes to the method of delivery and content of science education are welcome, particularly when they seek to develop a more complete understanding and appreciation of the subject. In fact, the Science Students' Society is in complete agreement with the introduction of an integrated science unit in the first two years of secondary school.

Despite this, one cannot but notice a certain lack of concreteness which is evident in the proposals put forward. Primarily, the absence of the new proposed syllabi for the topics which will be covered in secondary schools, fails to provide a clear picture of their content. This instantly places individuals and entities who wish to constructively criticise the reforms at a disadvantage. It also fails to provide an unambiguous definition of what each new subject will seek to deliver and in what way.

Furthermore, it is worth considering whether the 'paradigm shift' proposed in the consultation document is indeed a wise change. Though the adjustments would appear to be quite ideal, in theory, to bring about increased appreciation of scientific concepts and a greater degree of reasoning, one cannot help but feel that they are still at the conceptual stage.

Reinforcing this point is the fact that while the consultation document focuses greatly on secondary education, there is very little mention of post-secondary and tertiary levels. A primary concern is the lack of specification on how the transition from ordinary level to advanced and intermediate level education will actually be made, once the proposed reforms are implemented. This is because of the clear distinction made among science subjects at post-secondary levels. The issue is further compounded by the fact that as one proceeds to higher education institutions,

### Affiliates:



**IOP** Institute of Physics

particularly University, the content of science subjects begins to become more academic and theoretical as is the norm at such stages of education.

When considering that most science students achieve their final qualifications before entering the working world at tertiary level, it would be sensible to consult the relevant entities to gauge what the requirements are for achieving successful science education. The Faculty of Science has in fact published a position paper, which S-Cubed is in agreement with, outlining the existing issues regarding this area. It is unfortunate that, as apparent from the consultation document, neither were any members of staff from the Faculty of Science, nor current individuals from the science student body involved in the compilation of said document.

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In conclusion, the Science Students' Society urges the relevant authorities to consult further with the entities directly responsible for higher education prior to finalising the National Curriculum Framework reform on science education. In addition, S-Cubed strongly encourages an extension of the consultation period to allow for adequate feedback to be given, ideally with the inclusion of syllabi and outlines of the plans detailing the content which will be delivered and the transition to higher levels of education. It would also make sense to provide a review of foreign examples (if any) where such proposed science education scenarios have been implemented; thereby ensuring this is not simply a leap in the dark. Finally, the Science Students' Society would like to appeal for greater consultation with current members of the science student body to more accurately gauge the local underlying issues in science education, in order to involve all stakeholders and perspectives which should be contributing to this reform.



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*The Science Students' Society (S-Cubed / S<sup>3</sup>) represents all students within the Faculty of Science and works to unite them through social and educational activities throughout the academic year. S-Cubed also publishes the magazine In Touch twice yearly with science related articles. For more information visit [www.scubed.info](http://www.scubed.info).*