

2018 MCAST ANNUAL REPORT 2019

ANNUAL REPORT
2018-2019

MCAST ANNUAL REPORT

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EDITOR

Caroline Balzan

DESIGN

Peresso Design Studio

PROOF READER

Joyce Hili

PRE-PRESS AND PRINTING

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POSTAL ADDRESS

PR and Communications Office
Administration Building, MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola, Malta

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MCAST Board of Governors

2017-2020 – As of December 2019



From left, standing, are Mr Frank Farrugia, Ms Louisa Grech, Mr Frederick Schembri, Dr Amanda Bezzina, Prof Mark Borg
From left, sitting, are Ms Marietta Lanzon, Ms Rhoda Garland, Prof Joachim James Calleja, Ms Claire Grima and Mr Brian Farrugia

President (2018-2020)

Mr Frederick Schembri

Deputy President

Prof Mark Borg

Principal and CEO

Prof James Joachim Calleja

Board Members

Dr Amanda Bezzina

Mr Brian Farrugia

Mr Frank Farrugia

Ms Rhoda Garland

Ms Louisa Grech

Ms Claire Grima

Ms Marietta Lanzon

Ms Marisa Xuereb

Message from the **Hon Dr Owen Bonnici** Minister for Education and Employment



Since I was a child, learning by doing has always attracted my attention. Hand work is a skill which I thoroughly enjoy and miss when I am engaged in my public life. So when I was appointed Minister for Education and Employment, I was intrigued to experience, first-hand, the developments of vocational education and training particularly at our main public institution MCAST.

In my visits to the College, I have come across the huge developments that this sector has experienced since its second inception in 2001. The former MCAST was also a landmark in the history of our education system. It supported Malta's workforce post-independence and built the skills and competences necessary to move away from a fortress economy to one built on tourism in particular, but also on manufacturing and other important services. Over the years, the development of vocational education and training has seen significant leaps into a higher profile for both its employees as well as the students. These last twenty years and in particular after the launch of the Copenhagen process in 2002, MCAST has been developed into a learning institution with promising potential and capacity and high European standards.

This annual report bears evidence to this development. With over €100 million invested in infrastructure since Malta joined the EU, today MCAST is building the future of our nation's workforce. With over 180 full-time courses and 300 part-time courses, the College has grown beyond its financial and human capacity. With a learning population of over 12,000 full-time and part-time learners and almost 1,000 members of staff, MCAST is an institution which is forging the current and future workforce, making Malta a more competitive and sustainable economy. This is important because living in a globalised world has its benefits as well as its calamities. The surge of COVID-19 in the first months of 2020 has been a shock to practically all economies. It has also left its imprint on our social and economic systems but at the same time provided a wake-up call to invest heavily in our predictive capacities and in people who can work in a flexible environment and who possess the skills and competences of Industry 4.0.

MCAST offers such a wide variety of education and training opportunities. Vocational education is more than the traditional but useful skills in tile laying, plastering, plumbing and electrical installations. It is also about financial computing and cryptocurrencies, mechanisms and machine designs, industrial robot design and control. It is about achieving a Bachelor's degree in a suite of many subjects, a Master's degree in Product

Design, in Water Resource Management, in High Performance Buildings and in Environmental Engineering among others. MCAST is truly a kaleidoscope of qualifications from MQF Level 1 to Level 7, offering students finishing compulsory education with a career choice which they can achieve prevalently through work-based learning. This is what distinguishes MCAST from any other post-secondary education institution. Its proximity to Industry and its focus at all levels of a continued cross-cutting balance between theory and practice is the added value to Malta's economic growth.

My government has taken on board the many challenges that MCAST faces to enable our young generations and workers to excel in their skills. The annual budget has been increasing systematically over these last few years and more resources will be forthcoming at a time when in the post-COVID-19 phase many of our workers will once more knock on MCAST doors to re-train, re-skill or up-skill their competences. Furthermore, with the introduction of My Journey in schools and the heavy investment in setting up state-of-the-art workshops, it is expected that the MCAST student population will grow. This is also what government wishes to have so that more young people are in education and training and benefitting from work-based learning in its various forms including apprenticeships. In today's world of employment, the need to match theory with practice is increasing as well as having more research which is impact and action oriented. These two roadmaps are what MCAST is forging through its dedicated lecturing staff and management. Employers look for people who can hit the ground running. Employers are also deeply interested in supporting research which has an impact on their productivity and their capacity to grow. The new research framework at MCAST is a step in the right direction. So is the strategic plan launched by the Prime Minister in May 2019 which designs a future in which inclusion, excellence and equity develop the guiding light of all learning and working conditions at MCAST.

I am happy that all these initiatives are making MCAST an added attraction to learning for all ages. I augur that this momentum will continue during the difficult months of 2020 and that, with the support of MCAST, Malta will once more see its economy and its employment flourishing.



Message from

PROF IAN REFALO

President of the MCAST Board of Governors

The world of education has always been at the heart of my long career as a lawyer, lecturer and Dean at the University of Malta. Therefore when Minister Bonnici invited me to the role of President of MCAST, I did not hesitate to accept because the College is an interesting challenge in many aspects.

First and foremost, the College is in the process of reviewing its constitution to enable it to move towards higher levels of governance, efficiency and a better service to its students and staff members. I am eager to use my long legal experience in presenting a legislation that reflects the evolution of the College in these last twenty years and in visualising together with management where the College should be in 2040. Reading through the literature that I have been presented with, I am impressed with the development of MCAST and its structures. It should be to no one's surprise that over 6,000 students enrol in MCAST every year; that today the College caters for over 12,000 full and part-time students and that the staff population is close to 1,000. This is the extent to which this College has grown to provide our country with a workforce which can ensure that Malta

remains competitive, attractive and with increasing capacity for better quality of life to its citizens.

A second important challenge for us is to maintain the already strong relationship that the College has with the world of employment. A stronger partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, the Malta Employers' Association, Malta Enterprise and other related organisations and employers is what I am looking for so that work-based learning (a pillar in MCAST strategic objectives) becomes a College-wide opportunity for as many students as possible. I am aware that during 2020-2021 businesses will emerge from the wrecks of an unprecedented and devastating economic downfall of COVID-19. However, our economy has the political backup to re-emerge stronger and bolder as soon as we move towards the post-COVID-19 period. MCAST will be in the forefront to support industry with students capable of providing the necessary skills and competences needed by industry to re-emerge and prosper again. A stronger and more pro-active approach with industry will be the approach I shall entice management to continue pursuing so that the College

sustains its already strong relations with the world of work.

A look at the year under review reveals that in 2019 the College has grown from strength to strength. It has restructured management, it created Deputy Principals responsible for overseeing vital areas of the College; it has reorganised the Boards of Studies; it increased its reviews of qualifications in close collaboration with industry; the ERASMUS+ programme gave more opportunities to students and lecturing staff to experience vocational education and training abroad. I am also impressed with the amount of infrastructural work that has taken place during 2019 notably the opening of the new building for the Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) and currently the construction of two state-of-the-art buildings which will accommodate the MCAST Resource Centre (MRC) and the new Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT).

I am proud to be entrusted with the leadership of this College. I hope that this annual report will attract more stakeholders to work closely with MCAST and make the College a first choice for Maltese and international students.



An Overview by the Principal/CEO

PROF JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

As we review the latter part of 2018 and the year 2019, we face the challenges that COVID-19 is imposing globally and on our country. These events will undoubtedly leave an impact on education. More than ever before, we are now hugely dependent on communication technology in order to avert negative health repercussions. In this context, we realise how important online learning has become and how vulnerable our institutions are when faced with unprecedented events such as COVID-19. The sight of an empty campus is sad. However, we need to rise again and rebuild our learning processes in a manner in which automation will have the capacity to replace people when and if the need arises again. This will be a mammoth task that requires serious long-term investment in time and resources. But it will also be necessary so that young generations will not be deprived of their E&T entitlement.

2019 has been a year of transformation and change. Notably, the launching of a new organigram has seen the spreading of a process of democratisation cutting across the whole system of MCAST and empowering managers, lecturing staff and administrators with more autonomy and responsibility. Although the positive impact in 2019 will bear fruit in the coming years, yet the signs of a revitalised College can already be demonstrated. The new approach taken by the Board of Governors in their decision-making process has been a guiding light to the whole organisation. Few meetings, more focused discussions and a system of resolutions have found fertile ground in the new vibrant layers of management particularly among Deputy Principals who spearheaded targeted innovations.

The overall strategic objectives are those to improve the learning environment for both students and lecturing staff members, resource a management structure so that it responds to needs in real time, and increase stakeholders' participation in the day-to-day running of College-wide education and training. These objectives have been the focal point of several activities as evidenced hereunder and in more detail in the report itself.

For instance, in July 2019 the Office of the Deputy Principal – Registrar launched a new College Management Information System including the customisation of the system for the admissions process of the academic year 2019-2020. Following the first pilot publication of BlockCerts certification on the Blockchain, 2018-2019 saw the introduction of all MCAST MQF full-time level-rated digital certificates. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the academic administration of the College covering several functions including Student Admissions and Records for both local and international students, Examinations, Certification, Stipends as well as several other services offered to students and alumni.

Further reorganisation also occurred in Administration and in particular in the offices for Human Resource Management, Communication, Finance and Procurement. The continuous recruitment processes to support MCAST's needs has attracted talented individuals to MCAST. Efforts are ongoing to nurture a humanistic culture across the College which is inculcating a more caring approach to human resource management and re-training and re-skilling opportunities for all staff. In 2019 a new web portal and other social media platforms were launched, making the College a more attractive institution to learners. Statistics show that 30% of those obtaining access to academic higher education are making the College a first choice. The increase in our budget (both recurrent and capital) has put additional weight on our Procurement Office. This Office has been an unflinching support to a large number of EU MCAST projects. In Finance, the focus for 2018-2019 was to build a robust framework based on good governance and effective management in controlling the financial resources. The implementation of the MCAST/MUT collective agreement provisions was another major task, coupled with the financial backup support to various EU projects. Notwithstanding the workload, these activities have had a

positive impact on all College operations.

The newly established Grievance Office was approached by 166 students and 285 employees with concerns and complaints about academic grades awarded to students, communication problems, as well as recruitment and progression issues. 91% of cases have been resolved. The Office works closely with the MCAST Legal Adviser, the Education Ombudsman and the Progressions Board which meets every week. The Office has also carried out an analysis of current College practices such as the regulations of the student disciplinary code, the significant support given to the MCAST IAO Office, and the upskilling of all Directors on Disciplinary Board conduct and procedures.

The Capital Projects Office continued with the design, specification and implementation of the MCAST campus masterplan. The capital projects team was heavily committed on three construction projects which included the construction and finishing, including the infrastructural services, of the building forming part of the Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET), the MCAST Resource Centre (MRC) and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) at the MCAST Main Campus in Corradino.

The Capital Projects Office has been successful in coordinating a €30.7 million project with a gross floor area of 31,000sqm while working within a fully functional educational institution and constrained by the market realities of limited resources. It is expected that by 2021, the finished product will certainly change the external image of the College.

The area of research and innovation has seen a new lease of life during 2019 particularly through the College-wide Research Framework being formally launched across MCAST. MCAST recruited 6 senior research officers and a research director, who work hand-in-hand with the 6 Institutes to encourage many of the 500+ academics to take on research contact hours as part of their workload. This new research drive has provided immediate results that have resulted in over 40 MCAST academics taking on research endeavours and the launch, for the first time in 2019, of the biannual MCAST Journal of Applied Research and Practice. Further to the research drive, ARIC was also instrumental in providing several innovation drives, such as the MCAST Artificial Intelligence Strategy in 2019, as well as the innovative blended learning Master's programmes, focusing on sustainability drives through programmes such as Lean Enterprise, High Performance Buildings and Mechatronics, with over 200 active Master's students. These closed off their first year in the period in question.

Notably during 2019, the Partnerships Office was instrumental in the signing of various Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements for MCAST that help to increase the cooperation between MCAST and Industry. The Office gave its support for the increase of participation of MCAST students and staff in the

ERASMUS+ programmes in both Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). The number of incoming and outgoing students was over 600, with work placement opportunities in local industry. Various delegations from EU Universities and Colleges also visited MCAST as it continued to expand its international network of educational contacts through the International Office.

An important aspect of the College is curriculum development. The MCAST curriculum is constantly under review and in fact the Curriculum Department carried out the cyclical review of a considerable number of MCAST courses resulting in the updating of a large number of units. In 2019, the Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Department launched 6 new Apprenticeship degrees through the IICT, the IET and the ICA. Extensive work continued as part of the ESF 03.081 project – 'Achieving Vocational Excellence through Enhanced Work-Based Learning' and in November 2019, a seminar was held involving 50 participants from Industry.

The Learning Support Unit consolidated the provision of foreign language courses and for the first time at MCAST, introduced a 10-week course for senior citizens. A milestone in the history of the College has been the launching by the Centre for Professional Development of a Master in Vocational Education Applied Research 4.0. Fifty-five participants completed the PG Certificate and 15 participants progressed to the PG Diploma level. The Centre also offered batches of CPD sessions to staff, with over 250 registrations. The Key Skills Unit launched the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills module to all MCAST students enrolled in Level 4 and Level 6 programmes. The unit, which is delivered in the form of workshops, emphasises the importance of becoming active citizens hence including 20 hours of community work. The unit is offered to just under 4,000 students.

Since the launch of the MCAST Wellbeing Hub on 25 April 2019, 78 sessions were carried out by the different professionals within the Hub. In parallel to the individual sessions, outreach and prevention sessions were held on a regular basis. The career guidance services have enhanced their presence in secondary schools and career fairs, with a total of 62 interventions in the form of talks and fairs. 726 one-to-one and group career guidance sessions were given to all prospective candidates who sought guidance in relation to course choices.

2019 has been a year of transformation and consolidation of good practices across the College. The strategic goals launched in May 2019 provide a robust guiding framework for the next two years. Our key objective now is to move towards a more participative College climate in which staff and students continue to build a culture of inclusion and excellence.

BOARD OF GOVERNERS



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

EU Projects Office

Capital Projects Office

MCAST Gateway to Industry

Grievance Office

MCAST Strategic Plan

EU Projects Office

During the period 2018-2019, MCAST implemented four major projects which were funded through the European Structural Funds 2014-2020. A substantial number of activities have been contracted, some of which have been fully completed. Under this programming period, up to end 2019, MCAST has benefitted from €20.6 million in EU funding. The projects which are being implemented include:

ERDF 09.036

MCAST Campus Master Plan: Phase 2

This project comprises the construction of three new buildings: the Building and Construction Engineering Facilities within the Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET), the MCAST Resource Centre (MRC) and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) at the MCAST Main Campus in Corradino. The project also includes a College Management Information System (CMIS) to complement the physical development and to optimise the efficiency of MCAST's operational procedures and processes. The IET building was officially inaugurated in May 2019, whilst the CMIS was used for the first time in July 2019 to receive on-line applications from MCAST prospective students. The value of this project is €30.7 million, of which €28.7 million had been contracted by the end of 2019. Total disbursement up to end 2019 was €15.5 million.

ESF 03.081

Achieving Vocational Excellence through Enhanced Work-Based Learning

The aim of this project is to consolidate MCAST's structures as an indispensable pre-requisite to address shortcomings within the context of the National Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Schemes. The value of this project is €6.5 million of which €0.1 million have been contracted.

ESF 03.003

Development of Training Programmes at MQF Level 7

The project aims to consolidate the College's tertiary offers, specifically courses at MQF Level 7. During the period 2018-2019, eight vocational programmes at MQF Level 7 were launched. The value of this project is €3.3 million. The contracted amount is €2.7 million of which €2.3 million were disbursed by end 2019.

ESF 02.058

Adding Value - Nurturing Learning Journeys at the MCAST Foundation College

The aim of this project is to set up state-of-the-art support structures for students with learning difficulties and individuals pertaining to vulnerable groups. During the lifetime of the project, MCAST aims to identify the typical barriers to training which are encountered by socially excluded individuals. As a result of this exercise, MCAST will be able to create long-term structures that can provide immediate support to vulnerable students while they are following courses at the Foundation College. The value of this project is €9.4 million, of which €5.7 million have been contracted and €2.7 million were disbursed by end 2019.





Capital Projects Office

During 2018-2019 the Capital Projects Office continued with the design, specification and implementation of the MCAST campus master plan. The capital projects' team was heavily committed on three construction projects which included the construction and finishing, including the infrastructural services, of:

The building forming part of the Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET)

The MCAST Resource Centre (MRC)

The Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) at the MCAST Main Campus in Corradino

The year under review was particularly challenging in view of the fact that site works on all three projects were ongoing simultaneously.

On the IET project the works centred around finishes and the installation of the third fix of mechanical and electrical installations. The MRC focus was on superstructure civil works on levels zero to three, with the mobilisation of the

other trades during the last quarter of 2019. The IICT works centred on excavation, geotechnical investigation and civil works construction on foundations and basement levels.

In view of the magnitude both in terms of cost (€30.7 million) and the gross floor area (31,000sqm) coupled with the fact that works had to be conducted within and in parallel with the realities of a fully functional educational institution, one cannot underestimate the load on the Capital Projects Office.

Apart from the inherent difficulties presented by projects of such magnitude and complexity, one cannot forget to mention the challenging prevailing market conditions. Securing of all kinds of resources – human, material and otherwise – remained the number one underlying difficulty which posed most risk to the ongoing successful implementation of the project.

Internally, the sourcing and retention of duly qualified, experienced and warranted professionals proved to be very challenging.

Working with severely overloaded contractors and having to compete for resources with both public and private entities was the main external challenge.

MCAST Gateway to Industry

As the commercial arm of the College, the MCAST Gateway to Industry (MG2i) was conceived to support, enhance and complement the College's operations.

Focusing on training provision and maintaining the impetus on part-time course provision, MCAST's commercial enterprise has given thousands of people the opportunity to follow courses for leisure as well as for the achievement of accredited qualifications at various levels.

In a bid to maintain its relevance and in response to industry and public demand, the vast portfolio of 303 programmes offered on a part-time basis has been reviewed during 2019. Twenty-two new exciting courses have been introduced to entice people towards further training and learning. These include six new Master's courses.

During 2018-2019, MG2i started developing a business plan which should aim towards a major overhaul to its strategic direction and operations. Priority will be given to the restructuring of the team set up, with a view towards strengthening and improving customer relations, marketing and communications. MG2i continued with the process of reviewing its procedures throughout the period under review, and of formalizing better ties with MCAST and its operations.

Twelve bespoke training programmes aimed at local industry constitute an important pillar for MG2i, which is believed to necessitate greater attention. Specifically, the internal human resource restructuring proposed in the MG2i Business Plan states the necessity of expanding this area through the recruitment of sales coordinators whose role would be to reach out further to a broader spectrum of industry players. Moreover, MG2i has also been looking at expanding its portfolio of offerings beyond training provision, and has been focusing its attention to other revenue generation streams such as renting of spaces and resources.

MG2i has invested in the implementation of an internationalization strategy through direct participation in ten international fairs and conferences overseas, in an attempt to promote MCAST accredited courses among third country nationals. This networking and promotion exercise led to eight partnership agreements with various education agents and educational institutions with whom MG2i is working together with MCAST to design, and deliver full-time, shorter-term qualifications tailor made for the needs of specific target groups. MG2i registered an exponential growth in student numbers and new courses for international students during 2019. It is our intention to keep building on our success during the coming year through the launch and implementation of the MCAST International Strategic Plan.



The first group of International students who successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Business and Administration, Level 7 Course at MCAST

Grievance Office

The policy of the MCAST Grievance Office stipulates that, “This office has the role of assisting MCAST students and employees (lecturers and non-academics) in sharing and obtaining advice about their concerns, complaints and grievances.” Between the start of September 2018 and the end of December 2019, a total of 693 MCAST students and members of staff either sought the advice of the Grievance Office or presented a formal complaint, as indicated in the table below:

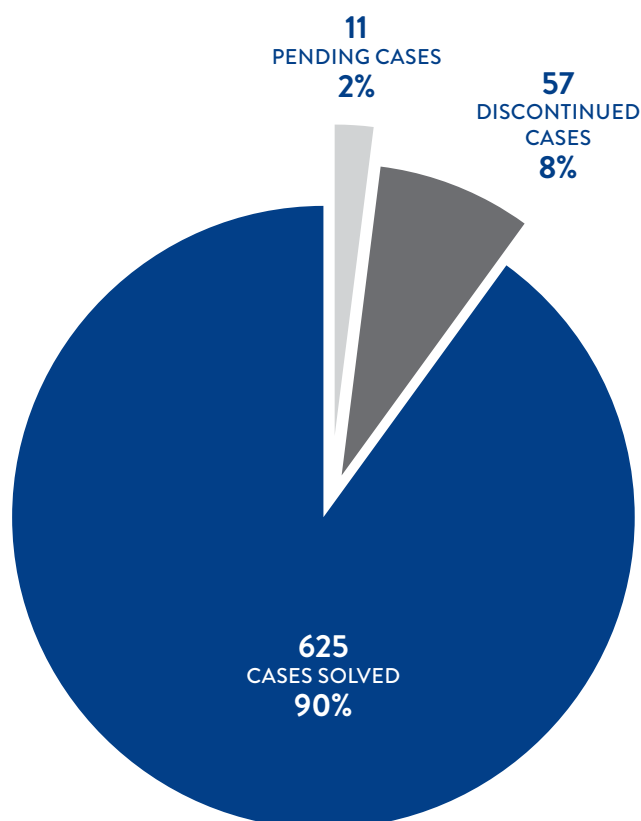
STUDENTS		
Male students	126	18%
Female students	145	21%
Student groups	17	2%
STAFF (lecturers and non-academics)		
Male staff	206	3%
Female staff	175	25%
Staff groups	3	0.4%
Non-MCAST staff	21	3.6%
TOTAL	693	100%

It is commonly expected that in any community, there are incidences of disagreement, when individual members or stakeholders have divergent opinions, engage in disputes or feel that, for some reason, they cannot share the ideals of their community. Some may find it quite challenging to obtain their entitlements within their community. At MCAST, the Grievance Office seeks to support students and staff to be the major beneficiaries of a more harmonious and authentic community spirit.

In its daily operations, the MCAST Grievance Office offers three possible ways of resolving conflicts. First, it paves the way to find a solution for minor disagreements at source. Whenever it is necessary, this Office guides the complainant and the other party to reach an informal resolution to the satisfaction of all concerned. Moreover,



Mr Anthony Saliba
Deputy Principal
Grievance Office



when cases are of a more serious nature, the complainant may opt for a more formal procedure by filling in the grievance document (Form A) to permit the Deputy Principal responsible for this Office to investigate the grievance until a fair solution is reached.

The MCAST Grievance Office does its utmost to ensure that all problems are dealt with in a timely manner, fairly and consistently, while it emphasizes the aspects of transparency of the entire process and confidentiality throughout the investigation procedure.

All those who feel that they need to refer their concern to the MCAST Grievance Office are encouraged to do so in order to improve our MCAST community for the benefit of all its members.



MCAST Strategic Plan

In September 2018, MCAST launched an extensive consultation process which extended until March 2019. During these six months, the College opened a dialogue on its strategic direction with its key stakeholders. MCAST met with more than 90 employers and more than 55 stakeholders. The College reviewed its strengths, addressed its challenges and prepared the vision for the College to interact with a dynamic economy and changing employment markets. After evaluating all the feedback received and reviewing the draft plan, the MCAST Board of Governors agreed on the parameters for the strategic direction of the College.

The MCAST Strategic Plan was launched by the Prime Minister of Malta Hon Dr Joseph Muscat in May 2019. The plan spans 7 strategic directions, 18 initiatives and 86 measures. The document outlines the priorities for the College and highlights the importance of a dynamic evolution to reflect the changes in Malta's socio-economic fabric.

The plan envisages seven strategic objectives, each with a number of initiatives and measures:

1	Invest in modern infrastructure that is fit for current and future staff and students.
2	Strengthen Quality and Relevance to enhance the students' learning experience.
3	Position quality Work-Based Learning at the heart of all professional and vocational training programmes offered by MCAST.
4	Reinforce the image and build the esteem of Vocational and Professional Education and Training.
5	Broaden the local and international MCAST partner network.
6	Provide support and reinforce the Management and Governance Structures.
7	Incentivize the development of sustainable innovation across the College.



The MCAST Strategic Plan was launched by the Prime Minister of Malta Hon Dr Joseph Muscat

The initiatives and measures elaborated in the published document outline the detail of each strategic objective and measure. The ambitious targets and objectives which MCAST has set for itself will provide a challenging context for those seeking to drive MCAST into becoming more relevant to the industry context in Malta. Since the launch of the Strategic Plan, the Strategy Implementation Office has embarked on the development of operational plans and individual staff plans. The plans have been translated into annual and thematic action plans assigned to different operational units and departments within the College. During 2019, ongoing monitoring and appraisal structures have been set up to capture actions undertaken. Furthermore, twice a year a complete review took place and status reports were prepared for the Board of Governors. By the end of December 2019, out of a total of 124 actions planned for 2019, 93% were ongoing or concluded, while 7% spilled over in the first quarter of 2020.

Other sections of this report provide ample evidence and descriptions of initiatives, actions and measures which have been driven by various Units and Departments within the College. Such actions arise from the overarching concepts of the Strategic Plan, its strategic objectives, initiatives and measures.

The College is gearing up to another successful year within the sphere of the strategic direction set out in the three-year plan. Apart from concluding the outstanding actions from 2019, new ambitious actions are outlined for the different departments for 2020.

MCAST staff during the first transnational meeting of the Erasmus+ STE(A)M project held in Almada, Portugal



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**CURRICULUM AND
STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Quality Assurance Department

Curriculum, Learning Support and Key Skills Department

MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre

Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Department

Centre for Professional Development

Inclusive Education Unit

Outreach and Student Affairs Department



Faculty Team Weekend Schools held in February 2020

Quality Assurance Department

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Quality Assurance Department carried out six internal operational reviews of key quality management systems processes. The output from these reviews led to ongoing improvement and therefore the achievement of better process flows, accountability, transparency and record-keeping.

A total of nine external examiners were hosted at MCAST as part of the annual external peer review of the MCAST qualifications. The visit reports issued by the external examiners were part of the management review process and learning points were communicated to academic staff and students.

As part of the continuous professional development process of lecturing staff, more than one hundred full-time and part-time lecturing staff have been appraised by a member of the Quality Assurance Department and given feedback following the class observation visits. Twenty-four educational forums were published. The forums were intended for academic staff and offer easy-to-read pedagogical and

andragogical hints to improve the teaching, learning and assessment process and therefore the overall student learner experience.

The Quality Assurance Department supported two MCAST students who have been trained and certified to participate in the National Commission for Further and Higher Education External Quality Assurance review teams.

Following a resolution by the Board of Governors, the Quality Assurance Department initiated a project to update, consolidate and disseminate the College Manual of Administrative Procedures.



Dr Nadia Vassallo

Deputy Principal
Curriculum and Student Affairs

Curriculum, Learning Support and Key Skills Department

Curriculum Office

Towards the end of 2018 and during 2019 the Curriculum Office within the Curriculum, Learning Support and Key Skills Department embarked on its first ever cyclical review process. Twenty-three MCAST courses, which had been developed over three years, were reviewed and updated to ensure that the curricula offered are relevant to industry requirements. This process involved consultations with academics and representatives from Industry and as a result 56 units were changed and updated.

The Curriculum Office worked with Institute Directors to restructure six degree programmes into Apprenticeship degree programmes which now include 12 ECTS of work-based learning in industry. The work-based learning component provides a rich working and learning experience for degree students and will eventually facilitate their transition from education to employment.

The Curriculum Office was in regular contact with institute vocational coordinators and subject coordinators in order to revise and update programmes and units. One collaboration saw the Curriculum Office and the Institute of Community Services working with the Institute for Education on the introduction of a joint top-up degree programme focusing on Early Years education.

The Curriculum Office was also very active on an international level. It finalised work on the Erasmus+ RUECVET project, in which MCAST supported colleges and universities in Russia and Uzbekistan to pilot the ECVET system in their respective countries. It also started working on the Erasmus+ TReP project whereby MCAST worked with partners from Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland and Tenerife to develop an accredited online course on restorative practices.

Learning Support Unit

The Learning Support Unit delivered Key Skills units to students following MQF Level 1 to Level 3 programmes. Several lecturers within the Learning Support Unit also delivered a significant number of modules at higher levels. Provision of additional one-to-one support was provided to 150 MCAST students, the most requested being Mathematics and English. Other support was provided in Maltese, Information Technology, Assignment Support, Organisational Skills, Time Management and Leadership Skills.

During the last months of 2018 and during 2019 the Learning Support Unit offered French, German, Italian and Spanish as foreign language courses on a voluntary basis. Sixteen students from different MCAST Institutes successfully completed a course in one of the languages offered. The Chinese language was added to the list of language courses offered and students were able to take this course as from the start of

the academic year 2019-2020.

A new 10-week course aimed at senior citizens was introduced. This course entitled 'Ibqa' Attiv Magħna' was offered free-of-charge. Various topics of interest to senior citizens were offered.

The Learning Support Unit has worked on two new projects which will improve the students' learning experience. MCAST worked on the OPENSEL project with partners from Hungary and The Netherlands on the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in presentation skills, teamwork and stress management. Once developed, these MOOCs will be offered to students and the general public for free. MCAST partnered with Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal in the STE(A)M project. The aim of this project is to reach students with learning difficulties in science and arts subjects.



Staff from education institutions from Cyprus, Latvia, Russia and Uzbekistan on their visit in Malta for the transnational meeting of the Erasmus+ RUECVET

Key Skills Unit

In September 2019 the Key Skills Unit started working on the introduction of the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills unit which has become mandatory for all MCAST students enrolled in Level 4 and Level 6 programmes. This unit, which is delivered in the form of workshops, provides an opportunity for students to be more reflective, have a better understanding of themselves and others and hence become more successful in life and at work. Furthermore, the unit also emphasizes the importance of being active citizens in the community and includes 20 hours of community work. The assessment of the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills unit is based on reflections and community work. In 2018-2019 the unit was offered to just under 4,000 students.

Active citizenship was also introduced in the Individual and Social Responsibility units which are offered on a compulsory basis to all MCAST students enrolled in Level 1 to Level 3 programmes.

The units were revised and updated to include this important component. In 2018-2019 these units were offered to just under 2,000 students.

Several other Key Skills units were updated and these include Maltese, English, Critical Thinking, Entrepreneurship, Science and Information Technology.

The unit Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills was introduced instead of Entrepreneurship for the Level 4 programmes. This was done to have a smoother transition to Level 6 which includes Entrepreneurship as part of the programme.

Subject coordinators responsible for Key Skills units delivered various interactive CPD sessions in February, June and October 2019 to ensure that lecturing staff remain updated in their respective fields of expertise, delivery and assessment.



MCAST staff together with European partners during the 2nd transnational meeting of the Erasmus+ YouNG Goes Further project held in Nottingham, United Kingdom



MCAST business start-up - The Paddy Team

MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre

The MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre occupies six spaces at the Kordin Business Incubation Centre (KBIC). It has continued offering its services to five companies owned by MCAST students and alumni who have shown interest in starting up their own business. During 2018-2019 a total of 30 meetings were held with these tenants and a further 18 meetings with new applicants.

Among several activities, the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre participated in the MCAST Expo, in the MCAST Entrepreneurship Week and also in the Malta Trade Fair at MFCC where around 80,000 people visited the stands occupied by the five companies.

During 2019 ten meetings with various stakeholders were held in order for the Entrepreneurship Centre to increase the support provided to students and alumni who wish to start up and invest in their own businesses.



MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre

Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Department

By the end of the academic year 2018-2019, 950 students following MQF Level 3 and Level 4 programmes benefitted from the Apprenticeship Scheme across several areas of vocational education and training, including engineering, community services, information technology, business and administration, applied sciences and community services.

Other work-based learning schemes, including work placements and internships, were consolidated further with students taking on real work-based learning opportunities during their period of study at MCAST.

The Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Department has further increased the industry activity base, with over 1,800 companies and entities registered as MCAST partners. This symbiosis between industry and education allows employers to offer opportunities to MCAST students for a work-based learning experience.

The Centre for Professional Development

The Centre for Professional Development offered the *Master in Vocational Education Applied Research 4.0* to MCAST and ITS lecturers together with other educators interested in furthering their studies in Vocational Education and Training. This qualification was offered in a blended learning approach consisting of face-to-face weekend schools and ongoing online learning. The College attracted 55 participants in its first cohort. Eight participants were invited to present their research work as part of their assessment in a national event on research.

The Centre for Professional Development also provided three batches of continuous professional development sessions to MCAST staff in February, June and October 2019. Over 250 participants registered for workshops on various topics.

The Centre also prepared and delivered training sessions requested by MCAST Institutes as well as by secondary schools in Malta. The most popular requests were for training on delivery and assessment methods, verification and train the trainer courses.

Inclusive Education Unit

The Inclusive Education Unit provides an accessible learning experience for students with particular needs and disabilities across all levels at the College. A multi-level approach to student support involving policy development, staff support, student support, parent/legal guardian support, and liaison with the various stakeholders involved, ensures that a holistic support system is provided for students. The following activities were undertaken by the Unit, in addition to various ancillary tasks:

1	<p>OUTREACH: 72 Information sessions were delivered to Year 11 students in secondary schools, focusing particularly on the support available at the College.</p>	6	<p>LSE SUPPORT SESSIONS: Numerous students benefitted from individual support sessions in Maltese, English, Mathematics and General Support. This additional support increased students' confidence in the subjects and affected their motivation positively.</p>
2	<p>TRANSITION MEETINGS: 250+ meetings were held with prospective students, in which course opportunities in relation to their particular needs/disabilities were discussed.</p>	7	<p>IN-CLASS LSE SUPPORT SESSIONS: Classes requiring additional support in Levels 1 and 2 programmes were identified and LSEs were assigned a number of in-class sessions per week.</p>
3	<p>INCLUSIVE EDUCATION UNIT REGISTRATIONS: 837 students were registered with the Inclusive Education Unit. 250 of these were new, active and prospective students.</p>	8	<p>TRANSPORT: 6 students with mobility impairments benefitted from daily transport.</p>
4	<p>MAP SESSIONS: Various sessions were held to evaluate students' academic progress and devise a way forward in order to support them in completing their course successfully. Sessions involved students, parents/legal guardians, lecturers, LSEs, support services coordinators, student mentors, and management staff.</p>	9	<p>PERSONAL ASSISTANTS: 9 students were supported by a personal assistant due to mobility impairments and other disabilities.</p>
5	<p>ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS: 2,271 requests for access arrangements during Time-Constrained Assignments were processed. Readers and scribes were provided accordingly.</p>	10	<p>PROCEDURES: Established procedures were refined and formalised in order to enhance operations and improve communication with students and staff.</p>

Outreach and Student Affairs Department

Student Support Services Department

The Student Support Services Department continued to focus on ameliorating its multi-disciplinary response and interventions to the psychosocial, emotional and mental health issues encountered by MCAST students and staff. The service priorities are to maintain the efficient, effective and professional therapeutic interventions requested by students and staff.

Throughout the academic year 2018-2019 student support team members worked to review the department's operational systems including forms, guidelines, policies and other documentation to ensure that these were in line with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Department continued to consolidate ongoing work with external entities including the Mental Health Services, the Commissioner of Mental Health, the Drug Squad, the Malta Police Force, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, the Richmond Foundation, the Probation and Parole Services, YMCA Homeless, the University of Malta, the Faculty of Social Wellbeing, the Counselling Department, the European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute – Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute Malta (EAPTI-GPTIM) and the Employee Support Programme (ESP).

Career Guidance Services

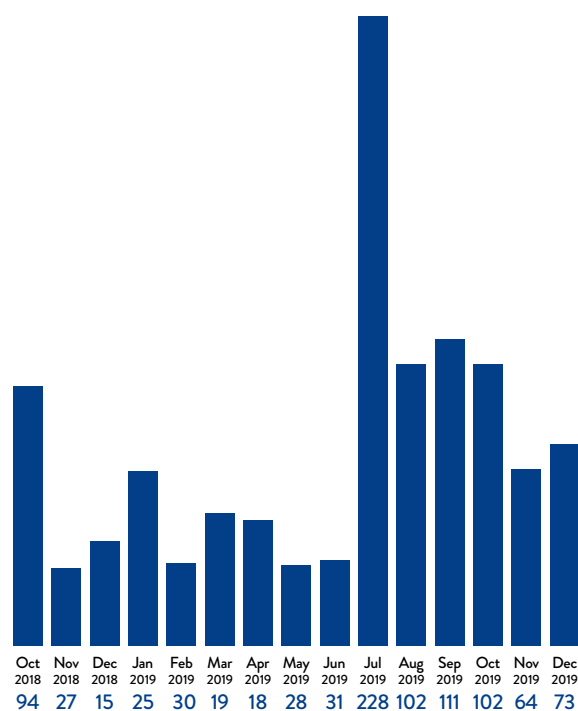
The Career Guidance Department aims to provide clients a timely, accurate and confidential career guidance service. During the academic year 2018-2019, the career advisers participated in 62 activities. MCAST was represented in all the career fairs, educational talks and other career related activities that took place within secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

	NUMBER OF TALKS/ REACH-OUT EVENTS	NUMBER OF CAREER FAIRS ATTENDED
Church Schools	16	4
State Schools	14	9
Independent Schools	3	4
Post-Secondary Institutions	1	7
Other events		4

726 one-to-one and group career guidance sessions were held with all prospective candidates who sought guidance in relation to course choices. While the majority of the clients (86%) were between 15 and 20 years old, other clients aged between 20 and 31 (9%) and above the age of 31 (4%) sought guidance with regard to course choices.

These sessions are often the first introduction to MCAST VET provision and its support measures. These in-depth sessions provide opportunities for referrals to other MCAST support services namely the Inclusion service, Student Mentorship and the Learning Support Unit.

The academic year 2018-2019 saw a strong collaboration between Institutes and student mentors to ensure the delivery of brief information talks to introduce the MCAST Student Support Services to MCAST students at the beginning of the academic year. The aim was to inform students at all levels about the career guidance service, about other courses within other Institutes which students could apply for after having completed their Level 2 programme, and to prepare them for the transition to a higher level of education.



Distribution of career guidance sessions per month
October 2018 - December 2019



At External Outreach events

Student Outreach and Events Department

During the academic year 2018-2019 the Student Outreach and Events Department organised and coordinated a number of activities. Freshers' Days were held both in October 2018 and in October 2019. The latter event saw the participation of more NGOs than in the previous years. During 2019 an Open Day for the general public was organised at the Main Campus and visitors had the opportunity to visit the different Institutes and view the variety of learning facilities. Towards the end of the academic year 2018-2019 a CPD day seminar was organised for Directors as well as a half-day training seminar for all guidance teachers on the island with a focus on MCAST training programmes.

Integration Unit

The Integration Unit aims at welcoming, integrating and accompanying students throughout their academic journey at MCAST. During the period under review, the Unit has increased its networking with NGOs to further support students in their integration at MCAST and in society in general. It has also kept regular contact with international students through one-to-one meetings, the drop-in service, meetings through the Institutes, seminars, use of the Youth Hub and MCASTlink.

The Unit supported Year 11 international students in schools and educational hubs and also participated in projects, programmes and twinnings with various organizations including the Tandem Project, the HOPE Project and UNEVOC – World Youth Skills Day. The Integration Unit also organized professional development sessions for MCAST members of staff. It opened the Multifaith and Quiet Contemplation Room in December 2019, and organized Diversity Day which was a great success.

Student Liaison Office

The Student Liaison Office aims at helping, supporting and guiding students in order that they successfully complete their studies at MCAST.

During the academic year 2018-2019 this Office assisted a number of students in their material requirements. Such assistance included the provision of daily stationery (donated by HSBC), 4 laptops (donated by MITA), food and drink (donated by the MCAST Canteen operator), and uniforms and equipment (supported through the Help Me Succeed Fund).

External Reach-Out Events: Information Talks and Career Fairs

External Reach-Out Events took place in the form of Information Talks and Career Fairs. The MCAST team participated in a number of events at various church schools, state schools, post-secondary institutions and independent schools.

The aim of these Reach-Out Events was to inform the public, parents, guidance teachers, PSCD teachers and most importantly students from feeder schools, about MCAST courses and their link to the labour market.

Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub provides services related to addiction, mental health, nutrition, tobacco cessation and sexual health to both staff and students.

The following is a list of the main services offered and duties carried out by the Outreach and Student Affairs Department during the academic year under review:

1	Monitoring of Action Plan 2018-2019 and formulating Action Plan 2019-2020.
2	Promoting the visibility of the services through induction sessions with students, the distribution of promotion flyers and bookmarks, meetings, consultations and presentations.
3	Outreach with students and staff.
4	Ensuring the efficiency of services through the referral system, vetting and dissemination of cases, immediate response to crisis, related meetings, consultations, follow-up sessions and database record-keeping. The therapeutic work was carried out by all practitioners at Paola Main Campus, all satellite Institutes and the Gozo Campus.
5	Holding of weekly case overviews and client distribution meetings with all the practitioners. Continuous Professional Development training was organised by the Outreach and Student Affairs Department and certified by MCAST Registrar in conjunction with external agencies/professionals.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**TECHNOLOGY AND
APPLIED SCIENCES**

Institute of Applied Science

Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences
(CAAAS)

Institute of Engineering and Transport

Institute of Information and Communication Technology

MCAST Gozo Campus



During 2018-2019, the Office of the Deputy Principal Technology and Applied Sciences, incorporating the Institute of Applied Sciences, the Institute of Engineering and Transport and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology, focused on strengthening the practical vocational aspect of learning at Foundation and Technical level as well as honing the professional aspect at Degree level.

The Institute of Applied Science continued to develop the health-related sector, with an always stronger input from health professionals mainly in the state health institutions, including health centres, homes for the elderly, Mater Dei Hospital and the Gozo Hospital among others.

The Institute of Engineering and Transport strengthened the Aviation Maintenance Training Centre, its internal quality assurance mechanism, and consolidated the staff complement. Work was also ongoing with regard to ensuring higher professional levels in the engineering sector with the opening of new laboratories and workshops.

The Institute of Information and Communication Technology focused on reaching out to the sector. It partnered with MITA, the eSkills Malta Foundation, MCST, Gaming Malta and the Ministry for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation among others.

The academic year 2018-2019 saw a focus on strengthening the research function, with lecturers setting up research groups that focus on areas such as Artificial Intelligence,

Automation, Photovoltaic Energy, Electric Cars, Drone Technology, Sustainable Development and Fisheries.

The year 2018-2019 was brought to an end with an Expo that was the result of collaboration between the Technology and Applied Sciences Institutes at MCAST. Present and future students were joined by lecturers, parents and people from industry to showcase MCAST research and project work as well as to explore future scenarios for the sector.

Finally, Master's degrees started being developed and delivered, widening the portfolio of courses at the Institutes from second-chance education programmes (MQF Levels 1, 2 and 3) to technical programmes (MQF Level 4) to Bachelor's and Master's professional programmes (MQF Levels 6 and 7), making MCAST a unique educational institution that combines outreach with excellence.



Dr Mario Cardona
Deputy Principal
Technology and Applied
Sciences (VPET)

Institute of Applied Science

During 2018-2019, the Institute of Applied Sciences continued to strengthen its full-time courses portfolio. In October 2019 it opened its doors to the first students in the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Health programme. This course aims to provide candidates with the necessary skills and competences to assess, analyse, devise and implement efficient solutions to environmental health issues. This course received recognition by the Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine (CPCM) and the Institute is being greatly supported by the Environmental Health Directorate. In addition, the Institute once again offered the Advanced Diploma in Food Technology. This diploma was offered on an Apprenticeship scheme and aims to prepare the learners for employment within SMEs as well as medium to large organisations which produce a range of food and drink products. Furthermore, the Institute is facilitating two Master's degree programmes namely the Master's degree in Water Resource Management and the Master's degree in Environmental Engineering.

This year also marked the first time that a group of students following the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health Sciences (Physiological Measurements) together with students following the Advanced Diploma in Food Technology graduated. These joined the other graduates who successfully completed the following programmes: Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Chemical Technology, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Engineering, the Advanced Diploma for Pharmacy Technicians, the Advanced Diploma in Applied Science, the Advanced Diploma in Environmental Sustainability and the Advanced Diploma in Health Sciences.

As part of the Institute's commitment, a wide range of part-time and bespoke courses were run at the Institute during the period under review. These included the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Chemical Technology, the Level 5 Certificate in Health Practice, the Level 4 Certificate in Phlebotomy and the Level 4 Certificate in Decontamination Science, the Level 5 Higher Diploma in Physiological Measurements and a Certificate course in Waste Management. The Institute also introduced the Undergraduate Certificate in Nursing course which is aimed at non-EU nursing graduates who are seeking to upgrade their degree qualification to EU standards so as to be able to register and work in EU countries.

Between September 2018 and December 2019 the Institute participated in a considerable number of open days and similar initiatives including Science in the City, STEM activities by Esplora and other entities, public talks, career fairs, Science Teen Cafés and others. It also organised visits to the Institute for secondary school students and held interactive sessions in order to provide them with a better understanding of the academic and career paths in the fields of applied sciences.

During the period under review, the Water Centre within the Institute organised a number of activities. These included two major events, namely the conference entitled 'Researching the Future', which was held in October 2019, and the Capacity Building Workshop 'Communicating Water Trends and Innovation to Engage Locals and Tourists' that was organised in November 2019.

The Institute was also involved in different areas of research via several projects, some of which are listed below:

1	SMIRES Science and Management of Intermittent Rivers and Ephemeral Streams
2	DNAQUA-NET Developing new genetic tools for bioassessment of aquatic ecosystems in Europe
3	MICROWATTS Micro Wastewater Treatment Systems using Photocatalytic Surfaces
4	FOWARIM Fostering Water-Agriculture Research and Innovation in Malta
5	DIVERCROP Land system dynamics in the Mediterranean basin across scales as relevant indicator for species diversity and local food systems
6	RENATURE Promoting research excellence in nature-based solutions for innovation, sustainable economic growth and human well-being in Malta
7	POVE Platform of Vocational Excellence in Water

Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences (CAAAS)

The Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences (CAAAS) within the Institute of Applied Sciences concluded the Horizon 2020 project FOWARIM, submitted the final report and disbursed the final monies to the partner. The Centre started participating in a project coordinated by LIFE (Low Impact Fishers of Europe) in which students from the Centre carried out questionnaires with fishermen in order to understand the impact of cetaceans on fishing and fishing equipment.

The Centre delivered an intensive course specializing in equine studies to a group of Dutch students that visited Malta purposely with their tutors. The course consisted of theoretical and practical sessions and was concluded successfully.

On the international front, a number of students participated in ERASMUS+ visits and spent weeks working in various farms, clinics, stables, etc. in a number of countries. A group of lecturers and students paid a visit to various Sicilian enterprises. During the visit, various agricultural models, not found in Malta, were explained by people in the field. On the receiving end, the Centre hosted an Austrian wine expert. During

his stay this expert delivered lectures to staff and students and was accompanied to various wine-related enterprises in Malta.

The CAAAS was also a partner in an Erasmus+ project bid that was chosen and through which a series of videos related to urban farming were produced. The project had Romanian and Turkish partners.

The Centre applied for a project, funded by the EU's Rural Development Programme for Malta, and through it MCAST was to deliver a considerable number of courses to hundreds of farmers who had an obligation to attend training sessions as part of an EU subsidy they had received. The bid was successful and the project is ongoing. The Centre's working relationship with the various stakeholders in the sector has been strengthened through continuous bilateral meetings and projects.

Furthermore, the Centre started a major upgrade in the biosecurity of its animal farm by overhauling the structure as required by Maltese legislation. Other embellishments in various areas were also undertaken, some with the collaboration of other stakeholders.



CAAAS students at a farm in Sicily

Institute of Engineering and Transport

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Institute of Engineering and Transport continued to strive to be the leading provider of Engineering and Transport courses on the Maltese islands.

The highlight of the academic year 2018-2019 was the inauguration of a new €6 million state-of-the-art build facility. It houses 20 new workshops in all fields related to the construction industry together with 34 lecture rooms and 3 computer labs. The satellite campus at Naxxar was closed and all lectures previously delivered from that campus started being held at the Paola Campus. This allowed students following Building and Construction Engineering courses to avail themselves of all the

services and facilities available at the Main Campus.

The Institute succeeded in providing training to many students following full-time courses and also custom-made bespoke courses which were specifically designed for the upskilling of employees from various leading engineering firms such as STMicronics and Methode.

The year 2018-2019 also saw the continuation of the provision of training abroad, namely to 30 students in Kazakhstan following a Level 4 Award in Electrical Systems.

Mechanical Engineering Department

The two Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) degrees, namely the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering (Manufacturing) and the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering Plant were redesigned in conjunction with the Engineering Board. This was done following long discussions with industry, lecturing staff and students.

Mechanical Engineering lecturers undertook further training and availed themselves of opportunities offered by the Erasmus programme. The Department's workshops and laboratories were further upgraded through the purchase of new tools and equipment whilst its premises, Block H, were also refurbished.

Centre for Maritime Studies

The new structure of the Officer in Charge of Navigational Watch course was launched, with the first two years consisting of academic studies at MCAST and the last year (12 months) as cadetship at sea. All cadets are now benefitting from Erasmus funding during their sea-time experience.

Through an agreement with IMAT Maritime School in Naples, sea placements for the cadets are now more available. Apart from the enhanced syllabus for the full-time courses, the

Centre has invested in upgrading the bridge and GMDSS simulators with the latest technology from TRANSAS, who are a leading brand producing this specialized equipment. The ECDIS simulator was also upgraded to the latest technology during 2018 and is now fully compliant with industry requirements.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Chief Mate course was organized and delivered. Successful students received their Certificate of Competence following completion of their STCW medical care certificate.

The ProCrew course, that is aimed at students wishing to further their careers on superyachts, was further developed after several meetings were held with industry stakeholders, lecturers and administrative bodies. Management has also visited City of Glasgow College in order to coordinate the preparations for this programme. This visit proved invaluable as the syllabus and general issues related to ProCrew structures and systems were covered. The Department also strove to cement cooperation with various colleges in Holland in order to provide training opportunities to students in various practical aspects of marine engineering and navigation.

Aviation Maintenance Training Centre

The Aviation Maintenance Training Centre saw the largest growth in student

population due to the strong demands of the aircraft maintenance industry. For the first time ever, 3 full-time day courses started in April 2019. One of these courses was the Category B Aircraft Maintenance Licence course and another one was the Diploma in Aircraft Structures and Repairs which was concluded in the first semester of 2019-2020. The last course was the Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance which was also concluded in the first semester of 2019-2020.

Students who completed successfully the Level 3 Diplomas in Aircraft Maintenance and in Aircraft Structures and Repairs have either opted to enter full-time employment in the Aircraft Maintenance industry, or embarked on furthering their studies in Aircraft Maintenance, by enrolling in the Category B Aircraft Maintenance Licence course, which started in October 2019.

The Aircraft Maintenance industry provided exceptional feedback regarding the performance of MCAST students at the places of work while they were on Apprenticeship or Sponsorship programmes.

In conjunction with the Aircraft Maintenance Organizations, training placements and opportunities were also organised for MCAST lecturers who thus gained training exposure in the industry.

Continuous Professional Development programmes for lecturers were organized



Prime Minister Hon Dr Joseph Muscat and Minister of Education and Employment, Hon Evarist Bartolo at the launch of the new IET Building

with the scope of bolstering knowledge in areas indicated by the regulator, i.e. Transport Malta.

Automotive Engineering Department

The syllabi of the Automotive Engineering Department Level 3 Diplomas were reorganized to reflect changes in modern green technologies.

The Level 4 Advanced Diploma was spread over three years in order to make it more comprehensive. This change resulted after extensive consultations with industry, lecturing staff and students.

Building and Construction Engineering Department

MCAST maintained a good uptake of students who opted to follow a course in the Building and Construction Engineering sphere at all Levels. The courses included Heritage Skills, Civil Engineering, Construction Engineering and Quantity Surveying. The Department continued with the ongoing collaboration with Coventry University where an MoU was signed for closer collaboration between the two educational institutions.

The BSc courses in construction engineering, namely the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Engineering and the Bachelor of Science

(Honours) in Construction Engineering (Civil Engineering) gained better recognition, with alumni being able to seek employment as Site Technical Officers in line with the amended Legal Notice. The Department sustained its agreements with various local entities and local councils whereby students following courses in Heritage Skills carried out repairs on artefacts found in various localities of the Maltese islands.

The MCAST student chapter of the Institute of Civil Engineers organised a seminar in 2018 with the presentation of the best three dissertations and was attended by a representative of ICE (UK).

The Department continued to offer its courses to those persons who opt to study on a part-time basis. This included courses at Level 6.

The Diploma in Plumbing and Liquid Petroleum Gas Systems was successfully reopened and specialised courses in liquid petroleum gas installations were conducted.

Students following the Advanced Diploma in Welding and Fabrication attended an Erasmus exchange programme in Holland. The host institution was really impressed by the students and they were offered a job upon completion of their studies. All Level 4 courses were extended to 3 years as requested by Industry.

Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department

The two Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) degrees, namely the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics and Control Engineering and the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics Engineering, were redesigned in conjunction with the Engineering Board.

The academic year 2018-2019 was the last year in which a multitude of Advanced Diploma programmes were running in addition to the first year of the new Level 4 Advanced Diplomas in Electrical Systems and in Industrial Electronics.

Collaboration with industry resulted in the launch of customized courses for employees in need of developing their technical skills and knowledge. Lecturers at the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department also undertook further training and availed themselves of opportunities offered by the Erasmus programme. New tools and equipment improved the facilities available to students of the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department.

A computer room equipped with the latest state-of-the-art equipment was set up in collaboration with the Malta Air Traffic Control Services. Courses focusing on the latest computer engineering technology were delivered, using this equipment.

Institute of Information and Communication Technology

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Institute of Information and Communication Technology participated and organised events in order to promote careers within the ICT sector.

In collaboration with the eSkills Malta Foundation, the Institute organised Code Week. This event was held over a period of two weeks (including weekends) and was free-of-charge for the general public. Not only did this initiative serve to promote awareness of information technology, but it also marked the Institute's participation in the Europe Code Week which is organised all around Europe during the month of October. The sessions included the design and development of mobile applications and websites, and also encouraged youths to learn how to code in a fun and engaging manner.

The Institute of Information and Communication Technology coordinated initiatives directed at the involvement of more females in IT. The Institute organised a series of Boot Camps for secondary school students. The aim of these sessions was to promote digital literacy and to assist students in their choice of subjects.

In line with the Institute's vision to promote equal learning opportunities, a group of five female students had the opportunity to participate in the first Global Robotics Competition in Dubai. It was an excellent experience for the team which had the opportunity to collaborate with other countries and compete to solve challenges related to the conservation of water, while promoting the choice of STEM subjects amongst youngsters.

The Institute collaborated with international institutions through the PingFin event. This was held for the fourth consecutive year and this year the Institute co-hosted the International e-Payments Workshop. This Workshop took place in March 2019 at the MITA Innovation Hub at Smart City and was sponsored by eSkills Malta Foundation and RS2. The workshop involved the design and implementation of a system that catered for bank transactions following the SEPA protocol. This workshop provided its participants with the opportunity to work in an international team using Oracle PL/SQL to solve real-life problems. The Maltese workshop was attended by 16 MCAST students and 12 students from Odisee, Brussels.

Local industry provided great support to the Institute by hosting the second year degree

students as interns. This was only made possible because industry appreciates the high-level technical skills that MCAST students possess. MCAST students are in high demand within the ICT sector since the Institute is always researching new areas to keep in line with the industry's requirements. This renders students highly employable because they are skilled and flexible to learn and adapt to their employers' requirements. In fact most of them are offered employment opportunities soon after completing their internship experience.

Students and staff at the Institute of Information and Communication Technology participated in educational exchange programmes. The Institute collaborated with the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), Esplora and a number of other science centres across Europe on the RAISE project. The aim of this project is to increase awareness and interest in STEAM employment.

The academic year 2018-2019 ended with the ICT Expo. This was held in June 2019 and was organised by the Institute in collaboration with the Ministry for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation together with GamingMalta, eSkills Malta Foundation and Exigy. The students had the opportunity to showcase their projects to the general public and industry partners.



ICT students at the Festival Arena in Dubai, UAE

MCAST Gozo Campus

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Gozo Campus continued to consolidate and expand its VET provision through the delivery of a wide spectrum of courses, both in terms of vocational areas as well as MQF Levels.

2018-2019 marked another first for the MCAST Gozo Campus. In October 2018 the College launched the first MCAST degree programme to ever run on a full-time basis at the MCAST Gozo Campus. Ten students enrolled for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Inclusive Education. This Level 6 top-up degree – the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Inclusive Education - was also launched on a part-time basis for Learning Support Educators already in employment. Eighty-one LSEs were enrolled in this part-time degree programme in Gozo.

The year 2018-2019 saw the continuation of the collaboration with the Gozo College secondary school in initiatives targeting potential early school leavers.

The MCAST Gozo Campus continued to support the Gozo College secondary school in the delivery of its Core Curriculum programme and other vocational initiatives aimed to retain potential early school leavers in education and training through the provision of the physical (workshops and equipment) and human resources.

Eleven academic members of staff from the Gozo Campus participated in Erasmus KA1 programme mobilities, visiting a number of European further higher education institutions in Finland, Iceland and Sweden. Three students participated in Erasmus mobilities.

MCAST participated in the very first edition of the Gozo Expo, organised by the Malta Business Review in collaboration with the Gozo Ministry. This event was held over two days at the Grand Hotel at Mgarr (Gozo). This business trading expo and networking event offered a fruitful gathering of



Signing of the MoU at the launch of the Gozo Innovation Hub

Gozo's best business companies and industry leaders under one roof, in a setting conducive to building up new partnerships, fostering and developing investment and gaining new business opportunities. MCAST's presence in this event, enabled it to re-affirm and consolidate its presence among industrial partners and important stakeholders in Gozo. It also proved to be an important networking event to establish new industrial contacts, potentially leading to securing new apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities for the students.

During the inauguration of the Xewkija Innovation Hub in August 2019, an MoU was signed between the Gozo Ministry, MCAST, Malta Enterprise (ME) and Malta Industrial Parks (MIP). The MoU was signed in line with the government's strategy to foster the economic development and competitiveness of Gozo through innovation, entrepreneurship and training opportunities.

As part of the activities organised to mark the International Day of the Girl Child 2018, President Emeritus Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, patron and ambassador of the #Girl2Leader campaign, run by the Women Political Leaders (WPL) Global Forum, visited the MCAST Gozo Campus to raise awareness about the importance of female participation across all strata of society. For this event, a number of women leaders formed part of a discussion panel which delivered a strong message for young women to aspire for leadership positions of various forms.

In November 2018, as part of the European VET Skills Week 2018, in collaboration with MEDE and the Gozo

College, the MCAST Gozo Campus hosted Year 8 (Form 2) students attending Gozitan state and church schools, to expose them, through interactive hands-on activities, to various vocational areas offered at MCAST Gozo Campus namely ICT, Engineering, Business, Childcare and Hairdressing.

An Open Day for Year 11 students attending all church and state secondary schools in Gozo was held in December 2018. Students visited the Gozo Campus to gain a more detailed insight about the courses being offered at the MCAST Gozo Campus as well as the training facilities.

In January 2019, Ing. Christian Zammit, senior lecturer at the Gozo Campus, presented a research paper at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Scitech conference held in San Diego, California. This conference is considered the world's largest annual conference in Aeronautics and Astronautics and provides a platform for engineers, scientists and technologists to disseminate and network their research work. Ing. Zammit also had the opportunity to visit the NASA Ames research laboratory situated in Silicon Valley, California.

In collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, a Polifest event was held for MCAST Gozo Campus students at the Calypso Hotel in Marsalforn. The event was well attended by students. The workshops focused mainly on inclusion, access, empowerment and participation and inevitably the students discussed fervently those issues closest to their realities as young people living in a geographically disadvantaged region.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute for the Creative Arts

Institute of Community Services

Institute of Business Management and Commerce



During the academic year 2018-2019, the Office of the Deputy Principal Arts and Social Sciences, incorporating the Institute for the Creative Arts, the Institute of Community Services and the Institute of Business Management and Commerce, was very active on different levels.

During 2018-2019, many study programmes were reviewed in order to ensure continued relevance and quality and to respond to the needs of industry. Collaboration with industry, both on programme content and on a number of initiatives, increased. In close collaboration with industry, a number of new study programmes were launched, including the Extended Diploma in Foundation Studies for Security, Enforcement and Protection, as well as the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion, which is one of the very first Apprenticeship degrees launched on the island. Particular highlights of the year were initiatives such as the annual festival organised by the Institute for the Creative Arts at Spazju Kreattiv, showcasing students' works from a number of courses at different levels, and the MCAST 2019-2020 Prospectus which started being designed by the students from the Institute for the Creative Arts in February 2019. Other highlights included an on campus treasure hunt as a team building activity with a difference for all staff, organised at the end of the year and spearheaded by the Institute of Community Services. Final year students at the Institute of Business Management and Commerce also had the opportunity to present their research to industry partners, with the best research being awarded by Industry.

The year being reviewed also saw the continuation of the implementation of ESF project 02.058 – 'Adding Value: Nurturing Learning Journeys at the MCAST Foundation College' which has the aim of developing innovative support structures to increase student engagement while making learning more interesting.

Student mentors in each of the MCAST Institutes, followed closely all students pursuing programmes up to Level 3, supporting them in settling into the College system, motivating them to engage in their learning journey and explore further learning opportunities, while also tackling issues that might not be conducive to learning. The student mentors organised

a number of activities to enhance students' experience at MCAST, one of which was the Debate Tournament which was held in collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and which involved students being trained in debating skills and debating topics of current interest.

The MQF Level 1 Skills Kits programme was also ongoing during this year. This cross-curricular programme consists of short courses covering various vocational areas as well as Personal Skills, Employability Skills and Functional Skills. During 2018-2019 a number of MCAST students at Levels 1 and 2 were given the opportunity to enroll in a number of Skills Kits. Moreover, secondary schools around Malta also had the opportunity to participate in a number of Skills Kits. In close collaboration with these schools, this opportunity proved to be very valuable for students who needed to explore and engage in learning through a vocational route. This helped increase awareness of the value of vocational education, exposing potential students to MCAST and increasing their interest in education through the hands-on components.

Within this project, research in a number of areas has also been ongoing. Challenges and barriers that students find in their learning journeys were researched, as well as skills gaps in the industry which could be targeted at basic levels and the gamification of the curriculum at MQF Levels up to Level 3.

Work on an online platform for students was also started. The platform will eventually enable students to be able to enjoy an attractive and user-friendly online environment and an application through which learning and communication could take place.



Dr Tatjana Chircop
Deputy Principal
Arts and Social Sciences (VPET)

Institute for the Creative Arts

As was the case in previous academic years, the Institute for the Creative Arts worked on significant projects which were carried out as part of its learners' programmes of study. Some such experiences extended to participation in international events.

Fine Art degree students were commissioned to execute two street installations as part of the 14th edition of the Malta International Arts Festival (MIAF). *Uċuħ* (Faces), influenced by masks from different periods in history, and *Sculptural Performance*, inspired by music and water, were chosen, and the installations were on display on the Marsaxlokk promenade and in Mellieħa square, respectively.

A variety of tabletop games designed in 2018-2019 by students following the Game Art and Visual Design and the Interactive Design degree programmes were showcased and play-tested at the Malta International Games Festival in November 2019 in Valletta. The games were accepted and exhibited alongside other international tabletop games. Students had the opportunity to have their games played by tabletop enthusiasts, game designers and executives.

Students following the Interactive Media degree programme were sponsored by HSBC to showcase their tabletop game *Congratulations You Destroyed the World* at the Playful Learning Conference in Leicester in July 2019. The game was designed as a critical game on climate change as part of the Game Design module.

The Photography Department saw one of its tutors and students chosen by Canon Europe to participate in a residency project in Matera as part of the European Capital of Culture initiatives. Furthermore, students following their final year of the Photography and Graphic Design degree programmes worked conjointly on the MCAST Prospectus. Other significant Graphic Design projects consisted of the logo competition for the Central Bank of Malta Foundation and an ongoing life case project for the Ministry for the Environment, consisting of animations highlighting European Sustainable Development Goals.



Game Art and Visual Design - Interactive Media (Malta Tabletop Festival)



Journalism students in Perugia



Interactive Media (European Sustainable Development Goals)

Several years back Toly Products had been the first to initiate industry-related projects with the Institute. Since then, every year, students visit the company and learn how design and production processes are carried out. Product Design degree students were once again involved in a life case with them, designing compacts for cosmetics. Moreover, second year students following the Spatial Design degree programme were involved in a life case at Dar Osanna Pia where they had to come up with a design for the common areas and the dormitory of a youth residence.

The first cohort of students following the Advanced Diploma in Fashion and Retail programme participated in the Malta Fashion Week during which they were given the opportunity to present their end-of-course mini collection at the design evenings. Learners also benefitted from initiatives supported by Hudson Group. Moreover, industry stakeholders participated in the development of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion which was later launched as the Institute's first Apprenticeship degree programme.

The academic year 2018-2019 also saw the Institute receives its first intake of students in its new Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts programme. Furthermore, students following the Performing Arts Advanced Diploma programme were involved in the Erasmus project Artisans of Tales (Ar-Ta). One of the project deliverables was the production of *Bebi Thor*, a multidisciplinary adaptation of the

Maltese folktale, *It-Tmienja jeħles Bint is-Sultan* mid-*Dragun Draganti*, originally recorded by Manwel Magri. The production was performed in Viterbo to the international participants of *Ar-Ta*, and at the *Holqa International Youth Arts Festival* held at the University of Malta Junior College in March 2019.

Performing Arts students also benefitted from initiatives motivated by the American Embassy that also brought international speakers over to the Institute for Media and Journalism students, a number of whom were the recipients of important local awards. Furthermore Journalism degree students travelled to Italy where they participated in the prestigious International Journalism Festival in Perugia with the support of the *Fundazzjoni Tumas Fenech*.

Other lifetime experiences included those given by *Heritage Malta* to the students of the Advanced Diploma in Cultural Heritage Skills programme who participated in the setting up of the *Schranz* exhibition and *MUŻA*.

The highlight of the year 2018-2019 was the MCAST ICA Festival – *Distinct* – which saw the Institute return to *Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta* in an ambitious one-month summer Festival of events supported by various industry stakeholders chief amongst which *Arts Council Malta*. The festival showcased primarily the work of exiting students from all areas of study, largely those of the Institute's degree programmes.

Institute of Community Services

The Institute of Community Services has been actively seeking new ways to strengthen its ties with industry in order to secure a bridge for students in their transition to employment. As part of VET Week a number of industry meetings were held between coordinators and lecturers hailing from the Institute of Community Services and stakeholders from industry, to better understand the competences required in different fields. These meetings proved to be fruitful and ensured the validity and relevance of the courses.

Throughout the academic year 2018-2019 the Institute reviewed a number of programmes and updated them according to the requirements set by industry. This ensured the validity of the programmes in today's community. Of special note are changes to the MQF Level 4 Early Years programme. The MCAST Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development has been reviewed to allow students wishing to work in childcare to exit the programme after the first year with an MCAST Award in Children's Care, Learning and Development which accredits students as child care practitioners. This change was effected in response to the large demand for child care practitioners due to the increased number of childcare centres which opened across the island.

An agreement was reached with other entities so that students who complete the MCAST Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport, Exercise and Health can also aspire to a teaching profession. To further consolidate this accomplishment, students enrolled in this programme attended placements within local schools, thereby ensuring participation in hands-on sport activities with youths. This provided another professional route for MCAST students.

An additional effective measure taken as a result of the review ensured that students who complete the MCAST Diploma in Health and Social Care, who are certified to work as carers, will be placing more prominence on the placements in order to focus on the specific skills and competences required to fulfil this role. Numerous meetings and workshops

were held between MCAST health and social care lecturers and members of the Social Care Standards Authority to determine the competences necessary to be effective carers. The outcome was endorsed and emulated in the syllabus.

The approach to work-based learning has consolidated the level of professionalism within each course. The Institute is currently working on establishing more ties with various stakeholders to further widen the horizon of possibilities for the students.





Institute of Business Management and Commerce

The academic year 2018-2019 saw the overhaul of a number of courses as part of the evaluation of various programmes. The review of five courses was made possible following consultation with various industry partners. This evaluation was focused mainly on the areas of Financial Services and Insurance. The main aim was for the courses to be in line with local requirements and to prepare students to be more versatile and able to operate in a wider number of roles within the sector. During 2019 thirty-two students following the Advanced Diploma in Marketing had the opportunity to participate, for the first time, in

the Apprenticeship programme. Around 500 students were engaged in some form of work-based learning during the period under review.

A good number of lecturers have furthered their studies, especially in the area of research, with a number of them having papers published. Lecturing staff also kept well in touch with industry by organizing twenty industry visits in areas ranging from financial services, to cyber crime, stock exchange, human resources, artificial intelligence, insurance and management. Industry partners were also invited to deliver talks and seminars to the students.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION**

Applied Research and Innovation Centre

Library and Learning Resource Centre

Partnerships Office

International Office

Applied Research and Innovation Centre

The past year saw the College-wide Research Framework being formally launched across MCAST. The framework was launched with supporting operating procedures and guiding templates that are available at <https://moodle.mcast.edu.mt/course/view.php?id=3649>. MCAST formally recruited six senior research officers and a research director, who work hand-in-hand with the six Institutes to encourage many of the 500 plus academics to take on research contact hours as part of their workload. This new research drive has provided immediate results that have resulted in over 40 MCAST academics taking on research endeavours, and the MCAST Journal of Applied

Research and Practice being launched biannually for the first time in 2019.

The Applied Research and Innovation Centre was also instrumental in providing several innovation drives, such as the MCAST Artificial Intelligence Strategy in 2019.

The innovative blended learning Master's programmes – focusing on sustainability drives through programmes such as Lean Enterprise, High Performance Buildings and Mechatronics - closed off their first year in the period in question, with over 200 active master's students.

Library and Learning Resource Centre



MCAST Library members of staff with H.E. Dr George Vella, President of Malta, Mr Frederick Schembri and Prof Joachim J Calleja

Following the successful migration of the library of the Building and Construction Engineering Department of the Institute of Engineering and Transport in Naxxar to the Main Campus Library in Paola in summer 2018, the Library also upgraded its Emerald subscription to E-Journals Premier. This is a complete collection of Emerald e-journals in all disciplines and provides comprehensive coverage of management, complementary specialist subjects plus engineering, computing and technology.



Dr Ing Alex Rizzo
Deputy Principal
Research and Innovation



A visit of students and staff from Berufsbildende Schule Wissen in November 2019

International Office

The International Office continued to increase the participation of MCAST students and staff in the ERASMUS+ programmes in both Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). These international mobilities increased by 15% and focused on educational, training and working programmes under Erasmus+ and other EU-funded projects.

During the period under review more than

300 MCAST students and staff members travelled overseas to gain knowledge through training and/or experience through work placements. A similar number of European students visited Malta and were assigned work placement opportunities in local industry by the MCAST International Office. Various delegations from EU Universities and Colleges also visited MCAST as it continued to expand its international network of educational contacts through the International Office.



The Euro Apprentices delegation attending the EURO Apprentices Network meeting in Malta

Partnerships Office

During the year 2018-2019 the Partnerships Office was instrumental in the signing of eleven Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). It continued to expand its network of contacts with the local and international industry in order to attract more business for the MCAST Gateway to Industry especially in terms of high-level technical training.

The Partnerships Office developed in its role as UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre for TVET in Malta and is now participating and contributing towards the development of TVET internationally. During the year UNESCO-UNEVOC declared MCAST as one of the first ten global innovative hubs (i-hubs).

The Partnerships Office also contributed to international networks such as the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) and the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EFVET).

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
REGISTRAR

Admissions Office

Records Office

Courses

Registrations

Examinations Office

Certification

Stipends Office

Programme Funding

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for several functions at MCAST, including local and international student admissions and records, examinations, certification and stipends.

The academic year 2018-2019 saw the preparation for the implementation of the new College Management Information System. This entailed a substantial effort on the part of senior management within the Office of the Registrar throughout the planning phase for the launch during the academic year 2019-2020.

The MCAST Classter CMIS is a cloud-based Student Management Information System that was procured through an open tendering process issued internationally in 2017.

The customisation was accomplished through a series of meetings with the system developers as follows:

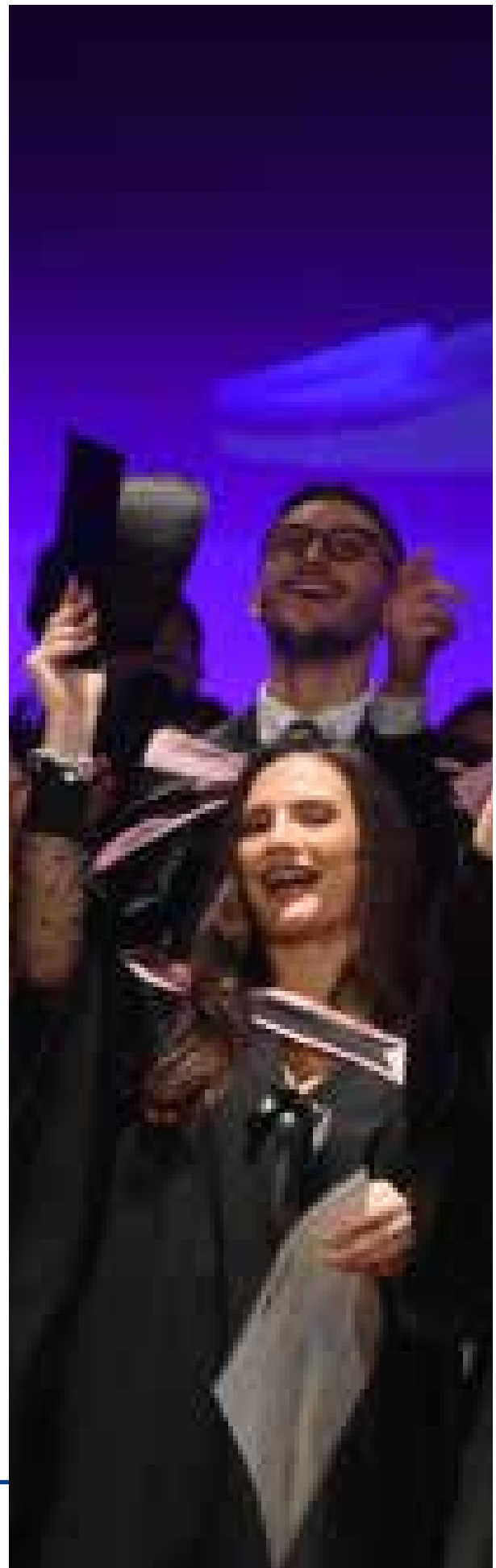
MONTH	MEETING HOURS
January	11
February	20
March	5
April	27
May	29
June	36
July	16
August	10
September	24
Total hours employed	178
Total days involved	39

The year 2018 also marked the formal introduction of BlockCerts certification on the Blockchain of all MCAST MQF full-time level-rated certificates following the first pilot publication that took place in February 2018 for Bachelor's degree graduates who graduated in December 2017. A total of 2,139 digital certificates ranging from MQF Level 1 to Level 7 were published during 2018.

This was carried out in parallel with the normal processes that fall under the remit of this Office as follows:



Mr Ronald Curmi
Deputy Principal
Registrar's Office



Admissions Office

During the year 2018-2019, the Admissions Office received a total of 8,588 applications, of which 4,638 were received from new candidates while 1,301 were received from students progressing to a higher level course. 2,248 applications were received from students continuing the second or subsequent year of their studies, while 401 were repeating a course unit/s in order to conclude their qualification. 162 candidates were admitted as mature students. 962 foreign students from 82 different countries were studying at the College.

APPLICATION TYPE	TOTAL	REGISTERED
New applicants	4,638	4,307
Progressing to higher level course	1,301	1,301
Continuing subsequent year of course	2,248	2,248
Repeating unit/s	401	401
Grand Total	8,588	8,257

Records Office

This Office is responsible for the issuing and filing of all records related to the academic performance of students as well as letters of reference, transcripts of achievement and other academic references. It also keeps records of all Council of Institutes meetings, Boards of Studies meetings, Review Boards meetings, Admissions Board meetings, Corporate Disciplinary Board meetings and Corporate Appeals Board meetings, amongst others.

Council of Institutes meetings held (from Council meeting no. 168 to Council meeting no. 178)	9
Degree Ratification Board meetings held	10
Admissions Board meetings held	16
Corporate Disciplinary Board meetings held	2

Another important function includes the maintenance and publication of statistics that are continually required internally or requested by external parties.

RECORDS ISSUED	NUMBER
Re-print of transcripts before or after graduation ceremonies	180
Letters of reference issued	28
MQF Level-rating letters issued	21
Europass Certificate Supplements issued	1,635
Validation letters issued	35
Recognition of Prior Learning exemption letters issued	404

Courses

The Office of the Registrar is also responsible for the publication of the annual Prospectus. In 2018-2019 the College offered 199 full-time courses distributed across all Institutes and the Gozo Campus as follows:

INSTITUTE/DEPARTMENT	COURSES
Learning Support Unit	3
Gozo Campus	26
Institute of Applied Sciences	27
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	18
Institute of Community Services	21
Institute for the Creative Arts	24
Institute of Engineering and Transport	54
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	12
Master's programmes	14
Grand Total	199

NEW COURSES OFFERED (2018-2019)	MQF LEVEL
MCAST Award in Agribusiness	Level 1
MCAST Award in Hospitality	Level 1
MCAST Award in Retail	Level 1
MCAST Diploma in Light Vehicle Servicing	Level 3
MCAST Diploma in iGaming	Level 3
MCAST Advanced Diploma in Industrial Electronics	Level 4
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Procurement and Finance	Level 6
ACCA Qualification	Level 6/7
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Inclusive Education	Level 6
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts	Level 6
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying	Level 6
Bachelor of Applied Science	Level 6
Bachelor of Applied Technology	Level 6
Bachelor of Applied Business Studies	Level 6
Bachelor of Creative Arts	Level 6
Bachelor of Community Studies	Level 6
MCAST Master of Science in Environmental Engineering	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in Integrated Water Resource Management	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in Lean Enterprise	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in Exercise and Sports Science	Level 7
MCAST Master of Arts in Product Design	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in Mechatronics	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in High Performance Buildings	Level 7
MCAST Master of Science in Information Technology and Systems	Level 7

Registrations

During the academic year 2018-2019, students were registered across the different MQF/EQF Levels as follows:

INSTITUTE/DEPARTMENT	A	A&B	N/A	1	2	3	4	EASA	IMO	5	6	7	TOTAL
Cross-Curricular	5	8		172		49							234
Gozo Campus		6			22	64	116			10	15		233
Institute for the Creative Arts					55	117	402				382	16	972
Institute of Applied Sciences					34	64	237			130	150	55	670
Institute of Business Management and Commerce				14	50	266	549			40	321	64	1,304
Institute of Community Services					136	415	597			659	328	25	2,160
Institute of Engineering and Transport			46		121	243	478	79	58	26	274	53	1,378
Institute of Information and Communication Technology					82	158	509				386	1	1,136
Master's and Post-Graduate Programmes												170	170
Total	5	14	46	186	500	1,376	2,888	79	58	865	1,856	384	8,257

The Examinations Office

The Examinations Office is responsible for the processing of all registrations, fee handling and examinations and result management of all such students according to the regulations stipulated by the respective awarding body. The number of examination sessions offered to students with foreign awarding bodies are as shown in the table on the right.

As from 2018-2019 MCAST started offering the ACCA qualification and associated Computer Based Examinations (CBEs).

During the year under review, 1,920 candidates sat for the examinations for Basic Seamanship and Safe Boat Handling in conjunction with Transport Malta and the MCAST Centre for Maritime Studies within the Institute of Engineering and Transport.

INSTITUTION	NO OF STUDENT EXAMINATIONS/CBE SESSIONS
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)	321
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	64
Chartered Institute of Insurance (CII)	15
Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS)	6
Transport Malta	131
<i>Chief Mate</i>	36
<i>Master</i>	6
<i>Officer in Charge Phase I</i>	43
<i>Officer in Charge Phase III</i>	46
Transport Malta/SQA	32
Total	569

Certification

2,404 students completed their programme of study successfully and graduated during the graduations held between December 2019 and March 2020. These ceremonies were all held on MCAST premises in Malta and Gozo.

A breakdown of graduations by Institute can be found hereunder:

INSTITUTE/DEPARTMENT	STUDENTS
Gozo Campus	100
Institute for the Creative Arts	287
Institute of Applied Sciences	224
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	380
Institute of Community Services	581
Institute of Engineering and Transport	403
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	335
Learning Support Unit	9
Master's and Post-Graduate programmes	85
Grand Total	2,404

Diploma and Certificate supplements were issued to all candidates who completed successfully an MCAST-accredited full-time programme of study.

Candidates receiving MQF level-rated certificates were also issued BlockCerts digital certificates on the Blockchain. This service enables candidates to have their certificates level-rated and verified easily and efficiently when applying for employment or for higher level studies in Malta or internationally. These certificates can be verified on any BlockCerts verification portal apart from that offered by MCAST. This is a project financed by the Ministry for Education and Employment.

Apart from processing the 2,404 certificates issued to these graduates, this Office also issued 2,012 certificates to students who completed an evening course successfully, and a further 246 candidates were certified for part-time Maritime courses. MCAST has also certified 44 candidates through its partner secondary schools and 22 candidates in Foreign Language Proficiency amongst others.

In addition, this office processed 23 Skill Kits certificates, 197 certificates for students who completed the I-Belong programme, 43 EASA Part-66 Form 148 module certificates and 8 certificates of participants in Aircraft Non-147 courses.

Short courses	2,012
Maritime certificates	246
Partner schools awards	44
Skills Kits	23
Foreign Language Proficiency	22
I-Belong programme	197
EASA Part-66 Form 148 module certificates	43
Aircraft Non-147 courses	8
Total	2,595

Stipends Office

The Stipends Office is responsible for receiving and vetting each online application in liaison with the Students' Maintenance Grants Board (SMGB) to determine eligibility according to SMGB Guidelines. During 2018-2019, 5,672 online applications for a maintenance grant were submitted and vetted. 4,566 students were issued with a stipend at any one time and a total of €4,202,417 were disbursed through the SMGB.

Out of the 4,566 students, 332 also applied for and received a supplementary allowance, while single parents received also an extra grant.

During the academic year 2018-2019, Top-up Stipend¹ payments were introduced. 1,403 students were registered on an apprenticeship course at any one time; out of these, 559 received Top-up and Summer Special stipend

payments. In the course of the academic year, the sum of €779,030 was paid as Top-up stipend to students registered on an apprenticeship contract. Furthermore, between July and September 2019, the total sum of €412,404 was paid as Summer Special stipend to full-time apprentices and students on work placements.

In the year 2018-2019, 459 requests for refund were issued to students who were asked to repay maintenance grant according to regulations. Total refunds due amounted to €141,129, of which the sum of €88,537 has been repaid. Thus 63% of the funds were recovered up to the date of publication of this report.

¹ Top-up stipend rates cover the difference between the normal stipend (paid every four weeks) in aggregate between the employer, the Student's Maintenance Grant and the National Minimum Wage rate per hour.

Programme Funding

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for registering programmes for funding under the Get Qualified Scheme. 42 new programmes were approved in 2018-2019, with 298 candidates benefitting from tax rebates under the approved programmes.



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
ADMINISTRATION

Human Resources Office

Communications Office

Procurement Office

Finance Office

Human Resources Office

The philosophy of the MCAST Human Resources Office is to support the College's most valuable resource, its human resources. These are extremely important for sustaining MCAST's success.

In 2018-2019 the Human Resources Office played a vital role in implementing the provisions of the Collective Agreement for Lecturing Staff, Learning Support Educators, Technicians and Student Support Services personnel. The team was instrumental in carrying out the assimilation exercise, providing assistance in working out the arrears due to each and every member of staff and processing more than 300 applications for progression.

During 2018-2019, the Human Resources Office issued 478 calls for application to fill various vacant positions. 201 of these vacancies were full-time, while 277 were for part-time lecturers.

MCAST recruited 165 full-time employees. 57 of these new recruits filled an academic position; the remaining 108 new employees were engaged in an administrative, clerical or support role. Part-time lecturers recruited in 2018-2019 totalled 156.

The Human Resources Office also processed applications for family-friendly measures. During the period under review, 38 employees applied for reduced hours employment status, eight employees were granted parental leave, while 13 female members of staff applied for teleworking. Eight employees applied for a career break.

In its continuous obligation to follow the legislative procedures, the Human Resources Office has updated all its records and processes to follow GDPR provisions. This has led to an approach whereby all SOPs are in an ongoing process of updating.

Communications Office

Communication is a vital management tool in any organization. During 2018-2019, the Communications Office focused on two parallel approaches to enhance its effectiveness. The first step was to improve internal communication with the introduction of a system that makes it possible to send internal circulars to specific groups. Secondly, regular meetings were held with all departments for the purpose of supporting all College initiatives.

External communication was strengthened. During 2019 various high profile events, governmental visits, conferences and meetings

with industry partners were handled by the Communications Office.

The social media tools were revised and updated to provide the required updated information in a timely manner.



Mr Philip Vella
Deputy Principal
Administration

Procurement Office

The increase in the procurement budget intensified the demands on the Procurement Office by 800%. The drive for an ethos of a transparent procurement process required that all team members, as well as qualified suppliers, have access to the procurement methods, the evaluation criteria and technical specifications.

In 2019, 2,210 purchase orders, amounting to €1.9 million, were processed. Moreover, 39 tenders amounting to €12.8 million, were drafted, while 11 tenders with a net value of €2.6 million, were awarded.

Finance Office

During the year 2018-2019, the Finance Office had to deal with various challenges in order to be able to provide the required financial management and control that are necessary to support MCAST activities. The major responsibilities of the Finance Office during the year under review were the management of a €26 million budget, payroll management and various tasks arising out of the financial requirements of EU projects.

The work at this Office is audited on an annual basis by an external audit firm, as shown by the excerpts from the audited accounts reproduced at the end of this report. Official copies of the annual audited accounts are presented to the Maltese cabinet according to law.



EXCERPTS FROM THE
AUDITED ACCOUNTS

Report of the Board of Governors

The Board presents their report and the audited financial statements of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology ("the College") and consolidated financial statements of the Group for the year ended 31 December 2019.

Principal activities

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) mission is to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an internal dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy. To achieve this, the College provides full-time vocational courses at various levels leading to internationally recognised Certificates/Diplomas at further and higher education level as well as ad hoc courses to cater for retraining and up-skilling of the workforce, enhancing mobility, flexibility and employability to meet the challenges of restructuring and the development of the economy in a highly competitive world.

Review of operations

The College and the Group registered a deficit for the year amounting €325,909 (2018 as restated: €1,472,284) and of €44,004 (2018 as restated: €1,462,539) respectively.

Events after balance sheet date

Subsequent to the financial year ended 31 December 2019, the spread of COVID-19 virus and measures taken by the government impacted the entity's operations, financial position and results. Further evaluation of the events and conditions are disclosed in Note 20.

Board of Governors

The following are the details of individuals who have served as Governors of the College during the year under review and up to date of authorisation of these financial statements:

Prof. Ian Refalo - President	-	appointed on 16th May 2020
Mr. Frederick Schembri - President	-	resigned on 16th May 2020
Prof. Mark G. Borg - Vice-President		
Dr. Amanda Bezzina		
Mr. Brian Farrugia		
Ms. Rhonda Garland		
Ms. Lousa Grech		
Mrs. Marietta Lanzon		
Mr. Emanuel Attard		

In accordance with the Education Act, 1988, the Board of Governors are appointed by the Minister for a period of three years and they are eligible for re-appointment.

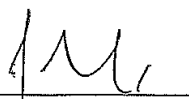
Registered Address

MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola, PLA 9032, Malta.

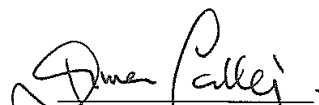
Auditors

Capstone Assurance Ltd, Certified Professional Accountants, have expressed their willingness to continue in office and a resolution for their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Approved by the Board on 30 June 2020.



Prof. Ian Refalo
President



Prof. James Joachim Calleja
Principal and CEO

Statement of Governors' Responsibilities

The Governors' of the College are required by the Education Act, 1988, to prepare the annual financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Group and the College at the end of each financial period and of its surplus/deficit for that period. In preparation of the annual financial statements, the Governors' are required to:

- Select and apply appropriate accounting policies;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Comply with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the EU; and
- Prepare the annual financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Agency will continue in business.

The Governors of the College are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the College and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Education Act, 1988. The Governors of the College are also responsible for ensuring that an appropriate system of internal control is in operation to provide them with reasonable assurance that the assets of the College are being properly safeguarded and that fraud and other irregularities will be prevented or detected.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Governors of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

We have audited the financial statements of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology and the consolidated financial statements of the Group, set out on pages 3 - 23, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2019, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.



Qualified Opinion

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis of Qualified Opinion section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the College as at 31 December 2019, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union.

Basis of Qualified Opinion

As disclosed in Note 10, the College has buildings and improvements recognised at a cost of €19,112,730 as at 31 December 2019, which were depreciated over 5 years resulting in a carrying value of €545,956. In our opinion, the depreciation method used by the College does not reflect the pattern in which the asset's future economic benefits are expected to be consumed by the College resulting in a deviation from IAS 16 *Property, plant and equipment*, an overstatement of accumulated depreciation and understatement of carrying amount of the assets. We were unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to quantify adjustments necessary to property, plant and equipment and reserves.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders). Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap.281) in Malta, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

Emphasis of matter

Without qualifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 20 in the financial statements which indicates that the College closed its campus and institutes from March 2020 in response to COVID-19. At the authorisation date of these financial statements, the College was unable to reasonably estimate the duration and severity of this pandemic, which could have a material adverse impact on the College's operations, financial position and cash flows in the year ending 31 December 2020. Management's evaluation of the events and conditions and management's plans to mitigate these matters are also described in Note 20.

We draw attention to Note 18 of these financial statements which indicates that an error was identified in the financial statements of the College as at and for the year ended 31 December 2018. The related corresponding figures for 31 December 2018 have been restated accordingly.

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Registered in Malta C57993. Director Kris Baron FCCA, FIA, CISA, CFA.

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Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Other Matter

The financial statements of the College for the year ended 31 December 2018, were audited by another auditor who expressed an unmodified opinion on those statements on 16 July 2019.

Other Information



The governors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Governors report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover this information, including the Governors report. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

In addition, in light of the knowledge and understanding of the College and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we are required to report if we have identified material misstatements in the Governors report. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Governors

The Governors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with IFRS as adopted by the EU, and for such internal control as the Governors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Governors are responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Governors either intend to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the College's internal control.

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Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Governors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Governors use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the College's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with the Governors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Under the Education Act, 1988, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or that returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us.
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have nothing to report to you in respect of these responsibilities.

Kris Baron
for and on behalf of
Capstone Assurance Ltd
Registered Auditor

30 June 2020

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Statement of Comprehensive Income

	Notes	Group		College	
		Period ended 2019	Restated 2018	Period ended 2019	Restated 2018
		€	€	€	€
Income					
Funds allocated by Government	4	32,132,140	25,583,829	32,132,140	25,583,829
Course fees		1,414,730	1,183,538	547,403	531,264
Finance income		137	365	137	91
Other income	5	1,593,388	817,943	905,085	577,044
		35,140,395	27,585,675	33,584,765	26,692,228
Expenditure					
Recurrent expenditure		34,959,710	(29,017,065)	(33,881,122)	(28,134,960)
Pension contribution		(29,552)	(29,552)	(29,552)	(29,552)
Depreciation	6	-	-	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before taxation	7	151,133	(1,460,942)	(325,909)	(1,472,284)
Taxation	8	(195,137)	(1,597)	-	-
Deficit for the year		(44,004)	(1,462,539)	(325,909)	(1,472,284)

There were no transactions to be reported as 'Other Comprehensive Income' during the year.

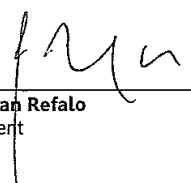
The notes on pages 7 to 23 form an integral part of these financial statements.

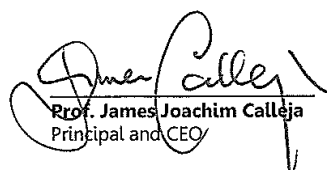
Statement of Financial Position

	Note	Group		College	
		2019 €	Restated 2018 €	2019 €	Restated 2018 €
ASSETS					
Non-current assets					
Property, plant and equipment	10	11,616,707	9,120,839	11,616,707	9,120,839
Investment in subsidiary	11	-	-	1,999	1,999
Investment in associate	12	200	200	-	-
Deferred tax		700	700	-	-
Total non-current assets		11,617,607	9,121,739	11,618,706	9,122,838
Current assets					
Trade and other receivables	13	5,173,985	7,274,876	5,923,639	7,335,695
Cash and cash equivalents	14	12,197,482	8,957,354	8,010,059	6,233,215
Total current assets		17,371,467	16,232,230	13,933,698	13,568,910
TOTAL ASSETS		28,989,074	25,353,969	25,552,404	22,691,748
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES					
Reserves					
Endowment capital		232,937	232,937	232,937	232,937
Other reserve		16,583,881	14,629,723	16,583,881	14,629,723
Accumulated deficit		(1,435,163)	(1,390,745)	(2,161,777)	(1,835,448)
Total reserves		15,381,655	13,471,915	14,655,041	13,027,212
Liabilities					
Non-current liabilities					
Other payables	15	2,447,172	-	2,447,172	-
Total non-current liabilities		2,447,172	-	2,447,172	-
Current liabilities					
Current tax payable		195,137	21,273	-	-
Trade and other payables	15	10,965,110	11,860,781	8,450,191	9,664,536
Total current liabilities		11,160,247	11,882,054	8,450,191	9,664,536
Total liabilities		13,607,419	11,882,054	10,897,363	9,664,536
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		28,989,074	25,353,969	25,552,404	22,691,748

The notes on pages 7 to 23 are an integral part of these financial statements.

These financial statements on pages 3 to 23 were approved by the Board of Governors on 30 June 2020:


Prof. Ian Refalo
President


Prof. James Joachim Calleja
Principal and CEO



Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology