GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2022-2025

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Version Final

Contents

1: Introduction

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is a leading provider of vocational and professional education and training in Malta. With more than 10,000 students each year and more than 700 employees, the College is a community of learners, practitioners, researchers and administrators.

The College is committed to achieving and promoting equality of opportunity in its learning, teaching, research and working environments, and to ensuring these environments support positive relations between people, and a culture of respect. MCAST values the diversity of its staff and students and are committed to encouraging everyone to realise their full potential.

The MCAST Equality Policy and this MCAST Gender Equality Plan provide a framework for structured measures geared towards supporting the MCAST community.

This document was written following the detailed guidance document published by the European Commission. [1]

2: Strategy and Policy Context

The MCAST Strategic Blueprint 2019-2030 and, in particular, the MCAST Strategic Plan 2022-2027 create the backdrop for this Gender Equality Plan.

The College's Strategic landscape is dominated by the MCAST Strategy Blueprint 2019-2030. This document outlines the contextual challenges faced by the College and depicts its alignment to European and National policies.

The College's strategy is built on three values - Inclusion, Equity and Excellence. These values underpin the 5 Strategic Goals, 20 Smart Targets (one of which refers to the increase of female students in male-dominated vocational sectors and vice versa) and the 7 Strategic Objectives. MCAST also promotes three cross-cutting themes. These priorities intertwine all the seven strategic objectives set for the College. These are (1) Student engagement, retention, development and involvement; (2) Community College and a College for the Community; and (3) Greener Sustainability and Digitalisation. These thematic priorities will direct the priorities which the College will set for each Strategic Objective.

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[1] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1

The College has long fostered an outward-looking, international perspective. MCAST's strategy is in line with the actions recommended by the new EU VET policy framework, namely the Council recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience (adopted on 24 November 2020) and the Osnabrück Declaration as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies (endorsed 30 November 2020).

3: Key Priority Areas

Key Priority Area 1: Non gender-blind infrastructure

Objective	Actions
Provide a safe campus for all staff and students	1.1 Ensure well-lit, walkways and public spaces on campus.
Make available facilities for female care and hygiene.	1.2 Include breastfeeding rooms in MCAST office buildings.
	1.3 Design toilet facilities which provide safe, private facilities for menstrual hygiene management, including running water, soap and a private space to clean or dispose of used menstrual materials.
Make available Gender-neutral facilities	1.4 Gender-neutral bathrooms that also have nappy changing facilities which can be used by all genders.

Key Priority Area 2: Promoting non-gender stereotypical career options for students

Objective	Actions
Widen the participation of students in non-gender stereotypical vocational sectors	2.1 Make more visible the participation of female students in male-dominated vocational sectors, and vice versa.
	2.2 Adopt and promote vocational ambassadors to attract non-stereotype students to that sector.

	2.3 Publish all internal and external circulars in both Maltese and English
	2.4 Promote non-stereotype academic staff as role models.
	2.5 Training opportunities on the use of gender-neutral language in all teaching and learning.

Key Priority Area 3: Work life Balance and Organisational Culture

Objective	Actions
Assist employees with care-related responsibilities	3.1 Increase more telework options for employees with care-related responsibilities.
	3.2 Increase visibility of male staff members taking up care-related responsibilities.
Improve the commitment to encourage lifelong learning and CPD	3.3 Widen the participation of staff members in CPD activities.
	3.4 Commit training funds every year for upskilling and reskilling of administrative staff members

Key Priority Area 4: Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Objective	Actions
Take a more formal stance against harassment on Campus	4.1 Draft, consult and formalise a College harassment policy.
	4.2 Ensure that employees and students know whom to contact and how to handle possible cases of harassment.
	4.3 Once informed of any harassment, investigate the circumstances, take remedial action and ensure peace of mind for all involved

Key Priority Area 5: Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

Objective	Actions
Promote participation and balance the presence of women and men	5.1 Appoint gender balanced staff selection boards.
	5.2 Organise training against unconscious bias in selection processes.
	5.3 Through the annual report, monitor the number of fixed-term employment contracts according to gender and professional group.

Key Priority Area 6: Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Objective	Actions
Boost gender equality through procurement practices	6.1 Mainstream gender in the procurement process is by requiring that bidding organizations demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.
Make better informed decisions	6.2 Collate and use gender-segregated data in all reporting and decision-making.
Support females in leadership positions	6.3 Design and promote training opportunities for females to allow for recognition and value in female leadership.

Key Priority Area 7: Gender Equality in Research

Objective	Actions
Balance more the participation of both gender in research activities	7.1 Ensure a pro-rata participation of male and female academics to reflect the gender balance in the respective Institute
	7.2 Institute research groups will address gender distribution of students involved in research groups.

	7.3 Give priority to research endeavours which are proposed by non-stereotype researchers.
Prioritise gender-related research	7.4 Promote research which includes a gender-related focus.

4: Resourcing

The College is dedicated to identifying resources for the developing and leading the GEP as well as to support specific measures, such as work-life balance and parental leave or for staff training and development (see section 3). The successful implementation of this plan includes the provision of necessary staff and financial resources, and ensuring that there is a clear focal point with expertise to lead and drive the work.

A dedicated MCAST Gender Equality Committee will be set up to oversee, monitor and report about the implementation of this GEP. This is beneficial to incorporate expertise in gender equality and change management and organised so that it can work with the whole organisation. This committee will be chaired by the senior executive team chosen by the Principal. However, the College would still like to emphasise that promoting gender equality is the responsibility of every staff member.

The MCAST Gender Equality Committee draws on staff from different parts of the organisation to support the delivery of the plan. Furthermore, the Plan refers to identified staff members and their respective time to develop and implement specific actions of the GEP. Personnel from across the organisation may be engaged in various steps, from reviewing existing data and practices, to identifying areas for attention and establishing the GEP's objectives. Staff time will be required for specific aspects of the GEP, such as data analysis for annual reports. Furthermore, key staff members may be needed to participate in working groups to review specific issues to develop new policies and or practices with the input of different parts of the organisation.

Additionally, some measures need to have dedicated additional budget allocated to the respective line item in the College's budget. The volume and structure of dedicated resources for the development and implementation of this plan are proportionate to the initiative and needs of the organisation.

5: Monitoring and Reporting

The development, launch, roll out and monitoring of this Gender Equality Plan falls within the remit of the MCAST Equality Committee. During the four-year period, progress will be measured through update reports from each Action Owner every quarter and a bi-annual update report will be presented to the Board of Governors.

A detailed Timeline and Ownership of the listed actions is available as an annex to this Plan.

Annex 1: MCAST GEP Timeline and Ownership

KPA	Objective	Action	Timeline	Owner/s
1: Non-gender-blind infrastructure	Provide a safe campus for all staff and students	1.1 Ensure well-lit, walkways and public spaces on campus.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Mr Jesmond Zammit
	Make available facilities for female care and hygiene.	1.2 Include breastfeeding rooms in MCAST office buildings.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2022	DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Mr Jesmond Zammit
		1.3 Design toilet facilities which provide safe, private facilities for menstrual hygiene management, including running water, soap and a private space to clean or dispose of used menstrual materials.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Mr Jesmond Zammit
	Make available Gender-neutral facilities	1.4 Gender-neutral bathrooms that also have nappy changing facilities which can be used by all genders.	S: Q2/2024 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Mr Jesmond Zammit
2: Promoting non-gender stereotypical career options for students	Widen the participation of students in non-gender stereotypical vocational sectors	2.1 Make more visible the participation of female students in male-dominated vocational sectors, and vice versa.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2023	DP: Mr Stephen Vella DP: Dr Mario Cardona DP: Mr Ronald Curmi D: All Institutes Directors D: Daniela Blagojevic

		2.2 Adopt and promote vocational ambassadors to attract non-stereotype students to that sector.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2023	DP: Mr Stephen Vella DP: Dr Mario Cardona DP: Mr Ronald Curmi D: All Institutes Directors D: Daniela Blagojevic
		2.3 Publish all internal and external circulars in both Maltese and English	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Ms Daniela Blagojevic
		2.4 Promote non-stereotype academic staff as role models.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Stephen Vella DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud D: Ms Daniela Blagojevic All institutes' Directors All administration's Directors
		2.5 Training opportunities on the use of gender-neutral language in all teaching and learning.	S: Q4/2024 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop DD: Mr Ruben Mifsud
3: Work life Balance and	Assist employees with care-related responsibilities	3.1 Increase more telework options for employees with care-related responsibilities.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud

Organisational Culture		3.2 Increase visibility of male staff members taking up care-related responsibilities.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud
	Improve the commitment to encourage lifelong learning and CPD	3.3 Widen the participation of staff members in CPD activities.	S: Q4/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop DD: Mr Ruben Mifsud
		3.4 Commit training funds every year for upskilling and reskilling of administrative staff members	S: Q2/2022 E: Q2/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud Ms Marita Brincat
4: Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Take a more formal stance against harassment on Campus	4.1 Draft, consult and formalise a College harassment policy.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q2/2022	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud
		4.2 Ensure that employees and students know whom to contact and how to handle possible cases of harassment.	S: Q2/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Ronald Curmi DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Mr John Bartolo D: Ms Daniela Blagojevic Ms Sandra Cortis
		4.3 Once informed of any harassment, investigate the circumstances, take remedial action and ensure peace of mind for all involved	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud

5: Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression	Promote participation and balance the presence of women and men	5.1 Appoint gender balanced staff selection boards.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud
		5.2 Organise training against unconscious bias in selection processes.	S: Q4/2024 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud
		5.3 Through the annual report, monitor the number of fixed-term employment contracts according to gender and professional group.	S: Q1/2022 E: Q1/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella DP: Mr Stephen Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud D: Ms Daniela Blagojevic
6: Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making	Boost gender equality through procurement practices	6.1 Mainstream gender in the procurement process is by requiring that bidding organizations demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.	S: Q3/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Marilou Vella Micallef
	Make better informed decisions	6.2 Collate and use gender-segregated data in all reporting and decision-making.	S: Q3/2022 E: Q3/2025	DP: Mr Philip Vella DP: Ing Pierre Dalmas D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud D: Ms Maria Pace
	Support females in leadership positions	6.3 Design and promote training opportunities for females to allow recognition and value in female leadership.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop DP: Mr Philip Vella D: Ms Mary Rose Mifsud DD: Mr Ruben Mifsud

7: Gender Equality in Research	Balance more the participation of both gender in research activities	7.1 Ensure a pro-rata participation of male and female academics to reflect the gender balance in the respective Institute	S: Q4/2024 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Mario Cardona DP: Mr Ronald Curmi DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop D: All institutes' Directors D: Dr Clifford de Raffaele
		7.2 Give priority to research endeavours which are proposed by non-stereotype researchers.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop DP: Dr Mario Cardona DP: Mr Ronald Curmi D: Dr Clifford de Raffaele D: All institutes' Directors Senior Research Officers
	Prioritise gender-related research	7.3 Promote research which includes a gender-related focus.	S: Q4/2023 E: Q4/2025	DP: Dr Tatjana Chircop DP: Dr Mario Cardona DP: Mr Ronald Curmi D: Dr Clifford de Raffaele D: All institutes' Directors Senior Research Officers