

# MCAST SUCCESS STORIES



ISSUE 70



# MCAST LINK



Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology  
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**CONTENTS**

Karen Attard	4
Darren Busuttil	6
Nicole Piscopo	8
Kirstie Calleja	10
Gabriel Bajada	12
Luke Galea	14
Kim Gatt	16
Ashwin Shrestha	18
Robert Cassar Pace	20
Thomas Buhagiar	22
Leandros Galea	26
Andrea Cassar	28
Mariah Bonnici	30
Mariella Borg	32
Nick Mercieca	36
Kurt Vella	38
Stephanie Vella Gera	40
Victoria Ebejer	42
Rachelle Deguara	44
Adrian Xiberras	46
Mark Theuma	48
Angela Bettoni	52
Alfred Galea	54
Ruth Fiteni	58

# MCASTLINK ISSUE 70



Welcome to this issue of MCASTlink magazine, where we spotlight the inspiring stories of a few of our graduates—each a testament to determination and the power of education. In these pages, you shall read about individuals who have taken different paths, pursued unique passions, and now make a meaningful impact in their fields.

From marine electronics service engineers maintaining cutting-edge systems, to graphic designers transforming ideas into visuals, to software engineers driving technology forward, our graduates reflect the diversity of professions today. In fields like IT, pharmaceuticals, beauty therapy, electrical installation, hairdressing, early years and primary educations they all bring expertise and dedication, creating positive experiences for clients, students and our communities.

At MCAST, our mission is to nurture the talent, curiosity and resilience within each student. These success stories show that education is not just about gaining technical skills; it is about cultivating the adaptability, passion and critical thinking that our graduates now bring to the workplace. We are equally proud of our MCAST lecturing staff, who inspire the next generation, passing on valuable insights and skills that help shape the professionals of tomorrow.

In our students' accomplishments, we see the impact of their hard work and the guidance of our dedicated staff. Every journey recounted here serves as an inspiration and a reminder of what is possible through commitment and quality education.

Join us in celebrating these stories of perseverance and achievement as we honour the graduates who carry the spirit of MCAST into the world, making a difference across industries and communities.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND CEO

As Principal of MCAST, I am honoured to introduce this special edition of MCASTlink which celebrates the outstanding achievements of our students. You will find stories of talent, resilience, and ambition—of students who have taken bold steps towards their dreams and are already making a difference in their chosen fields.

As Principal, my vision is to focus on motivating and developing people, students and staff alike. I am committed to fostering an environment where each member of our community is encouraged to grow, innovate, and strive for excellence. Our approach combines personal and professional development with establishing quality systems and structures, which form the foundation of a thriving learning environment. These elements ensure we provide consistent high standards that prepare our students for workplace and life success.

The stories you will read here exemplify this vision. They showcase students who, with the guidance of our dedicated staff, the support of our industry partners and the implementation of quality educational practices, have achieved remarkable milestones. Each success is a reminder of the potential we nurture every day and the impact we can make when we work together with purpose and passion.

Through this publication, we shine a light on a few of these inspiring journeys. You will read about students who have stepped directly into thriving careers, bringing innovation and enthusiasm into industries that are essential to our communities. These achievements speak of the power of vocational education to open doors and create lasting impact. We are proud of their accomplishments and thrilled to share these stories of perseverance and passion. We hope you are inspired by the journeys, challenges, and successes that define each graduate's experience. Each student's story is unique and forms a valuable piece of the diverse tapestry of the MCAST community. It is this diversity of learning journeys that fosters an environment where every student and graduate adds a new layer of depth to the shared experience of the education offered by our College.

As we reflect on the students' paths, we also look forward to their future impact, knowing they are ready to shape industries, contribute to communities, and inspire others.

Thank you for celebrating with us, and congratulations to all our students and graduates who continue to make us proud.

**Stephen Vella**  
**Principal and CEO**  
**MCAST**



# KAREN ATTARD

Researcher

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Since my formative years, I have always had a passion for science subjects. Though challenging, I am deeply grateful to my parents whose patience and support have supported my studies and guided me towards my current career path. Today, at 25 years old, I have dedicated much of my academic life to the fields of Chemistry and Biology. My academic journey began with a Diploma in Applied Science, where I gained an understanding of scientific principles applied in industry, along with knowledge of materials science and technological principles. Building on this foundation, I pursued a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Chemical Technology, integrating chemistry and engineering to solve production challenges across various scales. During this programme, I gained extensive hands-on experience as a lab analyst at Aurobindo Pharma and Foster Clark Products Ltd, which provided me with a real-world understanding of the industry while still studying.

Following my undergraduate studies, I pursued a Master in Research degree, focusing on studying olive mill waste and its potential effects on human cancer cells. During this period, I learned and applied new analytical separation and chromatography techniques, along with cell culture methods. The skills and knowledge I acquired have been fundamental to my development as a researcher. I am deeply grateful to my supervisors for their exceptional support and for introducing me to a topic that has inspired a keen interest in me, one that I aim to continue studying in the future.

After obtaining my Master's degree, I had the opportunity to work at both MCAST and the University of Malta. At MCAST, I engaged in diverse research projects that broadened my technical expertise and introduced me to new methodologies and research techniques, including ecological and toxicological studies. The projects were conducted in collaboration with international universities, allowing me

to establish relationships with foreign researchers and institutions. These experiences significantly expanded my technical expertise and enhanced my understanding of the research methodology.

During my Master's degree and my time working at MCAST, I had the opportunity to publish two scientific papers and contribute a chapter to a book with the help of my supervisor. These accomplishments enabled me to share my research findings with the broader scientific community, thereby enhancing my expertise and credibility in the field of science. The process of writing and publishing these works significantly improved my scientific communication skills and underscored the importance of contributing to the advancement of knowledge in my field.

My time at MCAST has been particularly impactful. The institution's support and resources have significantly contributed to my growth as a researcher. Working on various projects at MCAST has not only enhanced my technical skills but also deepened my understanding of the research process. The invaluable mentorship and guidance I received helped me refine my problem-solving abilities and technical proficiency, shaping the knowledge I possess today.

Moving forward, I would like to continue my studies and work as a researcher. This journey has greatly expanded my knowledge and opened many paths. Through my research experiences, I have enhanced my laboratory skills, learned to use various instruments and mastered new techniques. Conducting research has broadened my perspective and fostered a deep sense of dedication. I am excited about future opportunities and confident that this path will lead to continued growth and success.

# DARREN

Marine Electronics Service Engineer

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# BUSUTTIL



Ever since I was young, I have been captivated by the maritime world. From watching the smallest toy boat float to marvelling at the sheer size of massive metal ships, the fascination has always stayed with me—and it always will. With my parents and a close relative sharing a deep love for the sea, my interest in all things nautical was continuously nurtured. This passion eventually grew into a strong curiosity and a desire to explore the maritime world further.

My father worked at the Malta Drydocks as a Ship Repair Manager before transitioning to the role of Manager in the Electronics Department—coincidentally, the same field I work in today. Like many people, I spent my early years constantly grappling with the question of what career path to pursue, a question that seemed overwhelming. It was not until much later in my educational journey that I was finally able to give a definitive answer.

After completing my SEC exams, I enrolled at Junior College, where I earned my A-Levels. This achievement paved the way for me to pursue a degree in Communications and Computer Engineering at the University of Malta.

To succeed in any field, a strong foundation in the basics is essential. Every career begins with mastering fundamental principles, and it became clear to me early on that understanding how things work—especially in electronics—was crucial to my passion. Electronics served as a fascinating bridge between theory and practical application. By grasping core concepts like circuits, signals, and systems, I realised I could unlock countless possibilities, ranging from simple devices to complex innovations, which opened a world of creativity and problem-solving.

After attaining my Diploma in Computer Engineering, I was eager to deepen my knowledge of electronics. Seeking guidance, I was encouraged to enrol at MCAST to study electronics, taking advantage of its extensive hands-on approach. I completed the Higher National Diploma in Electronics Engineering, and the practical experiences I gained further fuelled my interest in advancing my education in this field. Upon successfully finishing the programme, I decided to pursue a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics and Control Engineering at MCAST.

During this time, I also began working on board vessels during the summer, assisting a senior engineer with the installation, diagnosis, and servicing of communication and navigation equipment. This experience was a highlight of my early



career, as it provided me with valuable insights into the field and helped clarify my professional direction.

After successfully completing my Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics and Control Systems Engineering, I enrolled full-time with the same company. In addition to my hands-on work on board vessels and superyachts, I also manage the technical aspects of office operations. This includes providing quotations and communicating with clients to understand their requirements while striving to meet their needs. The experience and knowledge I have gained during my years with Navicom Marine are unparalleled.

I owe an immeasurable amount of gratitude to my parents for their unwavering support, especially during the stressful times. I also want to express my appreciation to the administrative and teaching staff at the Institute of Electrical Engineering and Electronics at MCAST. Their dedication to sharing their knowledge with students has always been, and will continue to be, a top priority in their careers, inspiring future generations as they enter the workforce.

To those future generations entering this field, I encourage you to embrace the challenges ahead with perseverance and passion.

I have been drawn to creative expression through art and design from an early age. To formalize my passion, I pursued my studies at the MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts, from where I graduated in 2002.

# NICOLE

**Pharmaceutical Senior Consultant  
and Qualified Auditor**

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# PISCOPO

My name is Nicole Piscopo. I am 27 years old, a proud mother to a beautiful 4-year-old son, and I have successfully completed my Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Chemical Technology.

My journey at MCAST began back in 2015. I started my studies with the Advanced Diploma in Applied Science, a two-year course, before progressing to pursue my degree. During my time at MCAST, I was very active in student life. I served as the EU Careers Ambassador and was also the president of the Institute of Applied Sciences Student Organisation which organized numerous fundraising activities and events. In 2019, two years into my degree, I decided to pause my studies and begin working in the pharmaceutical industry. This meant I had completed Level 5 but had not yet earned my full degree. Although completing my degree remained on my mind, I did not prioritize it at the time. During this period, I also welcomed my beautiful son into the world.

Two years later, in 2022, I decided to continue my studies. With the support of the Institute, I was able to spread the final year of my degree over two years. Around this time, I also made a career change within the pharmaceutical industry, moving from manufacturing to consultancy.

My new job came with many challenges, as I had to work both in Malta and abroad, conducting several GMP and GDP audits and assisting clients in improving their Quality Management Systems. As a new mother balancing a full-time job and family life, I faced many struggles and moments where I considered giving up. However, with the unwavering support of my family, I persevered and have now successfully completed my degree.

Through determination, perseverance, and the constant encouragement of both my family and friends, I was able to successfully pass all units. This journey has definitely not been easy, but it has taught me the invaluable lesson of never giving up on my dreams. One day, I will be able to explain to my son that, no matter how hard life gets, if you set a goal and stay committed, you can achieve it.

Looking ahead, I plan to further my education by pursuing a master's degree in order to become a Qualified Person within the pharmaceutical industry.



# KIRSTIE

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# Primary School Teacher CALLEJA

My journey from being a student at MCAST to becoming a primary school teacher shows how education can truly change lives and open up many opportunities. From a young age, I was inspired by great teachers who sparked my love for teaching, guiding me to pursue a career in education.

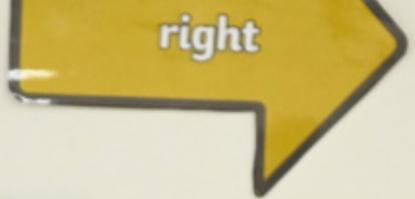
After completing secondary school, I was eager to continue my studies at MCAST. Through the MCAST Prospectus, I explored the courses offered at the Gozo Campus and identified the ones that captivated my interest. I enrolled in the Level 3 MCAST Diploma in Health and Social Care.

During this year, I had the opportunity to work with both elderly people and young children. I discovered a stronger interest in working with young children, which prompted me to apply for the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development. This course included hands-on practice, allowing me to work directly with small children. I then pursued the Level 5 Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years at the MCAST Main Campus in Paola, as this course was not available at the Gozo Campus at the time. Following this, I enrolled in the top-up course for a Level 6 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care, qualifying me to work as a Kindergarten teacher. Eager to enhance my expertise, I subsequently enrolled in the Level 7 Master Degree in Teaching and Learning at the University of Malta. This advanced programme deepened my understanding of teaching children in the primary school years (Year 1 – Year 6) and offered valuable classroom experience as an integral part of my training.

Looking back, I can say that at MCAST I found a perfect balance of theoretical knowledge and practical application. The curriculum covered essential topics such as child development, educational psychology, and instructional strategies. The hands-on training and student-teaching opportunities were crucial in preparing me for my teaching career. The staff members were deeply committed to mentoring, offering guidance, encouragement, and constructive feedback that were instrumental in my growth as an educator.

Thanks to the encouragement and support received at the MCAST, I was inspired to continue my studies and ultimately achieve my goal of working in the profession I have always dreamed of. The hands-on experiences I gained have significantly boosted my confidence and skills. I am deeply grateful to all the educators who guided and supported me throughout my journey. Today, I am a primary school teacher: the dream I have always aspired to achieve has been fulfilled. I am gratified to be able to inspire and nurture the next generation of learners, just as I was inspired and nurtured during my time at MCAST.

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our

# GABRIEL

Graphic Designer  
and founder of Moose Design Studio

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# BAJADA

My time at MCAST was transformative in many ways. The College was instrumental in shaping my skills and professional outlook, giving me the confidence to pursue my creative ambitions. It was more than just an educational institution—it was a place where I formed lifelong friendships and connected with like-minded individuals who shared my enthusiasm for design. These friendships have become an enduring support network, both personally and professionally.

I am also deeply grateful to the educators at MCAST, many of whom continue to serve as mentors and sources of inspiration. Their dedication and expertise nurtured my understanding of design principles and gave me valuable guidance that I still rely on today. I remain in contact with several of them and our conversations remind me of the solid foundation upon which I have built my career. It is a testament to the vibrant community at MCAST that so many of us remain connected long after graduation.

During my time there, I discovered a passion for editorial design while apprenticing at a publishing company, thanks to MCAST's emphasis on practical learning. This experience, combined with the College's rigorous curriculum, set the stage for my career trajectory. Upon graduation, I immersed myself in the world of print media, focusing on logos, branding, advertising campaigns and editorial design.

As the design landscape evolved with the rise of digital media, I adapted my skills accordingly. This enabled me to work with some of Malta's top marketing agencies, handling some major clients. The journey ultimately led to the launch of Moose, my own design studio, in 2017, where I continue to apply the principles and values cultivated at MCAST.

I envisioned Moose as more than just a traditional design agency—it is a collective of creatives, marketers and web developers working together. Our team, though small, is uniquely positioned to offer each client dedicated attention and tailored solutions. This close-knit structure allows us to thrive on creativity and deliver work that not only meets but exceeds expectations.

Our studio's size is one of our greatest strengths, enabling us to work closely with each client and offer a level of flexibility and innovation that larger agencies often struggle to achieve. This personalised approach ensures that we build strong, enduring relationships with our clients—relationships founded on trust, creativity and a shared vision for success.

Reflecting on my journey, I can confidently say that the MCAST was the cornerstone of my career, providing me with both the technical skills and the professional relationships that have been essential to my growth as a designer.





# LUKE

## IT and Digital Projects Coordinator **GALEA**

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My interest in computing and technology started at a young age and I have always wanted to work in this sector. After reviewing the IT courses offered at MCAST, I found the right programme that met my objectives. I started attending the MCAST Gozo Campus in 2007 where I completed a Level 4 two-year diploma programme in IT (Networking and Systems Support). On successful completion of this course, I progressed to the Higher National Diploma in Computing (ICT Systems Support) at the MCAST Paola Campus.

Upon completing my studies at MCAST, I started working full-time as an IT Administrator with M. Demajo Group in Malta. My role's primary focus was on IT systems, comprising of server management, network design and administration, and software, ensuring that the systems operated efficiently and securely, whilst supporting the organization's business operations and objectives.

The transition between studying and working full-time was not as challenging as I had expected because during my studies at MCAST, the College helped me acquire and develop hands-on IT skills as well as soft skills, thereby providing me with the right tools and competencies that needed to be put into practice in a real-life working environment. Concurrently, since MCAST was not running degree programmes at that time, I furthered my studies at a foreign university, by following a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Networks on a part-time basis.

Subsequently, I took on the role of IT Systems Administrator at Hutchinson Malta Ltd in Gozo. I have now been with the company for three years, and I am leading an ERP team and also managing the IT projects of the factory. Since Hutchinson is an international company, I have the opportunity to collaborate with other IT specialists based abroad across the

group's network and work collaboratively towards developing and maintaining the IT systems at the international group standards.

Currently, in my role, I am also mentoring an MCAST student apprentice who is following his Level 4 studies at the Gozo Campus. Having the opportunity to mentor and pass on to apprentices the knowledge I accumulated over the years both from my studies and from my working experience, is very rewarding as in this manner I am contributing to the future of young students and the pool of IT skills in the Gozitan context.

Apart from the personal and the professional gratification aspects of this, I take pride in assisting MCAST in the formation of young people, especially in recognition of what this institution has given me.

# KIM

Student reading  
for a Masters degree

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# GATT

I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Aircraft Vehicle Design at Cranfield University. My journey has been long but fascinating, filled with valuable learning experiences.

During the Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, I found mathematical subjects relatively easy due to my background in Pure Mathematics and Physics A-Level. I was exposed to various subjects, including CAD software, which I worked with throughout all four years, as well as practical sessions where I learned welding and lathe manufacturing.

One notable observation from my time at MCAST was the lack of female representation in my field. In my class, there were only two girls among twenty boys in the first year and ten boys in the remaining years, as we were split into manufacturing and plant streams. Despite this, my classmates were supportive, and we helped one another throughout our studies.

My curiosity drove me to explore different areas rather than sticking to the same routine. Between my second and third years, I completed a 200-hour internship with Crane Currency Ltd., where I learned about the manufacturing process of money. This unique opportunity allowed me to gain insights that are typically inaccessible without working for such a company.

After my internship, I sought employment to gain experience while continuing my studies. I applied at various aviation companies, but many required me to complete my degree first. As a result, I joined Methode Electronics Malta's

Engineering Academy. Although I was initially placed in the global purchasing team, which was not directly related to my field, the experience proved invaluable. My team was incredibly supportive, helping me develop new skills, such as negotiating with suppliers and issuing NDAs.

My journey at MCAST culminated in my final year, when I chose to focus my thesis on robotics. I studied and 3D-printed a robotic hand modelled after the human hand to replace repetitive work in factories. I successfully designed, built, and tested several robotic hands with servo motors to ensure their functionality in picking and placing parts. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of my family and my tutor Ing. Claire Seguna.

In 2023, I graduated from MCAST with first class honours. My hard work had paid off. My thesis was also selected as the best undergraduate thesis from the mechanical stream at MCAST by the Malta Chamber of Engineers. In March 2023, I applied for and was accepted into the Aircraft Vehicle Design Master's programme at Cranfield University. I have attended lectures and modules led by experts in the field and participated in a group project supported by Airbus. My role involved designing the Main Landing Gear Systems and writing the corresponding thesis.

Currently, I am working on another thesis focused on supersonic aircraft. As for the future, I hope to receive job offers from companies like Airbus or Lufthansa and pursue a PhD.





# ASHWIN

Bar Mixologist

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# SHRESTHA

My journey at MCAST began in 2023, when I pursued a Postgraduate Diploma in Tourism and Events Management.

This path, which led to a full-time position at Hilton Malta, is a story of passion, perseverance and a well-planned career strategy. Embarking on the programme in Tourism and Events Management marked the start of my journey into one of the world's most dynamic and rapidly growing industries.

Through the MCAST Diploma in Tourism and Events Management, I gained a deep understanding of the industry's core components, including event planning, hospitality management, tourism development and customer service. The course was not purely theoretical; it included practical experiences like internships, project work and collaboration with industry professionals.

One of the most important aspects of this educational journey at MCAST was the development of soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork and cultural awareness. As an international student these skills were very important.

Landing a full-time position at Hilton Malta is an achievement that reflects hard work, professionalism and a keen understanding of the hospitality industry. Hilton Malta is known for its luxury offerings, exceptional customer service and its commitment to creating memorable experiences for guests. This means that their hiring process is rigorous, and they seek individuals who not only have the technical skills required for the job but also align with their values of hospitality, teamwork, and integrity.

For a graduate with a background in Tourism and Events Management, joining Hilton Malta offers an opportunity to apply learned skills in a real-world context, work in a globally recognized brand and continue growing within the organization. I am forever grateful to MCAST for providing me with the right skills and knowledge for this rewarding career.

The journey from a MCAST Level 7 qualification in Tourism and Events Management to a full-time job at Hilton Malta is a story of dedication, passion and persistence. From gaining a solid educational foundation to building practical experience through internships and developing industry connections, every step of the way contributed to the beginning of my successful career in the hospitality industry.

# ROBERT

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# Senior Data Architect

# CASSAR PACE

The MCAST Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Multimedia Software Development provided a well-rounded, practical education that equipped me with the skills and mindset needed to enter the job market with confidence. The programme emphasised hands-on experience, ensuring that we worked directly with industry-relevant tools and technologies. This real-world exposure gave me a clear understanding of the skills employers value and how to apply them effectively in a professional setting.

One of the key strengths of the programme was its project-based learning approach. Rather than focusing solely on theoretical knowledge, the course allowed us to engage in practical tasks from day one. We developed software, created multimedia projects, and collaborated with classmates on group assignments, which closely mirrored the collaborative environment of the tech industry. This prepared me to be able to handle complex projects, communicate with team members, and solve problems efficiently, all of which are critical skills in the workplace.

The inclusion of internships and industry placements was another major advantage. These experiences enabled me to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional expectations. By working in real-world environments, I gained valuable insights into the industry's workflow, standards, and challenges. This not only helped me build a professional network but also allowed me to apply what I had learned in a tangible way, making the transition into full-time employment much smoother.

Furthermore, the programme's focus on emerging technologies and modern development practices ensured that we were prepared for the rapidly evolving tech landscape. By working with up-to-date tools, frameworks, and programming languages, I entered the job market with a relevant and competitive skill set. The course also encouraged us to think critically and adapt to new technologies, fostering a mindset of lifelong learning, which is essential in a field that is constantly changing.

In my current role as a Senior Data Architect, I still draw on the foundational skills and experience I gained during my time at MCAST. The programme did not just teach me how to code or work with data—it taught me how to think like a developer, work in teams, and continuously adapt to new challenges. This has been instrumental in my professional growth and has helped me navigate the complexities of a fast-paced, data-driven industry.





P92 JS

PROFESSIONAL PILOT TRAINING  
ACADEMY - MALTA

# THOMAS

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# BUHAGIAR

Private Pilot

I faced a difficult decision when choosing which college to attend after completing my secondary education. Initially, I opted for Junior College to pursue my A-Levels. However, after learning about MCAST's hands-on and practical approach to education, I decided to enrol in the Advanced Diploma in Aviation Operations programme instead. This decision allowed me to gain both practical experience and the theoretical knowledge needed to begin my journey in aviation with MCAST.

The lecturers, all highly knowledgeable experts in the field, brought a wealth of real-world experience to the lecture room, ensuring that the lectures were both informative and relevant to the ever-evolving aviation industry. I was fortunate to be offered an apprenticeship with the Air Wing of the Armed Forces of Malta as part of the diploma requirements. This opportunity aligned perfectly with my passion for aviation and service.

Through this experience, I had the opportunity to learn from highly qualified professionals dedicated to safeguarding our skies, while applying theoretical concepts to real-world practice. During my apprenticeship with the Air Wing, I worked alongside experienced soldiers, gaining valuable insights into the field. This practical experience provided me with a comprehensive understanding of aviation, encompassing essential maintenance and technical support required to keep aircraft operating at peak performance, as well as the tactical considerations of pilots involved in high-stakes operations. My appreciation for the meticulous attention to detail, discipline and teamwork necessary for the safe operation of aircraft has deepened through the crew's work and interactions within the force, underscoring the importance of rigorous maintenance, and adherence to ground and air regulations.

Thanks to MCAST, I now possess the knowledge and skills essential for leadership and safety in the aviation industry. The theoretical and practical education delivered by MCAST has provided me with a solid understanding of industry standards and safety procedures, particularly in flight operations. My education has prepared me to tackle challenges head-on and assume leadership roles, maintaining professionalism and safety in every task, whether it involves routine operations or demanding situations.





MCAST stands out for its commitment to equipping students with real-world experience and relevant industry knowledge. The practical training and industry-adapted curriculum ensure that students are well prepared for successful careers. Choosing MCAST is not just an investment in education but a step towards gaining the confidence and skills necessary for career advancement.

My passion for aviation has evolved from a childhood dream into a fulfilling reality as a private pilot. Each flight fuels my enthusiasm, blending the technical complexities of aviation with the excitement of travel. Through this passion, I connect with both the sky and a community of like-minded individuals who share the joy of flying. My journey is just beginning, and I eagerly anticipate where the skies will take me next. For those in aviation, the sky is the limit.

# Valletta



# LEANDROS Associate Software Engineer at Bank of Valletta plc.

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# GALEA

I have always been captivated by technology and the fascinating world of programming. During secondary school, I chose Computer Studies and Accounts as my options, but it did not take long for me to realise how much more passionate I was about programming. Excelling in subjects like Computer Studies, ICT, and Mathematics, I discovered that my true interest lay in coding and its endless possibilities.

Having completed my O-Levels, I enrolled at the Junior College, where I focused on Computing and Pure Mathematics as my main subjects. After obtaining my Matriculation Certificate, I faced an important decision, I had to choose between MCAST and the University of Malta. I chose MCAST for its hands-on and technical approach, which I believed would provide a more practical understanding of the industry and valuable work experience as part of my studies. I identified and applied for the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Development degree course, which aligned perfectly with my interests.

My time at MCAST was transformative. As part of the course, I undertook an apprenticeship at Arkafort, a local company where I worked primarily as a Junior Backend Developer. From the very start of my programming journey, I was drawn to backend development, a passion rooted in my problem-solving skills and strong interest in subjects such as Mathematics. Throughout the apprenticeship, I was also exposed to various aspects of the industry, including frontend tasks, client interaction, and server management, which provided me with a well-rounded view of the field. In addition to practical experience, MCAST offered a robust theoretical foundation. The lecturers not only taught theory but also demonstrated real-world applications of the concepts, which greatly enhanced my academic and practical understanding. This practical exposure proved crucial in excelling in my assignments and bridging the gap between theory and practice.

A standout moment during my time at MCAST was participating in HackSpace, an initiative that broadened my knowledge in cybersecurity. Through HackSpace, I discovered a keen interest in cybersecurity and I chose to focus my dissertation on the intersection of Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence, specifically Large Language Models. The support from my dissertation mentor was instrumental in navigating this cutting-edge field.

After graduating, I began my full-time career as an Associate Software Engineer at Bank of Valletta plc. In this role, my focus is on developing and maintaining automated testing for various applications within the organisation. This role has been immensely fulfilling, benefitting from the professionalism and mentorship offered. I value the ongoing learning culture at my workplace and would surely consider further studies, potentially pursuing a part-time master's degree at MCAST to continue my academic journey.

Looking back, I am grateful for the support provided by MCAST's dedicated lecturers and the hands-on approach of the course. From my early fascination with technology to a successful career in software development, MCAST has been a cornerstone in my professional growth and success.

# ANDREA

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# CASSAR

Owner of AC Aquatics

From a young age, I have been passionate about aquaria, and this passion inspired me to deepen my knowledge of the aquatic industry after completing secondary school. Driven by this interest, I attended an open weekend at MCAST in Paola, hoping to find a course that would help me build a career in this field. There, I was introduced to the Fish Management course. This programme covers a variety of topics, including aquarium sciences, fisheries, fish biology, basic chemistry and much more, giving students a broad understanding of the entire sector. Excited by the course content, I decided to pursue it.

As I progressed through the programme, I discovered that the depth of knowledge offered during the course went beyond my expectations. We explored details in subjects such as fish biology, water quality management, and the balance required to maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems. These studies provided a strong foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of fish management, which prepared me well for future opportunities.

In my third year, I was fortunate to participate in an ERASMUS+ project, which allowed me to travel to Sweden and work in a large public aquarium in Lysekil. The three weeks I spent there were some of the most transformative of my whole education. The experience broadened my horizons in ways I had not anticipated. Working in the aquarium not only exposed me to new marine species and advanced aquaria techniques but also taught me how to manage the operations of large-scale aquatic environments. Moreover, I developed essential life skills, such as working with diverse, international teams, embracing different cultural perspectives, and learning to be self-sufficient while living abroad. The hands-on experience in Sweden enriched my understanding of marine science and opened my eyes to the global nature of the aquatic industry.

Following my studies and these transformative experiences, I channelled my knowledge and passion into starting my own business, AC Aquatics. Through my business, I offer a wide range of services for aquaria and ponds, catering to both hobbyists and professional clients. My work includes designing and building custom aquariums from the ground up, tailored to the unique needs of each client. I also deliver and stock fish for aquatic environments in private homes, ensuring that each ecosystem is balanced and well maintained. Additionally, I provide professional-grade equipment for planted aquaria, helping enthusiasts create thriving underwater gardens. My goal is to combine creativity and expertise to bring clients' aquatic visions to life, whether it be a simple home aquarium or a complex, customised project. In running AC Aquatics, I continue to learn and grow, constantly staying up-to-date with new trends, techniques and innovations in the aquatic industry. This work allows me to pursue my passion daily, while also making a positive impact on the lives of my clients and the aquatic creatures I care for.



THE  
NORTH  
FACE  
NEVER STOP EXPLORING

Today's Date is  
Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Cars  
Planes  
How do we travel?  
Hot air balloon

Today's Schedule

8:30	1	Maths
9:15	2	PE
10:00	3	...
10:30	4	...
11:15	5	...
12:30	6	...
13:15	7	...
14:00	8	...

This week's special highlight is...  
Neymar  
Up Next: Zaleyshia



# MARIAH

# BONNICI

Early Years Educator

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My name is Mariah Bonnici, and in 2023 I was one of the first cohort of students to graduate from MCAST with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Years. My five-year journey at MCAST began in 2018 when I enrolled in the Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development, and then continued my studies to obtain the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Years. This journey was far from easy, particularly when the COVID-19 pandemic struck midway through my studies. The vibrant campus life, where we would gather with peers to support each other, was abruptly shifted online. This change affected half of our second year of Level 4 and the entirety of our first year of the degree. Despite these challenges, the unwavering support and dedication of our lecturers enabled us to persevere and succeed together.

Prior to October 2022, MCAST did not offer a Level 6 qualification in Early Years education, necessitating a year at the University of Malta to complete the degree. As we neared the end of Level 5, we were asked about our interest in completing our degree at MCAST if a Level 6 programme were to be launched. Without hesitation, I expressed my desire to stay at MCAST, as the institution made me feel part of a family rather than just a student. This decision is one I do not regret; I am immensely proud to have formed part of the first group to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Years from MCAST's Institute of Community Services. One aspect of MCAST that I particularly appreciated was its emphasis on practical, hands-on learning opportunities. These experiences allowed us to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings. Throughout my time at MCAST, I engaged in various teaching practice placements, which significantly shaped me as an educator. I learned a great deal from the experienced educators I encountered during these placements.

Balancing studies, work and personal life was challenging, and effective time management proved crucial. The recently renovated library provided a beautiful study area where my friends and I spent countless hours working on assignments, particularly in the last two years of our degree. Collaborating with friends not only made the workload more manageable but also allowed us to learn from each other's diverse ideas and perspectives.

MCAST offered numerous enriching learning opportunities, which have left a lasting impact on me. A memorable experience was a trip to Gozo with our lecturer Ms Rose Piccinino, where we explored ways to teach Maltese heritage to our future students. Another valuable opportunity was facilitated by Ms Simone Restall, who organised an outdoor themed activity at Buskett for kindergarten students. This experience underscored the beauty of outdoor learning and demonstrated how it fosters children's engagement and development.

Today, as I teach my own class, I feel well prepared and confident thanks to the dedicated lecturers at MCAST. I am now furthering my studies by enrolling in a Master's Degree in Primary Education. The foundation provided by my degree from MCAST has opened this door for me, and for that I am deeply grateful.

# MARIELLA

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# BORG

Beauty Therapist

My love for lifelong learning and my passion for beauty therapy have always been the driving forces in my personal and professional development. In 2011, after 21 years working in the semiconductor industry, I embarked on a challenging journey into entrepreneurship as a freelance beauty therapist. Though difficult, this transition was fuelled by my unwavering passion for beauty therapy. Over the years, my little business grew, as did my constant urge for professional development and studying to qualify further in the beauty sector. At the age of 47, I made another move to start reading for a Bachelor's degree in Vocational Education and Training (BVET) within MCAST as a full-time mature student specialising in Hairdressing and Beauty.

Returning to studies in a VET institution for higher education after being away from the school bench for more than 30 years was very demanding. Juggling the challenging studies and my business demands made the whole experience overwhelming, especially with the assignments' submission deadlines and the meticulous preparation required for every teaching practice we had in both secondary and further education settings. At times, the pressure felt more than I could handle. However, I realised that my learning curve was skyrocketing, and ultimately, it was paying off. Little did I know what was truly coming my way and that I was starting to shape my future into a brighter career.

During the three-year programme, I was exposed to different modules related to teaching theories, strategies, and methodologies that are vital for a teacher in training. What I truly loved about the degree was that I attained a real understanding of inclusion and how to cultivate and celebrate diversity; I also learned to reflect and capture reflections through writing journals, to understand social and emotional intelligence, and acquired new skills like blow drying and dyeing hair while revisiting the beauty modules I had studied throughout the years. I must admit that, as a qualified therapist, repeating the beauty modules was not something I looked forward to. However, it served me well as I learned how to improve my daily practices as a professional.

Completing my studies at MCAST in June 2023 was my greatest professional achievement and a significant milestone in my Vocational Education journey. Right after, I was deployed within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR) as a newly recruited Hairdressing and Beauty VET teacher at Zejtun Secondary School. Shortly after, I advanced to a more fulfilling role as a full-time Beauty academic at MCAST's Institute of Community Services (ICS), where I now lecture Beauty modules to students at various levels. This golden opportunity was a proud moment, validating my competences in the VET field and my dual career, for which I will be immensely grateful all my life. As a former student, I am proud of having MCAST management believe in my capabilities and for being allowed to join and collaborate with lecturers who, during my studies, were my crucial supporting structures and role models for my formation as a VET educator.



dermalogic



MCAST provided me with relevant and indispensable knowledge to shape me in whatever I needed to join the teaching profession. I am humbled to have had this unique experience, and I hope to sustain and improve on the needs of our Beauty students and industry. I aim to transfer relevant knowledge and skills to our students, supporting and guiding them to build professional, strong and resilient personalities. I am committed to shaping their future in the Beauty industry, a career that brings me immense fulfilment and pride.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the opportunities to further my professional development and contribute to the growth and innovation of the Beauty team within the Institute and the Beauty Therapy industry. I am committed to staying abreast of the latest industry trends and best practices and to continuously improving my teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of our students.



# NICK

Student Athlete

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# MERCIECA

I am Nick Mercieca and I have just completed two years studying at MCAST. During this time I completed the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Food Technology since I have always been highly interested in the processing and quality of food. Now I am aspiring to pursue the Bachelor's degree in Environmental Health Studies which will involve another three years of studies at the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences. In 2022, I chose MCAST as my institution of study, confident that it was the best option for me. Over the past two years, MCAST has continually proven this decision right by providing me with a high-quality education. The campus is one of the most inclusive and accessible environments I have experienced. As a wheelchair user, I found that every part of MCAST was easily accessible, with lifts or ramps available throughout. On the rare occasion that a lift was not working, MCAST quickly found alternative solutions, ensuring that I could continue attending lectures as normal. When I required special arrangements, MCAST accommodated my needs without hesitation, which made my experience even more comfortable.

Beyond the inclusive and high standard of education, these two years have also allowed me to form new friendships with people I did not know before.

As part of our course, we were required to complete a number of hours in a food and/or beverage company as an apprenticeship. Initially, this presented a bit of a challenge for me, as many of the companies I approached were not wheelchair accessible, making it difficult to secure a placement. I began my apprenticeship with Benna Malta Dairy Products. This turned out to be one of the best experiences, as it not only increased my independence but also provided me with valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in food technology.

In addition to my studies, I am an athlete with a strong passion for sports. During my time at MCAST, I competed in various local competitions and, in January 2023, I became Malta's first para black belt in karate. Balancing my assignments, apprenticeship, and school with daily training sessions of up to 3 hours was challenging but rewarding. Alongside karate, I also practise para rowing and have broken multiple world records over the past two years. I recently started para powerlifting and had the opportunity to participate in a high-level training camp.



# KURT

# VELLA

**Inclusive Educator**

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As a graduate of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Inclusive Education at MCAST, I am excited to share my experience with prospective students. This journey has been enriching and transformative, equipping me with the knowledge and skills necessary to support learners with diverse needs in educational settings.

From the very beginning, the course emphasised the importance of creating inclusive environments. We explored the various barriers learners face and learned innovative strategies to overcome these obstacles. The focus on inclusivity has been pivotal in shaping my understanding of how to cater to individual needs in the classroom.

Among the highlights of this course were the work placements which for me served as opportunities to explore what working in schools meant. Each year, we observed and participated in real educational settings, witnessing good practices and implementing what we learned. These placements have not only built my confidence but also allowed me to see the impact of inclusive education first hand.

The curriculum is comprehensive, covering essential areas such as child and adolescent development, the psychology of learning, and supporting students with specific needs like ADHD and autism. These units have provided me with a robust theoretical foundation and practical tools to apply in various educational contexts.

Beyond the theoretical knowledge, the course has significantly improved my interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The focus on continuous assessment through the various tasks has helped me develop strong research and writing skills, essential for a career in inclusive education. These units are critical in preparing us to create educational settings that celebrate and support all learners, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities.

As I completed this programme, I felt well prepared to enter the field of inclusive education. The skills and knowledge I have gained at MCAST are not only academically enriching but also applicable in practice, ensuring that I can make a positive difference in the lives of learners.

For those considering this course, I can confidently say that it offers rich, supportive and comprehensive education that prepares you to meet the diverse needs of today's educational environments. Embrace this journey, and you will emerge a skilled and compassionate advocate for inclusive education.





# STEPHANIE

# VELLA GERA

**Deputy Accountable Manager**

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From a very young age, I aspired to work in aviation. At just 17, I became a private pilot student at the European Pilot Academy while simultaneously preparing for my A-Levels. I obtained my Private Pilot Licence even before I got my driving licence!

In 2008, I embarked on a special journey in aviation that has proven to be one of the most rewarding decisions of my life. Although I knew little about aircraft maintenance at the time, I enrolled in the EASA Part-66 Category A course at MCAST. This course is specifically designed to equip students with the necessary theoretical understanding of aircraft maintenance and related systems, and is reinforced by practical experience in workshops at the mechanic level. This was followed by on-the-job training at a maintenance organisation, Lufthansa Technik Malta, which was a time of intense learning.

During my time at MCAST and Lufthansa Technik, I was fortunate to meet professional people in the industry who mentored and inspired me, and to whom I remain grateful to this day. While at Lufthansa Technik, I had the opportunity to travel, learn, and work at other Lufthansa entities within the group, including Lufthansa Technik Philippines and Lufthansa Technik Basel. Eventually, I was offered a full-time position at Lufthansa Technik.

The course led me to obtain the EASA Part-66 Category A licence, which allowed me to exercise its privileges in Part-145 Organisations. This meant I could issue Certificates of Release to Service following minor scheduled works and line maintenance, defect rectification, and component changes. Outside the MCAST classrooms and workshops, a different world awaited me—one filled with opportunities.

In 2010, I joined MCM (Maintenance Centre Malta), the first Business Aviation company in Malta. Although I had no prior experience in business aviation, MCM saw potential in me,

and I was recruited even while pregnant with my son. Over five and a half years, I held various roles in Maintenance, CAMO/Part M (at the time), and Part 147 (A.P. Malta). Eventually, I sought to embark on a new journey working for an aircraft operator.

During this time, I continued my academic journey, earning a Higher National Diploma in Administration and Management, followed by an MBA.

In 2015, I joined Medavia as Head of Compliance for the AOC, Maintenance Part 145, CAMO, and Ground Handling. It was a highly interesting and rewarding time working for an operator that supported International Humanitarian Aid agencies worldwide. Medavia offered an array of services, and I was privileged to be a part of and support these efforts.

In 2017, I returned to business aviation. The sector was booming in Malta, and I had the opportunity to join TAG Aviation Malta, which was still in its founding stages on the island. I started as Compliance & Safety Manager for the AOC and CAMO and was later appointed Head of Compliance & Safety for TAG Europe. Eventually, I became Deputy Accountable Manager & Continuous Improvement. I am very proud to have contributed to the great success that TAG is today, with an ever-growing fleet of business aircraft.

Working in aviation requires long hours and consistent commitment, but I do it with great passion and support from family. I hope to inspire my 14-year-old son and others to join this amazing industry, perhaps starting with one of MCAST's aviation courses. Although Malta is a small island, the aviation sector has expanded significantly, offering great potential and opportunities for young people or anyone wishing to change careers and join the aviation fun!



# VICTORIA

# EBEJER

Hair Stylist

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I have been involved in the hairdressing industry since 2010. I obtained my City and Guilds certification through MCAST and graduated in 2013. After that I continued working in the same salon which had offered me an apprenticeship and where I have been working for the past 13 years. My role now is that of a senior hair stylist.

When MCAST opened the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Hairdressing course two years ago, I decided that I wanted to further my studies. So, after 11 years of working in the industry, I returned to the College and joined the first cohort of students enrolled in the Advanced Diploma in Hairdressing. To say the least, I was nervous after being in the industry and away from a school setting for so long. I was aware that there was going to be an age gap between the other students and myself, but I did not let all this stop me. The beginning was challenging, however I adapted to the new technologies and advancements the school system had made, as well as the new teaching strategies and assessment methods.

Thankfully, given my experience in the field, I was well familiar with most of what was being taught, and I had the privilege of aiding other students with their difficulties. I was able to brush up my skills and go back to the basics and refresh what I had learned years before. The most challenging part for me was trying to juggle attending school, working and maintaining a household. When assignments were given to us, house chores had to be put aside and I focused on doing well academically and still maintaining my focus at work. A lot of all-nighters were involved and a great deal of time management in order to be able to fit everything in, but my passion for my work and my eagerness to learn kept me going.

During my two-year course, as part of a final assessment, together with my classmates I was able to plan, organise and present a hair show, where all students got to showcase their work on models with a specific theme. Preparations for the hair show themed Misfits took place throughout the second year. Students worked individually and together towards a successful and high standard hair show. This was quite a nerve wrecking, yet fun process, as everyone had to create a unique look promoting our creativity and skillset to showcase what we learned throughout the course. The final show, attended by various stakeholders in the field of hairdressing, was a presentation everyone was proud of. The Institute of Community Services management, lecturers and students all worked very hard to present an outstanding hair show which was very well received.

The end of the course was a bittersweet experience as I was over the moon that I managed to complete my Advanced Diploma, but also sad because I had to say goodbye to many new friends. The Advanced Diploma opened up an opportunity to further my studies at degree level. After being part of the first cohort graduating with an Advanced Diploma in Hairdressing, I decided to further my studies and I am currently reading for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Vocational Education and Training. During this course I am able to study how to apply my knowledge and skills in hairdressing and beauty and how to pass them on to secondary school students. In addition, I shall also practise my people training skills in the hairdressing industry. I am grateful to MCAST for providing me with the great opportunity to study as a mature student. I intend to continue pursuing my journey as a student for years to come.

# RACHELLE

**Artist, Arts Manager and Small Business Owner**

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# DEGUARA

I set foot at MCAST three years ago, uncertain of what to expect. After deciding to take my art seriously and pursue studies in the art industry, I knew I wanted a course that was practice based and inclusive of all aspects of the performing arts sector. While researching, I discovered that some of the lecturers were industry professionals recognized for their innovation and expertise. At that moment, I knew this was the right course for me, so I applied.

The three years have now flown by, and what I am left with are not only invaluable skills but also profound friendships that continue to shape my practice every day. As a trans-disciplinary artist I find myself working alongside different mediums from both the performative and the visual arts. I had the opportunity to curate my first show which commemorated 10 years of the Women's Rights Foundation and worked together with 12 local and international artists on the collective show XQXS - Xewka F'Qalbi Xewka F'Sormi. Now, as a freelance artist, I create my own work which is very activist in nature and helps other artists materialise their own art from inception through development to final presentation.

As the owner of Mellowmoon Studio, the performing arts course influenced my entrepreneurial mindset and demonstrated how creativity can drive innovation. Through my work as a jewellery designer, the course broadened my skills in sustainability, product development, management and marketing. What began as a personal project to sustain my studies during my student years, has evolved into successful pop-up events showcasing small businesses, fostering a collaborative community experience.

During my three years of study towards my degree, I was able to produce work that pushed me to think creatively and outside the box. One of the standout experiences during my course was collaborating on a community-based theatre project focused on eating disorders with Dar Kenn Għal Saħħtek. This project was recognized with the Best Community Project award at 'Il-Premju għall-Arti 2023' organised by Arts Council Malta. I played a key role as the dramaturg and a performer in this successful production directed by Tyrone Grima.

MCAST has taught me the virtue of patience when working with people from all different walks of life and also equipped me with the life skills I use every day. It has altered the way I see certain aspects of the industry. Now, I see them with an informed eye, and am able to critically analyse and use the tools I have so as to do better.

The course created a space for me to discuss and have some of my questions answered. It gave me the opportunity to meet wonderful people who have now become collaborators and empowered me through the process of education.

During my time at MCAST, I continued to establish myself as an artist within the Maltese art scene. I participated in art exhibitions, created and sold some of my best work, and built around me a network of professional artists that I am now aware of.

This course was a journey of intellectual, spiritual and physical empowerment that I believe every artist can benefit from.





# ADRIAN

**Self-Employed,  
Electrical Installation Works**

# XIBERRAS

My journey at MCAST started in 2012. What attracted me most to MCAST was the College's practical approach to teaching and learning. I finished my secondary education with no formal qualifications. In MCAST I saw hope for a concrete opportunity to succeed in education and training, in order to secure a better future.

With just a school leaving certificate, I enrolled in the Foundation Certificate in Engineering Skills, which exposed me to a number of engineering subjects as well as helped me strengthen my competencies in key skills. On the successful completion of this year, I then enrolled in the Level 3 Diploma in Electrical Installations, which strengthened my theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field. In the following year, I progressed to the Advanced Diploma in Electrical Systems – Level 4.

During the first year of this course, I started an apprenticeship. Looking back, the apprenticeship was a crucial component of my education and training at MCAST and essentially shaped my career. Although many of the study units that we covered at College contained extensive practical components in the workshops, the apprenticeship truly allowed me to apply the theories and practical competencies learned at the College in real-world scenarios. It provided a real work experience in the sector – an experience which also enriched me with other skills, including teamwork, collaborative working and problem-solving skills. Out of my own free will, during the first year I also enrolled in the MCAST part-time course leading to the Wireman's Licence A examination. This was very challenging and required loads of dedication, but with the help of the very dedicated lecturers, together with my family's encouragement, I succeeded.

Nowadays, MCAST Level 4 Electrical students can benefit from Authorisation A and B theory examination exemptions on successful completion of their Advanced Diploma.

However, this MCAST-REWS agreement was not yet in place during the time of my studies. For this reason, after finishing my Advanced Diploma in Electrical Systems, I subsequently enrolled in the relevant MCAST part-time course in preparation for the Electrical Licence B, while also working full-time with my former apprenticeship employer, who kept me on board as a full-time employee after completing my full-time studies.

After successfully obtaining both Electrical Licences A and B, I remained in full-time employment with the same company for another five years. After a total of seven years as an employee, I felt it was the right time to take a leap of faith and start my own business in electrical installations and plumbing. It has now been three and a half years since I became self-employed, and I have never looked back. I am truly satisfied with the decision I took.

From a student with no formal qualifications, I became a qualified electrician, transitioning from employee to employer. Today, I have the privilege of employing young people and mentoring MCAST student apprentices, who I hope will follow in my footsteps.

Looking back, it was a long and challenging journey, but MCAST certainly gave me a pathway leading me to achieving my goals. The education I received at MCAST went beyond textbooks. It shaped me into the confident and capable individual I am today.

# MARK

Senior Lecturer

# THEUMA

I consider myself a curious person, with many interests and always keen to explore and learn new things. Since childhood, I always enjoyed building my own toys more than playing with off-the-shelf ones. Craft materials were never in short supply. Cardboard sheets were cut, bent and turned into buildings, cars, truss bridges and so much more. I was always scavenging for broken or discarded items and thinking of ways on how to repurpose them into one of my contraptions. Balsa wood gliders and water-bottle rockets were undoubtedly my favourites, given the sheer number that kept piling up in my bedroom! Holidays were never boring, as idle time was an opportunity to think about and execute my next project. And yes, I had very patient and understanding parents!

Perhaps, my interest in so many areas influenced my choice of studies, starting from the Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) at O-Level and continuing with Pure Mathematics, Physics and Engineering Drawing at A-Level. My Systems of Knowledge project was very much engineering oriented and consisted of a functional, variable-pitch, helicopter propeller! Following my sixth form years, I took a gap year, since I was still quite undecided on the career I wanted to pursue. This turned out to be instrumental for my future. I sought employment with a small graphic design company where, within a short time, I got acquainted with relevant software applications. I became involved in the design of a local, monthly magazine, and other smaller graphic design jobs in between, until one fine day I was asked to deliver one-to-one introductory sessions on the software that I was using on a daily basis. Although a bit hesitant at first, I took the plunge, and soon discovered the satisfaction that could be achieved through teaching others. I could see progressive improvement in my students, as a result of my contribution. Both my parents were educators so, most probably, my teacher genes kicked in. I finally discovered what I wanted to do. I was hooked on teaching!

In October 1996, I started reading for a Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Technical Subjects, at the University of Malta. The first couple of years were particularly challenging since, during my gap year, I had enrolled on a three-year part-time Draughtsmanship Diploma (coordinated by the Education Division), that I was determined to complete. Consequently, I had to juggle between projects, assignments and examinations for both study programmes. Thankfully, but with a lot of support, I managed to complete both.

With the diploma, degree and teacher's warrant in hand, I started my first year of teaching (2000–2001) at the former Technical Institute, Paola, where I taught Graphical Communication, Computer-Aided Design and Information Technology. When MCAST was inaugurated, I was amongst the first educators to join the College. Most of my teaching career at MCAST was at the Institute for the Creative Arts, Mosta. During the first eight years as an educator, I obtained two further qualifications, namely a Diploma in IT (2000-2002) and a Master in Business Administration (2003-2006), on a part-time basis, at the University of Malta.

Three years after completing my MBA, the Institute for the Creative Arts saw a change in management, and in January 2009, I took the opportunity to assume the role of Deputy Director. This was a position I held for ten years, and included various roles such as resource management, project management, event management, procurement, tender adjudication, staff enrolment, dissemination, academic programme management, student support, and coordinator duties, amongst other.

Although this position was challenging, it offered an opportunity to learn about so many processes that are instrumental for the function of the College, and that many a time are taken for granted. Throughout my management years, the passion for the classroom and contact with

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students only grew stronger, and in September 2019, I decided to return to my roots, in the position of Senior Lecturer II. Although fully qualified for the position, I still felt the need to further my knowledge and skills.

At the time, MCAST was offering a number of EU-funded Level 7 qualifications, and I seized the opportunity to apply for a Master of Arts in Product Design. Although this was not my first Level 7 qualification, it was my first formal qualification with MCAST as an awarding body. I chose this study programme because I saw it as an opportunity to further my skills in an area that could bring together many subjects particularly in the fields of the Arts, Design, Science and Technology.

My newly-acquired skills, combined with my previous experience, would allow me to offer better, up-to-date pedagogical content to students at various levels, including EQF Level 6, within the fields of Art and Design.

Reading for a Master of Arts in Product Design was possibly one of my best career decisions. The course experience was a positive one. As with other study programmes at this level, it brought about its own set of challenges. Nonetheless, with commitment, research, and most importantly, tutor guidance, the programme was completed successfully.

The teaching methodology at MCAST needs little introduction and is well proven. This study programme was no exception. It was well structured and delivered by dedicated lecturers, all of whom were experts in their respective fields, and who were always very supportive, both in class, and beyond lecture hours.

The subjects offered were all very interesting and varied, providing the right dose of theory and application. The course helped me look at Design not only from an aesthetical point of view (which is very important), but also from a functional, psychological, engineering and scientific way. This Master's programme helped me consolidate and combine the skills that I had obtained, in multiple disciplines, throughout the years. Following my studies at MCAST, I feel more confident to embark on new projects and step outside my comfort zone. More importantly, as an educator, I am in a position to provide a better service to my students. I can guide them better in class, throughout their coursework, and in their respective dissertation projects.

I would highly recommend the Master of Arts in Product Design with MCAST for those who are willing to further their studies in the various fields of Product Design and are willing to take on a challenge that will bring with it an acquisition of many skills, confidence, experience and a lot of satisfaction!

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# ANGELA

**Performer  
and Disability Rights Advocate**

# BETTONI

When I began my Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts at MCAST in 2019, I never imagined I would continue onto a degree, eventually standing here today as a Bachelor of Arts graduate in Creative Arts—the first person with Down Syndrome in Malta to achieve this.

Overall, my six years at MCAST were very positive. Many lecturers were encouraging and supportive, treating me as they would any other student while also making necessary adjustments. Their belief in me built my confidence. In my first year (Level 4.1), I was assigned a teaching assistant for two technical units, but when that arrangement did not continue the following year, I had to learn to adapt and manage independently. In Level 5.1, MCAST suggested I shift from a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts to one in Creative Arts, allowing me to select units that suited my abilities from Creative Media Production, Journalism, and Photography. Socially, my classmates always included me in group activities, fostering a sense of belonging on campus.

One of the highlights of my journey was the Erasmus experiences I had through MCAST. My first Erasmus+ VET in 2019 took me to Chickenshed, an inclusive theatre in London, where I discovered my passion for advocacy. This experience ignited my mission to promote more inclusion in the performing arts. My Bachelor of Art dissertation focused on 'Representation for People with Learning Disabilities in the Performing Arts in Malta.' I later had two more Erasmus experiences in Greece. These grants also covered my dad's expenses to accompany and assist me when needed.

During my degree, I had several work placements. I job-shadowed an inclusive choreographer on two mixed-ability shows for the ŽiguŽajg Festival. In 2023, I did a placement in the UK with Stoppap, a professional mixed-ability

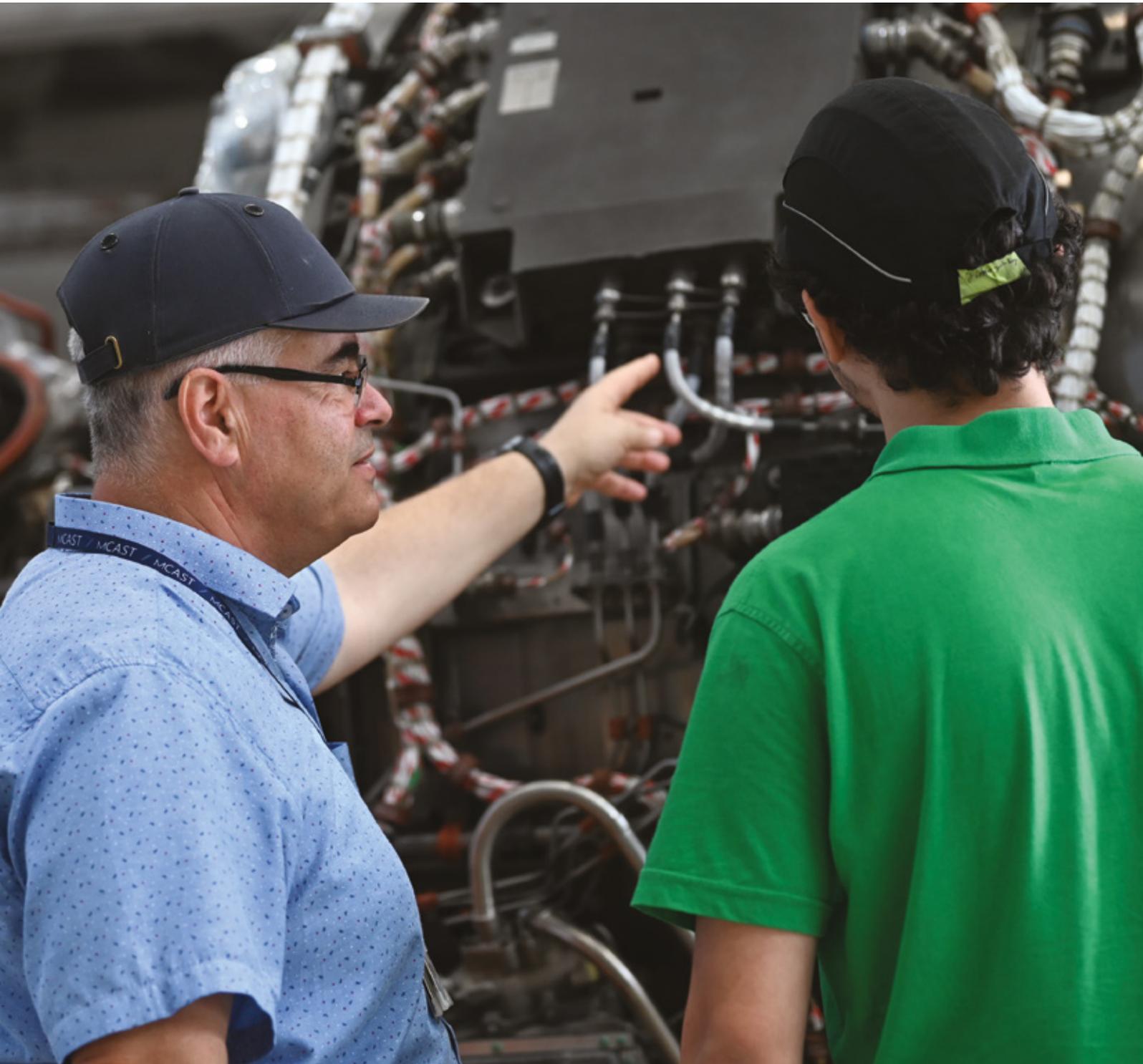
dance company. My final placement was with Malta's first multisensory performance, Snowglobe. These experiences led me to discover my true passion: dance and physical theatre with mixed-ability casts.

After completing my Bachelor of Art in June, I was awarded my first artist residency through the Professional Media Presence EU project. I spent two weeks in Venice with my choreographer and dance partner, where we developed an inclusive dance performance called BALM, inspired by monologues I had written. This summer, we performed it at the Dance Festival Malta and at the Venere in Teatro Dance Festival in Venice.

I am now pursuing a Diploma in Community Access for Disabled People at the University of Malta. This course will enable me to apply what I learned in performing arts to advocate for more inclusion and representation of people with learning disabilities in the industry. I have already started this work; at this year's State of the Arts Symposium organized by Arts Council Malta, I presented my dissertation findings with my tutor, Dr. Tyrone Grima. We are also set to present a paper on my research at the International Conference on 'Theatre/Drama & Inclusive Education' in Greece next year. In the coming months, besides performing, I plan to adapt a manuscript I have written into a stage performance—funded by Arts Council Malta.

My message to students with learning disabilities is: do not assume that higher education is not for you. If it is something you truly want, explore your options and seek the support you need. And my message to MCAST is to continue focusing on a person-centred approach, moving beyond equality to equity. Students with learning disabilities have so much to contribute when given the chance.





# ALFRED

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# GALEA

Lecturer

At almost age 57 and looking back in time, I cannot regret any of the decisions I made along the way related to my career. When I finished my secondary education, we did not have as many opportunities as there are today. One could either choose to proceed on an academic route at the so-called Sixth Form, or opt for a vocational route at the Technical Institute. Being a person who always obtained better marks in Mathematics and Physics, I was somewhat confused about whether to select the Sixth Form route to study for A-Levels in Mathematics and Physics, or to select the other option. I remember talking with a friend of mine who told me, "There is a very good technical school called Fellenberg. Why don't you apply?" And I said: "Why not give it a try?" Having good grades in Mathematics and Physics O-Levels, it was rather easy for me to be one of the 40 students selected to start the five-year intensive course in Industrial Electronics. That was the first career-related decision I do not regret. I started to enjoy discovering electronics and mechanical engineering at the Centre, performed well in the course assessment examinations, and learned a lot through the high element of hands-on practice.

After five years at Fellenberg, I became qualified as an Industrial Electronics Technician and was lucky enough to discover a vacancy for an Avionics Tradesman with the Maltese national airline, Air Malta. I was employed by Air Malta in September 1990, shortly after completing the Fellenberg course a couple of months earlier. My first years at Air Malta were spent between the Avionics Workshop and the Aircraft Base Maintenance Hangar. Throughout those years, I enhanced my knowledge in electronics by performing specialized maintenance on aircraft avionics and electrical parts, as well as blending the electronics/mechanical knowledge I gained at Fellenberg with hands-on experience

in aircraft maintenance while performing maintenance directly on the aircraft inside the hangar during deep maintenance winter grounding checks, technically called C and D checks. Along with this technical experience, Air Malta helped me advance academically, since classroom training in aviation was ongoing, sometimes even mandatory by regulation. Furthermore, the workshop and hangar experience helped me build competences to work in a team and enhance supervision and leadership skills. This led to my appointment as 'Workshop in Charge' (Workshop Manager) in 1995. In 2002, I decided to shift my focus within aircraft maintenance and began working in the Air Malta Line Maintenance Department. In this role, maintenance needed to be completed between flights, which required working under significant pressure due to the limited time available to solve any issues. Additionally, I had to adapt to a wide range of working conditions, from extreme heat during the summer to freezing temperatures in the winter, and from bright sunny days to heavy rain. This work often involved long hours, both day and night.

This experience in Line Maintenance also motivated me to pursue further studies. I began preparing for the B2 (Avionics) Aircraft Maintenance Licence examinations with the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority. Earning this licence allowed me to certify an aircraft as fit for its next flight following maintenance.

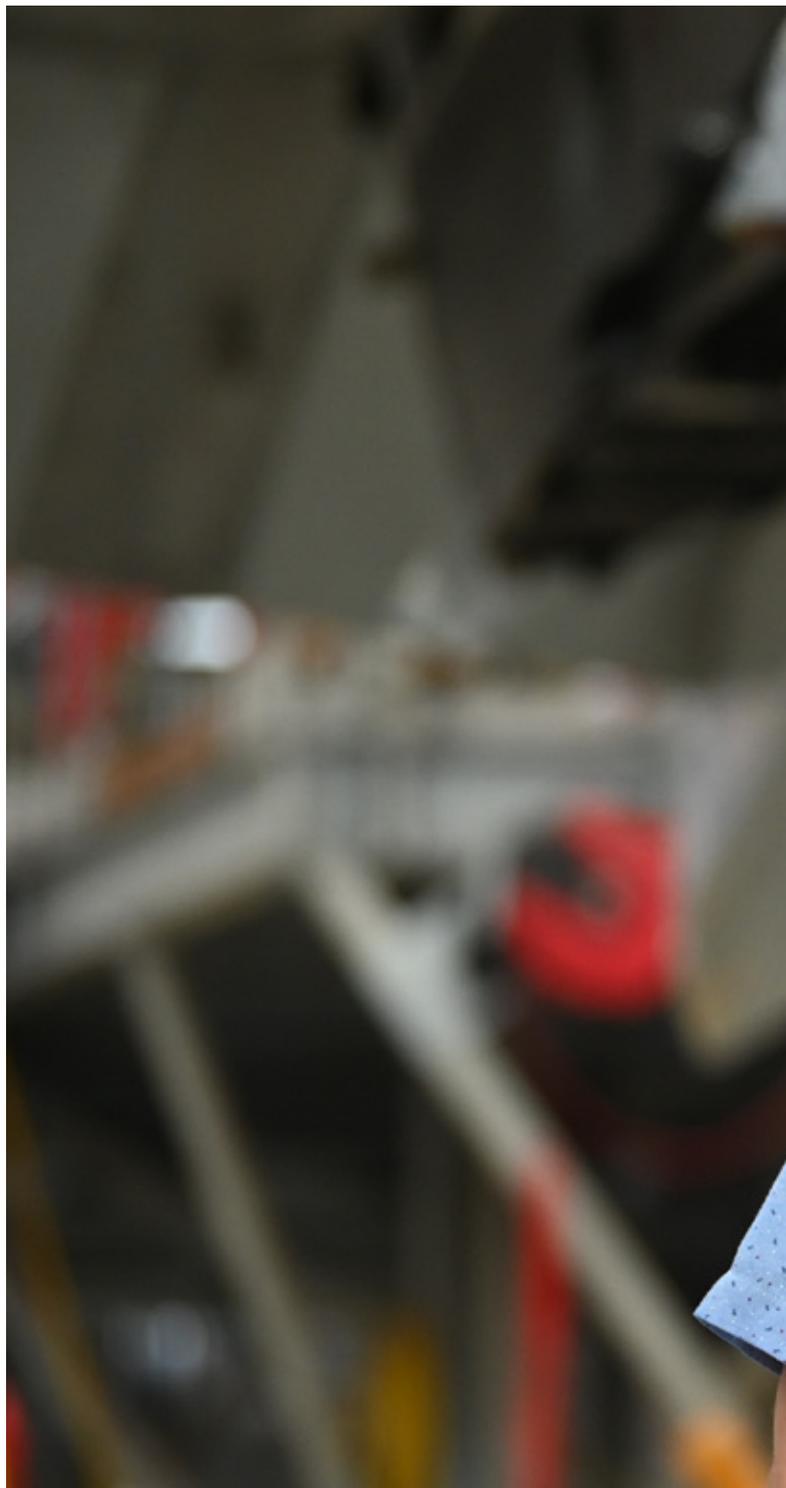
In 2005, after more than three years working in Line Maintenance, I changed my career in aircraft maintenance and embarked on a new experience as an Auditor with the Air Malta Engineering Quality Department. This job involved conducting inspections to ensure that aircraft continuing airworthiness was compliant with regulations through proper maintenance activities. The experience I gained throughout the years was invaluable for performing this job properly.

Late in 2006, I took the opportunity to join MCAST as a lecturer, first in Electronics and later also in Aircraft Maintenance. Joining MCAST was a big challenge for me, as I had no previous experience in teaching. However, my experience in the industry helped me be selected for the role, as well as to adapt myself rather well to this new career adventure.

Once lecturing at MCAST, the same institution also helped me blend my hands-on experience with the requirements for vocational teaching abilities by giving me the opportunity to earn the BTEC Certificate in Vocational Teaching and Training (VTT). Later on, I was given the opportunity to obtain a first degree in Electronics Engineering from MCAST. This enhanced my level of knowledge in Electronics, making me able to help students at higher levels.

Having enhanced my knowledge in electronics, I then felt the need to improve my academic understanding of Aviation Maintenance. This was achieved by conducting research on Human Factors in Aviation, leading to the MCAST Master in Research Methods, with a dissertation entitled 'A Study about the Effects COVID-19 has had on the Human Factors within the Maltese Aircraft Maintenance Industry,' submitted in January 2024. Human Factors in Aviation is one of the main subjects I currently lecture at MCAST.

Such a journey shows that even when reaching a certain age, one cannot say that what has been done is enough. There is always a way to improve. Accumulating hands-on industrial experience was essential for facilitating the learning and understanding of my students at MCAST. However, I feel that by advancing academically through obtaining two postgraduate qualifications with MCAST, I am now in a better position to help MCAST students be well prepared, just as I was when I left Fellenberg in 1990 and started my career in Electronics and Aircraft Maintenance.





# RUTH

**Portfolio Administrator**

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# FITENI

I am Ruth Fiteni, a 23 year old working at Bank of Valletta's Gozo Investment Centre as a Portfolio Administrator, a post that I have been occupying for the past four years.

Enrolling at MCAST Gozo was one of the best decisions I made in my educational journey. After completing secondary school, I applied for the Level 3 Diploma in Business at the MCAST Gozo Campus and, on completing it, driven by a keen interest in the business and financial sectors, I progressed to the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Finance and Insurance. At that time, I was seeking an educational environment that offered practical knowledge and skills which could translate directly into the workplace. MCAST's mix of academic and hands-on learning with real-world applications was exactly what I needed.

The curriculum at MCAST Gozo was well rounded and industry focused, preparing me extensively for the demands of the business world. The courses were designed to cover theoretical concepts but also to gain hands-on experience through various projects, case studies, and internships. This practical approach allowed me to understand the dynamics of the business environment, from financial management to customer relations, and equipped me with the necessary soft skills and confidence to enter the workforce. The apprenticeship was an invaluable experience – both as a learning experience as well as for providing a seamless transition from education and training to employment.

After completing my studies at MCAST, I was well prepared to step into the professional world and so I began my career with Bank of Valletta. The experience, mentorship, and guidance I received during my time at MCAST Gozo were instrumental in shaping my professional path, giving me the tools and insights needed to succeed in a competitive and ever-evolving field.

Reflecting on my journey, I can confidently say that MCAST Gozo was pivotal in laying the groundwork for my career. The combination of excellent staff, practical learning opportunities, and a supportive environment, made it possible for me to achieve my personal and professional goals.



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