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GENERAL INFORMATION				
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<p>The MCAST Quality Policy has been revised and expanded to address the requirements identified by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) during the most recent External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit. These updates were necessary to ensure full alignment with the MFHEA Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards.</p> <p>As part of this revision, the policy now provides broader and more comprehensive coverage of the principles, procedures, and quality mechanisms expected by the MFHEA. The expanded sections explicitly reflect the standards and expectations set out by the authority, strengthening MCAST's commitment to continuous quality enhancement and regulatory compliance.</p>				
	Document change history			
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Document users are encouraged **NOT** to retain printed hard copies of the Quality Management System documents. If, however a hard copy of the document is required, the user is to ensure before use that the printed document is the current revision.

Continuous Improvement

Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be followed, implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated! Contact your Document Controller on Ext 7148 **today!**



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IMPORTANT NOTE – THIS DOCUMENT IS AN EXTRACT OF THE MCAST QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

1. Introduction

The MCAST Quality Policy has been established and approved by the College's Senior Executive Management as a formal expression of its commitment to quality and continuous improvement. It is underpinned by two core statements, i.e., the Mission Statement and the Quality Policy Statement, which were drafted at the inception of the College's Quality Management System and constitute the foundational pillars upon which this system is built.

The Policy articulates MCAST's mission and quality objectives by defining what the College seeks to achieve in meeting the expectations of its stakeholders, as well as by outlining the principles and approaches through which these objectives are realised. Central to the Quality Policy is a culture of continual improvement, founded on fostering a proactive attitude towards enhancement, developing effective systems, skills and tools to support improvement, and systematically identifying areas for development through measurable and evidence-based processes. This document provides an overview of the MCAST Quality Policy and explains the key elements that underpin its implementation and ongoing review.

The Quality Policy is reviewed by the Vocational and Professional Council for continuing suitability. The Policy is documented, communicated and explained at all levels.

2. Scope

The Quality Policy applies to all academic and administrative units of MCAST, including all Institutes, departments, centres, offices and services that contribute to the learner experience and academic outcomes, and to all staff, students and external stakeholders involved in the design, delivery, monitoring, review and continuous improvement of MCAST's provision.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Quality Policy is to define the institutional framework through which the College assures and enhances the quality and academic standards for the provision of its further and higher education, its research activities and student support services.

It establishes the parameters within which the College organises, governs and oversees its internal processes, and serves as the overarching institutional reference for MCAST's internal quality assurance and management system.

This system is implemented as a continuous and cyclical process, grounded in the principles of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, to support systematic monitoring, evaluation and continuous enhancement. It is supported by detailed quality assurance manuals, procedures and operational guidelines, which set out how quality assurance and enhancement processes are implemented in practice.

The Policy therefore establishes the principles, governance arrangements and institutional responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement at MCAST, ensuring that quality forms an integral part of the College's strategic management, planning and decision-making processes. Therefore, the purpose of this Policy is to:



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- define the scope and structure of quality assurance at institutional level; clarify how quality assurance supports academic standards, accountability and continuous improvement; and, provide a coherent reference point for the implementation of quality-related policies, procedures and processes across the College.

The Quality Policy underpins a continuous quality cycle by providing a common reference for the development, implementation, evaluation and refinement of quality assurance manuals, procedures, guidelines and operational tools.

4. MCAST Mission and Quality Policy Statements

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy.

QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

The College fulfils its Mission by ensuring that all programmes are designed, validated and periodically reviewed with the involvement of staff, students, industry and other stakeholders in order to ensure that their expectations are met, and even exceeded, when these programmes are being realised.

The College aims to achieve this by committing to a structured Quality Management System that fulfils, as a minimum, the requirements of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education and, where applicable, other international standards in order to ensure continuous improvement.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is committed to assuring and continuously enhancing the quality and standards of its further and higher education provision, research activities and student support services, in fulfilment of its Mission and strategic objectives.

Quality at MCAST is student-centred, inclusive, evidence-based and enhancement-led. The College ensures that its programmes and services are relevant, coherent and responsive to national and international standards, societal needs and labour-market expectations.

Quality assurance is an integral and systematic component of MCAST’s governance and strategic management. Ultimate responsibility for academic quality and standards rests with the College’s governing and senior executive bodies, supported by academic governance structures and a structured integrated internal quality management system (QMS) that operates across all levels of the institution championed by appointed Quality Assurance Contact Persons in every institute/centre/department and student body/representation.

MCAST actively and systematically involves students, staff, employers, industry partners, alumni and other external stakeholders in the continuous enhancement processes of its QMS. Feedback and



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evidence generated through these mechanisms are formally reviewed, analysed and used to inform institutional planning, decision-making and continuous improvement.

MCAST operates an internal quality assurance system aligned, as a minimum, with the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (MFHEA) underpinned by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This system ensures transparency, accountability, effective oversight and the continuous enhancement of student learning experience and institutional performance.

5. Quality Assurance Framework and Principles

MCAST's quality assurance and enhancement activities are guided by the principles of student-centricity and inclusive learning, academic integrity and accountability, evidence-based decision-making, continuous enhancement beyond compliance and transparency through stakeholder engagement.

MCAST operates an integrated internal quality assurance framework that provides a structured, systematic and institution-wide approach to assuring and enhancing quality and academic standards that follows the PDCA cycle.

The quality assurance framework is designed to:

- support consistency and coherence across Institutes, centres and modes of delivery;
- enable effective institutional oversight and accountability; and,
- promote continuous enhancement of learning, teaching, assessment and student support.

The framework is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Student-centricity and inclusive quality assurance**
Quality assurance processes are designed to support effective learning and fair assessment and to respond to the needs of a diverse student population.
- **Enhancement-led approach**
Quality assurance is not limited to compliance with minimum requirements but is used proactively to identify strengths, address areas for development and improve institutional performance.
- **Evidence-based decision-making**
Quality assurance activities are informed by the systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information, supporting objective evaluation and informed planning.
- **Shared responsibility for quality**
Responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement is shared across governance bodies, management, academic and professional staff, students and relevant external stakeholders, within clearly defined roles and reporting arrangements.
- **Transparency and accountability**
Quality assurance processes and outcomes are documented, monitored and subject to review, supporting institutional accountability and fostering trust among stakeholders.



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These principles guide the design, implementation, monitoring and review of all quality assurance and enhancement activities at MCAST and inform the development of related policies, procedures and operational processes.

6. Alignment with Regulatory and Quality Frameworks

MCAST’s internal quality assurance framework is aligned, as a minimum, with the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education and the Internal Quality Assurance Standards issued by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).

For its higher education provision, MCAST’s quality assurance framework is informed by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), ensuring coherence with recognised European good practice.

This Policy provides the institutional basis through which MCAST meets national regulatory requirements and supports ongoing compliance, monitoring and enhancement across its academic and support functions.

7. Governance, Leadership and Strategic Integration

Quality assurance and enhancement form an integral part of MCAST’s governance and strategic management framework and are embedded within institutional planning, decision-making and performance oversight.

Ultimate responsibility for academic quality and standards rests with MCAST’s governing and senior executive bodies, namely:

- the Board of Governors (BoG),
- the Vocational and Professional Council (VPC),
- the Administrative Council (AC) and
- the Board of Studies (BoS),

in line with the College’s statutory responsibilities, as defined in the MCAST Act 2023. Academic governance structures provide oversight of quality assurance and enhancement activities and ensure that institutional priorities, academic standards and quality outcomes are aligned.

Quality assurance processes are implemented and monitored at institutional, institute, centre and programme levels through established governance and management structures. Within this framework, the Quality Assurance Department, under the direction of the Deputy Principal responsible, plays a central coordinating role by supporting the consistent application of quality assurance processes and promoting a shared culture of quality across the College. Through collaboration, guidance and oversight, the Department contributes to the ongoing enhancement of practices and the continuous improvement of MCAST’s internal quality assurance system.

Information arising from quality assurance activities is systematically escalated through defined reporting lines to support institutional oversight, risk management and evidence-based strategic decisions. Through this governance structure, MCAST ensures that quality assurance and enhancement are not stand-alone activities, but are fully integrated into the College’s strategic objectives, operational planning and continuous improvement processes.



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Reference Document

- *Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology Act (2023). Act No. XXXII of 2023. Laws of Malta.*
<https://legislation.mt/eli/act/2023/32/eng>

8. Roles and Responsibilities and Reporting Lines

MCAST ensures that roles, responsibilities and reporting lines for quality assurance and enhancement are clearly defined, communicated and consistently applied across the institution.

Responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement are allocated at multiple levels, ensuring effective ownership, accountability and institutional oversight:

- **Institutional governance and senior management**
provide strategic direction and institutional oversight for quality assurance and academic standards, ensuring that quality outcomes inform strategic planning and decision-making.
- **Academic governance and Institute-level leadership**
oversee the implementation, monitoring and review of quality assurance processes within Institutes and other academic areas, such as Centres, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and standards.
- **Programme leadership and academic teams**
are responsible for the quality of programme delivery, assessment practices, annual monitoring and the identification and implementation of improvement actions at programme level.
- **Quality assurance structures and designated quality roles**
support the development, coordination, monitoring and review of the internal quality assurance framework, and provide guidance and methodological support, while facilitating the process.
- **Students and external stakeholders**
contribute to quality assurance and enhancement through structured mechanisms for feedback, representation, consultation and review.

Defined reporting lines ensure that information arising from quality assurance activities is escalated appropriately from programme and Institute/Centre levels to institutional governance and management structures, enabling effective oversight, follow-up and continuous improvement.

9. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes

MCAST assures and enhances the quality and academic standards of its provision through a coherent and integrated set of quality assurance and enhancement processes operating across all levels of the institution.

These processes include, as appropriate:

- **Programme design, approval and change control**, to ensure that programmes are coherent, fit for purpose, aligned with qualification frameworks and responsive to stakeholder needs.



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- **Ongoing monitoring and review of programmes**, providing assurance that programmes are operating effectively and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Periodic review of programmes and provision**, enabling reflective evaluation of programme content, delivery, assessment practices and learning outcomes.
- **Systematic student feedback mechanisms**, at course and programme levels, to inform enhancement of the learning and assessment experience.
- **Engagement of external stakeholders**, including employers, industry partners, professional bodies and alumni, to support relevance and externality.
- **Internal evaluation, audits and management review**, to assess the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements and institutional performance.
- **Planned follow-up and improvement actions**, ensuring that findings from monitoring, review, audits and feedback lead to documented actions with clear responsibility and oversight.

These processes operate as part of a continuous quality cycle and are designed to support both assurance of adherence to standards and beyond, as well as the ongoing enhancement of the student learning experience and institutional effectiveness.

10. The Integrated Quality Management System

In order to fulfil its obligations, the College has established and maintains a formal, structured, documented Integrated Quality Management System (QMS) that is focused on delivering added value to the customer, both internal and external, as identified by the organisation's Mission Statement and Quality Policy. The Quality Management System (QMS) of the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology is compliant with the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, in particular, MFHEA's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards. The Quality Assurance Department, together with the Principal, Deputy Principals, the Registrar and Institute Directors, is responsible for ensuring that , the academic and administrative processes, recorded in two dedicated Manuals of Procedures, are disseminated, regularly reviewed and updated. The Deputy Principals, together with the Institute Directors who are the owners of these dynamic processes and procedures, also have the responsibility of ensuring that their staff are *au courant* and compliant with the content of these manuals.

The academic domain incorporates two main key processes, namely:

1. Corporate Quality System Support processes, comprising of:

- a) Management Responsibility
- b) Administration of the QMS
- c) Measurement, Analysis and Improvement

2. Academic and Student Support Process comprising of:

- a) Curriculum Design, Development and Approval of VET Programmes/Courses
- b) The realisation of Programmes/Courses
- c) The realisation of Learner Support Services
- d) The realisation of Services to Industry



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e) The realisation of Research and Innovation Activities

The College management is, thus, committed to the implementation of the MCAST Integrated Quality Management System and continually improving its effectiveness. This is achieved through:

- a) Ensuring that all key administrative and academic processes are documented as part of the MCAST Integrated Quality Management System;
- b) Communicating the importance of identifying and fulfilling relevant stakeholder requirements;
- c) Ensuring compliance with the College Quality Policy;
- d) Applying the Plan, Do, Check Act (PDCA) cycle to achieve and review the quality objectives;
- e) Conducting management reviews; and,
- f) Ensuring the availability of resources.

The MCAST Integrated Quality Management System diagram provided as an appendix to this policy incorporates under its scope the following three MCAST domains (Governance, Administrative and Academic), namely:

- Domain 1: Board of Governors processes
- Domain 2: Administrative processes
- Domain 3: Academic processes (Teaching, learning, assessment and student support services key processes).

11. Information Management, Use of Evidence and Monitoring

MCAST ensures that quality assurance and enhancement activities are informed by the systematic collection, analysis and use of relevant qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Information used to support quality assurance includes, as appropriate, data and evidence relating to student performance, progression and completion, assessment outcomes, student, alumni and stakeholder feedback, programme monitoring and review outputs, and institutional performance indicators.

Evidence arising from quality assurance activities is reviewed at programme, Institute/Centre and institutional levels and is used to:

- support monitoring of academic standards and the effectiveness of provision;
- inform decision-making, planning and prioritisation of improvement actions; and,
- enable institutional oversight and risk awareness.

MCAST maintains structured arrangements for information management and reporting to ensure that quality-related evidence is reliable, timely and accessible for the purposes of monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.

12. Communication, Follow-up and Continuous Improvement

MCAST ensures that outcomes arising from quality assurance and enhancement activities are systematically followed up and translated into planned improvement actions.



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Findings from monitoring, reviews, audits, evaluations and feedback are documented and used to identify actions for improvement. These actions are assigned clear responsibility and timeframes and are monitored through established reporting and governance arrangements.

Progress on improvement actions is reviewed at appropriate levels of the institution to ensure effectiveness, accountability and timely completion. Where necessary, actions are escalated through institutional structures to support resolution and oversight.

MCAST promotes transparency and shared ownership of quality by communicating, as appropriate, the outcomes of quality assurance processes and the actions taken to students, staff and relevant external stakeholders, thereby supporting trust, engagement and continuous improvement.

13. Review, Approval and Publication

This Quality Policy is approved through the Vocational and Professional Council and is subject to periodic review to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness and alignment with institutional strategy, regulatory requirements and good practice.

The Policy is reviewed at planned intervals and updated as necessary in response to internal evaluation outcomes, MFHEA findings, legislative or regulatory changes and strategic developments.

Approved versions of the Quality Policy are formally controlled, communicated and made publicly available to ensure transparency, institutional accountability and consistent application across the College.

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APPENDIX 1: Integrated Quality Management Systems
