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GENERAL INFORMATION

1	Document category	Policy and Procedure		
2	Document approver	VPC		
3	Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update	All Staff and Students		
4	Document change history			
	A	Document Change Tracking Number	Date released	Change originator
		84/2026	07/07/2026	Lorna Bonnici West; Albert Agius; Caroline Demarco; Stephen Sammut; Thea Lynn Cesare
	Change history (Section/change details)			
	This document establishes the policy and procedure governing the award of scholarships at MCAST, ensuring transparency, fairness, and alignment with institutional priorities. It defines the end-to-end process for advertising, application, evaluation, selection, and award of scholarships administered by the College. It outlines governance structures, including the Scholarship Selection Board, eligibility criteria, and appeals mechanisms. The procedure distinguishes between scholarships where MCAST undertakes selection and those where beneficiaries are nominated externally, clarifying MCAST's advisory role in such cases. It also sets out requirements for agreements, data protection, and record-keeping, ensuring compliance with institutional and regulatory standards.			
Document change history				
	Document Change Tracking Number	Date released	Change originator	
	Change history (Section/change details)			

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I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is committed to promoting equitable access to education, academic excellence, and research advancement through the awarding of scholarships. This policy establishes the principles governing the transparent, fair, and merit-based allocation of scholarship opportunities offered by or administered through the College. In this context, the MCAST Policy for the Award of Scholarships shall be based on the following principles:

- Transparency and Fairness
- Merit-Based Selection
- Accountability and Governance
- Alignment with Institutional and Strategic Priorities
- Compliance with Admission Requirements and Process Alignment
- Rights of Applicants
- Contractual Obligations
- Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Partnership and Funding Integrity

This policy applies to all scholarships administered by MCAST where the College is responsible for the selection of beneficiaries. It governs the conduct of applicants, evaluation bodies, and administrative units involved in the scholarship process. This policy shall apply where the scholarship funding framework requires MCAST to undertake a formal selection process. In such cases, the College shall invoke the applicable Scholarship Procedure to operationalise the principles outlined herein. Where the funding source designates or nominates a beneficiary directly, MCAST shall not apply the selection procedure. In such cases, MCAST shall recommend to the funder governance, contractual, and compliance arrangements consistent with those applied by the College when administering scholarship funds directly, without assuming responsibility for their adoption or implementation.

Scholarship schemes arising from external funding bodies, institutional initiatives, or collaborative partnerships shall align with this policy, while also respecting any additional conditions imposed by the respective funding source.

MCAST shall ensure that all scholarship opportunities falling within the scope of funds administered by the College are publicly advertised, clearly communicated, and administered through processes that uphold fairness, objectivity, and equal opportunity for all eligible applicants. Scholarship awards shall be based on defined eligibility criteria and an impartial evaluation of candidates' academic qualifications, competencies, and potential, with selection decisions being evidence-based and consistently applied. The College shall implement formal governance structures to oversee the selection process, ensuring that decisions are properly documented, justified, and subject to appropriate oversight, with all individuals involved acting with integrity and declaring any conflicts of interest. Scholarships shall support MCAST's academic, research, and strategic objectives, contributing to the development of skills, innovation, and knowledge within priority areas.

The scholarship selection process shall be administered in conjunction with the College's admissions and enrolment processes, ensuring that both operate in a coordinated and non-prejudicial manner. The award of a scholarship shall not constitute automatic admission to a programme of study and shall not replace the requirement for applicants to fulfil the College's academic admission criteria and comply with established enrolment procedures.

Applicants shall have the right to receive timely communication regarding the outcome of their application, and MCAST shall provide a structured mechanism for appeals to ensure that any concerns regarding the fairness or integrity of the selection process are appropriately addressed. All scholarship awards shall be formalised through appropriate agreements, clearly outlining the conditions,



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responsibilities, and expectations of the recipient and any involved parties, and such agreements shall be binding and enforceable.

MCAST shall ensure that all personal data and application materials are processed, stored, and retained in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and institutional policies, safeguarding applicant confidentiality at all stages. Where scholarships are supported through external funding, partnerships, or sponsored initiatives, MCAST shall ensure that roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clearly defined within arrangements under its administration and shall promote clarity in all external partnership agreements.

II. PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

This procedure establishes the process for advertising, receiving applications, evaluating, selecting, and issuing scholarship awards for students wishing to pursue studies at the college.

The aim of this document is to ensure transparency of the process and alignment with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) internal quality standards and regulations.

2. Scope

This procedure shall be invoked only in cases where the funding source requires MCAST to undertake the selection of the scholarship beneficiary through an established evaluation process. In situations where the funding source has already identified or nominated a preferred beneficiary, this procedure shall not apply. In such cases, MCAST shall advise the funding entity on the appropriate payment process and shall further recommend the establishment of any required agreements directly with the student, without assuming responsibility for their adoption or implementation.

This procedure applies to:

- all internal and external applicants seeking sponsorship through a scholarship to pursue their studies at MCAST,
- the Interview Board responsible for evaluating applications,
- administrative staff involved in the coordination and management of the process, as well as
- the respective Institute/Centre responsible for overseeing the academic components of the programme.

3. Definitions

- Scholarship - A financial award provided to a student to support the pursuit of studies at MCAST, which may include tuition fees, stipends, or other approved academic-related expenses.
- Funding Source / Funder - Any external or internal entity providing financial support for a scholarship, including private industry partners, national agencies, research programmes, or MCAST itself.
- Industry-Sponsored Scholarship - A scholarship funded by a private sector organisation with the aim of supporting student development, fostering innovation, and strengthening sector-specific skills.



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- d) Project-Based Funded Scholarship - A scholarship financed through national or international programmes or initiatives (e.g. Xjenza Malta) intended to build research capacity and support postgraduate studies under defined project outcomes.
- e) Internally Funded Scholarship - A scholarship financed directly by MCAST as part of its academic, research, or strategic institutional priorities.
- f) Beneficiary / Scholarship Recipient - The student selected to receive the scholarship funding in accordance with the eligibility and selection criteria established under this procedure.
- g) Applicant - Any internal or external individual applying for a scholarship to pursue studies at MCAST.
- h) Selection and Scholarship Board (SSB) - The panel formally appointed to evaluate scholarship applications, conduct interviews where applicable, and recommend candidates for selection in accordance with established criteria.
- i) Tripartite Agreement - A formal agreement between three parties (MCAST, the student, and an external funding partner), governing the terms, obligations, and conditions of an industry-sponsored scholarship administered by the College.
- j) Bipartite Agreement - A formal agreement between two parties (MCAST and the student, or the funding entity and the student, depending on the funding arrangement), outlining the conditions of the scholarship.
- k) Process Owner - The individual responsible for the implementation, monitoring, review, and periodic revalidation of this procedure in accordance with DOC 014 requirements.
- l) Institute/Centre - The academic unit within MCAST responsible for delivering and overseeing the academic components of the programme undertaken by the scholarship recipient.
- m) Conflict of Interest – Any circumstance in which a member of the Selection and Scholarship Board has a personal, professional, financial, or other interest that could improperly influence, or be perceived to influence, the impartial execution of their duties.

4. Scholarship Sources

Scholarships may originate from a variety of funding sources, each designed to support educational advancement and research development.

These can include (but are not limited to):

- **Industry-Sponsored Scholarships**

These scholarships are funded by private sector entities with the objective of promoting innovation and strengthening sector-specific skills.
Depending on the administration of funds:

- A tripartite agreement between MCAST, the student, and the industry partner shall be established when funds are administered by the College; or
- A bipartite agreement between the industry partner and the student shall be established where the funding and administration are retained directly by the industry partner.



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In both cases, roles, obligations, and expected outcomes shall be clearly defined.

- **Project-Based Funded Scholarships**

These arise from national or international initiatives and programmes (e.g. Xjenza Malta) aimed at strengthening research capacity and supporting postgraduate study.

- Such scholarships shall be governed by a bipartite agreement between MCAST and the student, clearly outlining the conditions of funding, research deliverables, and compliance with funding body requirements.

- **Internally Funded Scholarships**

These scholarships are financed directly by the College as part of its strategic academic and research priorities.

- They shall be governed by a bipartite agreement between MCAST and the student, defining eligibility, funding conditions, performance expectations, and reporting obligations.

Funding may also be made available through other externally financed projects, collaborations, or strategic partnerships, each contributing to the opportunity for candidates to pursue specialised study or research within priority areas.

Scholarships shall be issued exclusively to students who will pursue their studies at MCAST, thereby supporting both student development and the College's strategic academic and research objectives.

5. Eligibility Criteria

Candidates wishing to apply for a scholarship need to ensure that they meet:

- the preset entry requirements for the programme of study they wish to follow, as shown on the college's website or other course-offering publications such as the prospectus.
- Any other requirements emanating from the funding source.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The eligibility for the award of the scholarship does not guarantee academic eligibility to the specific programme; candidates will still be subject to eligibility confirmation by the office of the Admissions & Records Department (ARD).

6. Application Process

Applicants wishing to study at the College and be taken into consideration for a scholarship, shall be requested to apply separately for consideration of the scholarship and for admission and enrolment to the programme of study.

Applications for Scholarships

Calls for application for scholarships will be issued and processed via the dedicated section on the MCAST Jobs Portal available at <https://jobs.mcast.edu.mt/en/page/home>.

The application is to clearly explain the eligibility criteria relevant to the scholarship being offered.



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Calls will remain open for five (5) working days.

Applicants shall be requested to:

1. Create a profile on the MCAST Jobs Portal
2. Apply for the specific call for applications by submitting the required documents which include: Curriculum Vitae (CV), relevant certificates as requested by the Call, official transcripts, MQRIC (if applicable), other relevant certificates, police conduct, and documentation proving work experience when needed.

Application for admission and enrolment to the programme of study

Applications for joining the programme of study will be processed according to DOC 185 Student Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure via the College CMIS.

7. The Selection Process

Applications for Scholarships will be vetted for eligibility by the Institute Director (or their delegate) responsible for the Programme of Study. When scholarships are funded through research projects, the Institute Director (or their delegate) shall liaise with the project coordinator to ensure that the applicants are eligible students in terms of the requested expertise.

Eligible applicants shall be called by the Institute SAO to sit for an interview with the Scholarship Selection Board.

Scholarship Selection Board (SSB) Composition

Institutes and/or Centers who issue a call for a scholarship will be required to raise a Scholarship Selection Board (SSB) which will consist of:

- i. The Institute Director (or their delegate) (Chair) (voting member),
- ii. The Institute Deputy Director (or their delegate) (voting member), and
- iii. The Project Leader/Supervisor or Principal Investigator or (their delegate) (voting member).

The board shall reserve the right to invite additional non-voting members who may contribute to the decision making process.

SSB members shall be required to declare any conflict of interest in writing prior to accepting the role. Where any of the Board members expresses a conflict of interest or inability to carry out their function, alternative appointees shall be nominated.

The Selection Board shall keep comprehensive notes concerning the questions asked and responses provided during the interview. The interviewing board may appoint a fourth non-voting member as notetaker. This member shall be bound by the confidentiality clause and shall be named as notetaker in the proceedings of the board.

Interview and Scoring

The SSB shall keep record of each interviewee's performance via a pre-established Scoring Template.



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Upon termination of the interviewing process, the SSB Chair shall be responsible for the drafting of the selection report. The report is to be signed by all the members of the Interviewing Board.

The report shall include as a minimum:

1. Notes on the questions asked to individual Candidates
2. Individual Candidate performance score sheets and
3. Candidate rankings based on the score obtained.

In cases where the programme involves more than one Institute/Centre the report is to be made available to all units involved.

8. Notification of performance

Communication of results/SSB Interview outcomes shall be the responsibility of the Institute Administration.

The selected candidates will be notified of their successful application and offered the Scholarship.

Remaining candidates will be informed of their performance/placement within the final rankings issued by the SSB.

9. Appeals

Any candidate who considers themselves aggrieved by the decision of the SSB shall have the right to lodge an appeal concerning the selection process within ten (10) working days from receipt of the results.

Appeals shall be submitted in writing via email to the MCAST Director for Human Resources. The Director for Human Resources shall determine and appoint the appropriate Board to review and adjudicate the appeal. The decision of the Appeal shall be final.

10. Award of Scholarship

Selected candidates will be required to enter into a Scholarship Award Agreement to formally confirm their acceptance of the scholarship. The SSB shall identify the appropriate type of agreement required based on the parameters listed in the *Scholarship Sources* section (above) and liaise with the interested parties accordingly.

Upon signature by all parties, the signed agreement shall constitute a legally binding instrument, enforceable in accordance with its terms and conditions, and shall govern the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all signing parties throughout the duration of the award.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Award of the scholarship does not guarantee academic admission; candidates will still be subject to complete the formal MCAST Admission process and be accepted by ARD.

11. Record Keeping

All application documents, scoring sheets, notes, declarations, ranking lists, and appeals documentation must be retained by the coordinating institute in line with College GDPR rules.



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12. Withdrawal, Suspension or Termination of Scholarship

MCAST reserves the right to suspend, withdraw, or terminate a scholarship award where:

- a) the recipient no longer satisfies the academic or administrative requirements of the programme of study;
- b) the recipient fails to comply with the conditions established in the Scholarship Award Agreement;
- c) the recipient withdraws from, suspends, or is terminated from the programme of study;
- d) the recipient is found to have submitted false, misleading, or fraudulent information during the application or administration process;
- e) the recipient is found guilty of serious disciplinary misconduct in accordance with College regulations;
- f) the funding source withdraws or terminates the funding arrangement; or
- g) any other circumstance arises which, in the opinion of the College, materially affects the recipient's eligibility to continue benefiting from the scholarship.

Prior to any decision to suspend, withdraw, or terminate a scholarship, the beneficiary shall be informed in writing of the grounds for the proposed action and shall be afforded the opportunity to submit representations within a reasonable timeframe.

Any decision to withdraw or terminate a scholarship shall be communicated formally in writing and shall include information regarding any applicable right of appeal.

Where a scholarship is suspended, withdrawn, or terminated prior to its intended completion date, MCAST shall determine, in accordance with the applicable Scholarship Award Agreement and any funding conditions imposed by the funding source, whether any scholarship funds already disbursed are to be recovered, either wholly or partially.

Recovery of funds may be considered in circumstances including, but not limited to:

- a) voluntary withdrawal by the scholarship recipient from the programme of study;
- b) termination resulting from fraud, misrepresentation, or submission of false documentation;
- c) failure to comply with the conditions established in the Scholarship Award Agreement;
- d) unsatisfactory academic or research progress, where such progress constitutes a condition of continued funding;
- e) serious disciplinary misconduct; or
- f) any breach of contractual obligations established between the parties.

The College may require the scholarship recipient to reimburse all or part of the scholarship funds received, taking into consideration:

- I. the reason for the early termination;
- II. the duration of studies or research already completed;

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- III. the nature of the expenditure already incurred;
- IV. the provisions of the applicable funding agreement; and
- V. any exceptional or mitigating circumstances.

No reimbursement shall be required where early termination results from circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the scholarship recipient, including certified medical incapacity, force majeure, or other exceptional circumstances accepted by the College, unless otherwise required by the funding source.

Any decision regarding the recovery of funds shall be communicated in writing and shall specify:

- i. the amount to be reimbursed, if any;
- ii. the basis upon which the amount has been calculated; and
- iii. the applicable payment arrangements and timelines.

13. Fraud, Misrepresentation and Academic Integrity

Applicants and scholarship recipients shall ensure that all information, declarations, supporting documentation, and representations submitted to MCAST are accurate, complete, and truthful.

Any applicant or scholarship recipient found to have:

- submitted false, misleading, altered, or fraudulent documentation;
- concealed material information relevant to eligibility or selection;
- engaged in plagiarism, academic misconduct, or any form of dishonest practice; or
- knowingly provided inaccurate declarations

shall be subject to disqualification from the scholarship selection process or withdrawal of the scholarship award, as applicable.

MCAST reserves the right to initiate disciplinary, civil, or legal proceedings where warranted.

14. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

All individuals involved in the scholarship application, evaluation, selection, administration, and appeals processes shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding applicant information and deliberations.

Members of the Scholarship Selection Board (SSB), Appeals Boards, and any other persons participating in the evaluation process shall:

- a. sign a Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest prior to undertaking their duties;
- b. disclose in writing any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest as soon as such conflict becomes known; and
- c. withdraw from participation in the evaluation or decision-making process where a conflict of interest exists.

Failure to declare a conflict of interest may result in the invalidation of the evaluation process and the implementation of any corrective measures deemed necessary by the College.

15. Equality, Diversity and Non-Discrimination

MCAST is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that scholarship selection processes are conducted fairly, objectively, and without discrimination.



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No applicant shall be discriminated against on grounds protected under applicable national legislation and institutional policies, including but not limited to sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief.

Reasonable accommodations shall be considered, where appropriate, to ensure equitable participation in scholarship selection processes.

16. Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

Scholarship recipients may be required, in accordance with the conditions established by the funding source and/or Scholarship Award Agreement, to submit periodic academic, research, financial, or progress reports.

The responsible Institute/Centre and, where applicable, the funding entity, shall monitor the progress of scholarship recipients to ensure continued compliance with scholarship conditions and satisfactory academic or research performance.

Failure to comply with reporting obligations or to demonstrate satisfactory progress may result in corrective measures, suspension, or withdrawal of the scholarship in accordance with this procedure.