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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 7121 **today!***

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1.1. The aim of this document is to explain, for the various College, Academic and Student Disciplinary boards:

- a) their composition,
- b) the terms of reference and
- c) The board procedures (if applicable).

1.2. This procedure applies to all full-time and part-time Students registered on MCAST (including MG2I) courses and programmes.

2. LIST OF MCAST ACADEMIC AND STUDENT DISCIPLINARY BOARDS

2.1 The Table below provides the list of academic and Student disciplinary boards and the corresponding remits (i.e. academic or disciplinary) covered under the respective terms of reference.

Section	Name of Board	Remit of Board		
		Academic matters (Boards pertaining to appeals of assessment decisions)	Disciplinary issues (Boards pertaining to issues of Student conduct)	Other
3.1	IAB - Institute Appeals Board	Yes		
4.2	IDB - Institute Disciplinary Board		Yes	
4.4	MCDB - MCAST Corporate Disciplinary Board		Yes	
5	MCAB - MCAST Corporate Appeals Board	Yes	Yes	
7	BOS - Board of Studies			Yes
8	MDC – Master's Degree Committee			Yes
9	DRB – Degree Ratification Board			Yes
10	WBLOB – Work Based Learning Operational Board			Yes
11	WBLAB – Work Based Learning Appeals Board			Yes

Table 1: List of academic and Student disciplinary boards.

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Note: In the case of the delivery of a joint award/programme with another institution, the composition of the boards may be changed to include representatives from the other institution. In such cases the structure dictated by the signed agreement between the institutions is binding.

3. ACADEMIC MATTERS (Boards related to assessment decisions)

3.1. Institute Appeals Board (IAB)

3.1.1. The Institute Appeals Board (IAB) only deals with cases related to:

- a) Appeals by students on assessment decisions (excluding dissertation results) (refer to para 3.1.5), and
- b) Appeals by students on attendance (closing-off record) decisions (refer to para 3.1.6)

3.1.2. The Student (and parents or guardian if the Student is under 18 years of age) may be accompanied by a person of their choice, and they may also wish to bring any witnesses and/or produce any evidence to support their case.

3.1.3. Institute Appeals Board - Appeals on Assessment Decisions

3.1.3.1. The IAB for assessment decisions shall be composed of:

- a) Institute Director as Chairperson,
- b) Deputy Director
- c) Director Quality Assurance (or their appointed designate)
- d) Secretary to the Board appointed by the Chairperson (non-voting member).

Note: The Chairperson, on behalf of the IAB, shall request the presence of the Lecturer and Internal Verifier during the Institute Appeal Board Meeting in particular if the appeal merits being upheld.

The Secretary to the Board shall keep the minutes of the proceedings

3.1.3.2. Students are entitled to appeal assessment decisions upon receipt of the full result of the unit.

3.1.3.3. Assessment appeals referring by Students must be based upon one or more of the following justifications:

- a) Grounds that there was an error in the assessment or grading of the work submitted by the Student;
- b) The assessment/examination procedures have not been conducted fairly or per College regulations. In other words, a claim is made based on administrative error, misdirection or irregularity;

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c) The Assessor has been unaware of or has given insufficient weight to extenuating circumstances supported by appropriate evidence, as verified and accepted by the Institute Management itself, which events have adversely affected the Students' performance.

d) Discrimination is alleged.

3.1.3.4. Upon being notified of the final assessment decision, a Student who wishes to contest the decision is encouraged to seek an appointment with the Lecturer in an endeavour to resolve the matter satisfactorily and amicably. The Student shall be entitled to see and discuss the marked exam script or assessed work with the Lecturer concerned.

3.1.3.5. If following the meeting with the Assessor, the Student is still not satisfied with the outcome, the Student is entitled to lodge a formal appeal against the assessment decision. For such purposes, the Student shall fill in and sign the Assessment Appeals Form (referenced below) and submit it to the Institute Director within ten (10) college days from the first time of being notified of the assessment decision. Appeals filed outside the specified deadlines will generally be ruled invalid.

Reference Document:

Doc 292 Assessment/Examination Result Appeal Form

3.1.3.6. Applications for Appeals do not exonerate students from programme obligations (e.g. taking Synoptic, repeating units etc.) until such time that the appeal process is completed, and the outcome communicated.

3.1.3.7. The Secretary to the Board shall summon the Student to a hearing with the Institute Appeals Board. Email notification shall be sent to the Student informing them of the date and location of the hearing and other details that the Student must be aware of prior to attending the IAB hearing.

3.1.3.8. The Chair initiates the Board session by informing the Student that they can appeal the decision of the IAB by sending an email to the Chair of the MCAB on registrar@mcast.edu.mt explaining the reasons for the appeal of the IAB decision.

3.1.3.9. The Student will then be asked by the Chair to explain and justify the appeal. The Director will then ask the Lecturer/Assessor/IV/IVC for their position.

3.1.3.10. If any witnesses are present, they shall be called to testify by the Chair, one by one, in the presence of the Student.

3.1.3.11. The final part of the IAB session will be attended by the Board members and the Student (only), if so requested by the Student.

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3.1.3.12. Following the hearing of the case with the Student, the IAB may make the following recommendations:

- a) To uphold the decision of the Assessor, or
- b) Direct the Assessor to review the assessment decision, taking into account particular facts, or
- c) To amend or suspend the judgment of the Assessor.

3.1.3.13. If the appeal is not upheld, the Board shall inform the student that they can appeal the decision of the IAB by sending an email to the Chair of the MCAB on registrar@mcast.edu.mt explaining the reasons for the appeal of the IAB decision within 5 days of the decision of the IAB.

3.1.3.14. The summary decision of the IAB shall be communicated by the Chair within five College days to the Student in writing. The Chair will also inform the Assessor accordingly. A copy of the Board report shall be filed with the Student's records.

3.1.3.15. Dissertation results cannot be appealed with the IAB.

3.1.3.16. If a student has evidence to demonstrate that there has been a procedural error in the processing of their dissertation results; or that they have been treated unfairly (in one way or another), the student can file a grievance with the MCAST Grievance Office. The MCAST Grievance Office investigation remit will not include the review of the mark/grade established by the Institutes' Degree Ratification Board (DRB) or the quality of the dissertation. The Grievance Office is however required to check that the student has been treated fairly and that the established assessment process has been followed as established in the MCAST regulations and procedures.

3.1.4. **Institute Appeals Board - Appeals on Attendance Decisions (Closing-Off Record)**

3.1.4.1. The IAB for attendance decisions shall be composed of:

- a) Institute Director as Chairperson,
- b) Institute Deputy Director
- c) Institute Deputy Director or Coordinator or an appointed designate
- d) Secretary to the Board appointed by the Chairperson.
- e) Director QA (or appointed designate)* as and when necessary (non-voting member)

The Secretary to the Board shall keep the minutes of the proceedings

Note: at the discretion of the Chair of the Board, the Director QA (or appointed delegate) may be asked to join the hearing as a fifth non-voting member. The role of the Director QA (or appointed delegate) will be to act as an external (from the institute) consultant to the board and provide guidance as needed.

3.1.4.2. Students are entitled to appeal closing-off record decisions upon receipt of such notification.

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- 3.1.4.3. Students wishing to appeal a closing-off record decision, need to provide sufficient evidence justifying their absence or any alleged discrimination.
- 3.1.4.4. Prior to lodging an official appeal to the IAB students are encouraged to speak to their institute Director and/or Deputy Director to discuss the situation and provide any evidence/explanation.
- 3.1.4.5. If following the meeting with the Director/ Deputy Director, the Student is still not satisfied with the outcome, the Student is entitled to lodge a formal appeal against the Attendance Decisions (closing-off record). For such purposes, the Student shall fill in and sign the Attendance Appeals Form (referenced below) and submit it to the Institute Director within ten (10) college days from the first time of being notified of the closing-off record decision. Appeals filed outside the specified deadlines will generally be ruled invalid.

Reference Document:

Doc 291 Attendance Closing-Off Record Appeal Form

- 3.1.4.6. It is important to note that students who submit an Appeal against the Attendance Decisions (closing-off record) are to continue attending the College and to attempt all related assessments until their Appeal is heard. Should the appeal be decided against the student, any assignments submitted in this period will be considered invalid and will not be assessed.
- 3.1.4.7. The Secretary to the Board shall summon the Student to a hearing with the Institute Appeals Board. Email notification shall be sent to the Student informing them of the date and location of the hearing and other details that the Student must be aware of prior to attending the IAB hearing including the right to be accompanied by one person provided that due notification to the Institute Management is provided up to 24 hours before the start of the session.
- 3.1.4.8. The Student will then be asked by the Chair to explain and justify the appeal.
- 3.1.4.9. If any witnesses are present, they shall be called to testify by the Chair, one by one, in the presence of the Student.
- 3.1.4.10. Following the hearing of the case with the Student, the IAB may make the following recommendations:
- d) To uphold the decision of the closing-off record for the student, or
 - e) To withdraw the closing-off record notification and keep the student registered under the same programme of study, where applicable, against a number of pre-set conditions.

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3.1.4.11. If the appeal is not upheld, the Board shall inform the student that they can appeal the decision of the IAB by sending an email to the Chair of the MCAB on registrar@mcast.edu.mt explaining the reasons for the appeal of the IAB decision within 5 days of the decision of the IAB.

3.1.4.12. The summary decision of the IAB shall be communicated by the Chair within five College days to the Student in writing. The Chair will also inform the Office of the Registrar accordingly. A copy of the Board report shall be filed with the Student's records.

3.2. MCAST Corporate Appeals Board (MCAB)

3.2.1. If the Student still feels aggrieved by the decision of the IAB, the Student is entitled to request that their case is heard by the MCAST Corporate Appeals Board (MCAB).

3.2.2. Refer to Section 5 (below) for the (MCAB).

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4. DISCIPLINARY BOARDS (for inappropriate student conduct)

Inappropriate student conduct is classified (in Doc 038 referenced below) under three categories, namely:

- a) Petty misconduct
- b) Misconduct
- c) Serious misconduct

The inappropriate student conduct is handled as follows, depending on the nature of the misconduct, namely:

- a) Verbal warning (Institute Director)
- b) Institute Disciplinary Board
- c) MCAST Corporate Disciplinary Board.

Reference Document

Doc 038: Student Conduct Regulations

4.1. Verbal Warning (Institute Deputy Director) -

4.1.1. Cases of petty misconduct are to be considered as minor offences. Petty misconduct is addressed via a verbal warning.

4.1.2. Offences classified as petty misconduct are provided in Doc 038.

4.1.3. Records of Verbal warnings issued to students are to be kept, therefore the verbal warning shall be issued in person by the Institute Director via the Doc133 'Record of Verbal Warning of Student Misconduct'. Records of Verbal warnings shall be formally issued to students in the presence of a witness from the Institute Administration (such as the Deputy Director etc.).

4.1.4. The record shall make it clear to the Student that further misbehaviour shall lead to disciplinary action. The Student shall also be advised by the Institute Director what repercussions may ensue.

4.1.5. The Student shall be asked to sign for the verbal warning. The record shall also define the purpose of the signature and clarify that the record is still valid even if the student refuses to sign.

4.1.6. The report is filed at the Institute in the Student's Personal file.

Reference Document

Doc 133: Record of Verbal Warning for Student Misconduct

Doc 038: Student Conduct Regulations

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4.2. Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB)

- 4.2.1. All offences which are classified either as Misconduct or Serious Misconduct in DOC 038 Student Conduct Regulations fall under the remit of the IDB.
- 4.2.2. In the case of serious misconduct, or if deemed necessary by the Institute Director, immediately following the reporting of the incident, the Institute Director may decide to issue an 'interim preventive suspension' order to the student/s involved or allegedly involved in the misdemeanour, if this is considered necessary to:
- safeguard the safety of all parties and other 3rd parties involved in the incident and;
 - prevent a possible escalation of the incident, pending the hearing of the IDB.
- 4.2.3. If the 'Interim preventive suspension' order is issued, the Institute management will do its utmost to rescind this order within the least time possible provided that mitigating measures have been implemented.
- 4.2.4. The Student will be requested, through a standard formal letter (refer to the document below) signed by the Institute Director, to appear in front of the Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB).

Reference Document:

Doc 284 Summons for the Institute Disciplinary Board Form

- 4.2.5. The Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB) shall have a different composition depending on the severity of the misconduct:
- 4.2.5.1. In the case of misconduct the IDB shall be composed of, as a minimum 3 voting members as described below:
- a) One Deputy Director as Chairperson;
 - b) One Deputy Director
 - c) Coordinator (IVC);
 - d) The Secretary to the Board (non-voting member);
 - e) The Institute Director as deemed necessary by the IDB (non-voting member)
- 4.2.5.2. In the case of serious misconduct the IDB shall be composed of, as a minimum 3 voting members as described below:
- a) The Institute Director or their appointed designate as Chairperson;
 - b) One Deputy Director;
 - c) A Deputy Director / Coordinator (IVC);
 - d) The Secretary to the Board (non-voting member);
 - e) A DP VPET as deemed necessary by the IDB (non-voting member).

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The IDB has the prerogative to ask other support staff to join the Board meeting (as non-voting members).

For cases related to disciplinary issues of students following Work-Based Learning programmes, which occur at the employer's premises, the IDB shall be composed of:

- a) Institute Director or their appointed designate as Chairperson,
- b) Director WBL,
- c) Deputy Director
- d) The Secretary to the Board (non-voting member);
- e) A DP VPET as deemed necessary by the IDB (non-voting member).

Board member/s directly involved with the Student in the disciplinary case need to exonerate themselves and hence be replaced by Directors/Deputy Directors from other Institutes.

The IDB shall have the possibility of requesting the presence/advice of the MCAST lawyer.

- 4.2.4 The Secretary to the Board shall keep the minutes of the proceedings. The Secretary shall also ensure that Board members, Institute Director, Student/s involved in the incident/s, parent/s or guardian/s (if the Student is under eighteen years of age) and witnesses, have been notified in good time.

NOTE: If the invited (via email) parent/guardian does not turn up to the IDB, the Chair of the Board can ask to speak at the start of the IDB to the parent/guardian via the student's mobile phone. If the parent/guardian consents for the session to proceed in their absence, the Board can do so. A note of this is taken in the records of the Board. If not, another session needs to be rescheduled.

- 4.2.5. The IDB may decide to interview anyone it deems necessary in connection with the incident/s.
- 4.2.6. The Chairperson, in the presence of the Student (and parents or guardian if the Student is under 18 years of age), shall start by outlining the case. The Student will then be asked to respond. If any witnesses are present, they shall be called to testify one by one in front of the Student undergoing board procedures.

Sanctions

- 4.2.7. Depending on the nature of the case and the outcome of the hearing, the Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB) may impose, at its discretion, any of the following sanctions:
- i. No Sanction (Student found to not have participated in misconduct);
 - ii. A documented verbal warning;
 - iii. A written warning;
 - iv. Community work (the nature, duration and follow-up of which will be strictly within the discretion and monitoring responsibility of the Institute Management);

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- v. A temporary suspension of the student from studies during which the student cannot access the College Premises, absence being marked as 'unauthorised absence';
- vi. A 'Notification of Suspended Dismissal';
- vii. Dismissal leading to immediate termination of studies and closing-off record. Student may also be denied re-admission in the future.

Sanctions – No Sanction

- 4.2.8. If the IDB determines that the student has not participated in Misconduct, no sanction will be applied. Record of such a decision is to be issued by the IDB and communicated to the student in writing through the document referenced below.

Sanctions – Verbal/Written Warning

- 4.2.9. If the IDB feels that a written warning is not warranted, the Institute Director may decide to give a further formal verbal warning. A record of the verbal warning and circumstances leading to it shall be appropriately filed for future reference.
- 4.2.10. If the IDB decides to issue a formal written warning, the Institute Director must ensure that the Student fully understands the implications of the written warning vis-à-vis the sanction being applied by the IDB and any future misconduct. The Director shall also give appropriate advice to the Student. The intervention of the Director Student Support Services may also be sought.
- 4.2.11. The written warning shall be signed by the Institute Director and shall be passed on to the Student within five college days. The format (Refer to 'Record of Verbal Warning Following Student Misconduct' referenced below) shall be standard for all Institutes and shall briefly state the circumstances leading to the warning.

Sanctions – Community Work

- 4.2.12. In the case of Petty Misconduct and/or Misconduct, the IDB may decide to impose Community Work as a sanction. The total number of hours of Community work shall be as follows:
- Petty Misconduct: not more than 4 hours
 - Misconduct: not more than 8 hours
- 4.2.13. Community Work assigned as a sanction shall be restricted to the College Premises.
- 4.2.14. The type of Community work assigned shall be at the discretion of the IDB. It is recommended that the IDB consults the MCAST Legal Office prior to imposing Community Work as a Sanction.

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- 4.2.15. Students shall not be excused from their Academic duties because of Community Work as a Sanction. Such Community Work shall not count towards any other form of Community Work which students are expected to fulfil as part completion of their academic programme.
- 4.2.16. Community work shall be monitored by the Institute Administration.
- 4.2.17. Students who do not fulfil the total hours of Community Work imposed as a sanction by the IDB shall be charged with serious misconduct and shall therefore be subject to a second IDB and additional sanctions.

Sanctions - Suspended Dismissal

- 4.2.5. The IDB may decide to impose a Notification of Suspended Dismissal (refer to document below), which the student will be asked to sign. If the student is found to be in breach of this agreement within the stipulated term (of the agreement), the dismissal becomes effective.
- 4.2.6. The IDB shall forward to the Secretary of the MCDB copies of the 'Notification of Suspended Dismissal'. The Secretary of the MCDB shall retain a central repository of the notifications.

Reference Document

DOC 429 Notification of Suspended Dismissal and Student Support (IDB)

Sanctions – Suspension

- 4.2.7. In the case of a Student who is placed under suspension, the letter of suspension shall be issued indicating the dates when the Student is not allowed to attend the Institute/Centre and Campus. It shall also clearly show the date when the Student is to return to the Institute/Centre and report to the Director's office. A copy is to be sent by the Director of Institute to the student and parent/parents or guardian/s if the Student is under 18 years of age. All communications in this regard are to be prepared by the Secretary to the Board and signed by all the voting Board members.
- 4.2.8. The Student is entitled to receive, without penalty, any assignments issued during the Student's absence, on condition that a request in writing is submitted by the Student to the Director of Institute within three (3) days after the Student's return to the Institute. If eligible, according to student regulations, the Student is entitled to submit completed assignments online and only present hard-copy assignments to the Institute administration provided prior permission has been sought by the Student to enter the Campus and Institute building.
- 4.2.9. In no way shall this entitlement provide any guarantee that the Student shall be allowed any special concessions in connection with (i) the teaching and guided learning delivered during the Student's absence, (ii) the quality and volume of work which the Student is expected to submit for assessment purposes, and (iii) previously established deadlines.

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4.2.10. A Student shall not normally be suspended when there is an examination. In all instances, Directors shall ensure that harm to the Student's academic performance is disturbed as minimally as possible.

Sanctions - Dismissal

4.2.11. In cases where the IDB is proposing a 'dismissal' of the student, the Institute Director shall forward the report of the proceedings to the MCDB for oversight to ensure fairness and consistency across all Institutes and Centres.

4.2.12. If the student's dismissal is confirmed by the MCDB, the proposal is forwarded by the MCDB to the Principal and CEO for final endorsement.

4.2.13. Students who are dismissed in this way may also be denied re-admission in the future.

4.2.14. The Secretary to the IDB Board shall inform the Deputy Principal VPET of the outcome of any IDB hearing.

4.2.15. The Secretary to the Board shall be responsible to keep the minutes of the hearing.

4.2.16. Copies of all communications and/or sanctions are to be kept in the Students' files. Such records will also be passed on to the Office of the Registrar.

4.2.17. Within 5 college days from the final hearing of the Board, the Secretary to the IDB shall provide the students (and parents/guardians in the case of students under 18 years of age) with a written letter specifying the outcome of the IDB and any imposed sanctions.

4.2.18. All communications in this regard are to be prepared by the Secretary to the Board and signed by all the voting Board members.

Reference Document:

Doc 038 Student Conduct Regulations

Doc 284 Summons for the Institute Disciplinary Board Form

Doc 286 Record of Decision Following IDB Hearing Form

Doc 032 Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures MQF Levels 1 – 4

Doc 099 Plagiarism Policy MQF Levels 5 - 7

4.3. MCAST Corporate Appeals Board (MCAB) for cases related to an appeal of an IAB or IDB decision

Note: Also refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of the Board composition and Terms of Reference.

4.3.1. Students have the right to appeal the decisions of the IDB.

4.3.2. Refer to Section 5 (Below) for the MCAB procedure.

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4.4. MCAST Corporate Disciplinary Board (MCDB)

4.4.1 The MCDB shall be composed of:

- a) Deputy Principal QA & Academic Management of Students or appointed designate
- b) Deputy Principal VPET (alternating according to student hosting institute),
- c) Director Outreach Services and Student Affairs
- d) Secretary to the Board (Non-voting Member)

4.4.2 The Institutes shall send a copy of the IDB report to the MCDB Board secretary.

4.4.3 The role of the MCDB shall be to perform random checks of the various IDB proceedings and the respective reports issued by the different IDBs across the Institutes and Centres in order to ensure oversight on the fairness and consistency of the decision making process.

4.4.3 The MCDB shall provide feedback and recommendations to the Institute Directors as and when required/necessary.

5. MCAST CORPORATE APPEALS BOARD (MCAB)

5.1. The MCAST Corporate Appeals Board (MCAB) is the top level MCAST board which Students may appeal to should they disagree with any decisions taken at Institute level by the IAB or IDB.

5.2. The MCAB shall be composed of;

- a) Deputy Principal QA & Academic Management of Students or appointed designate
- b) Deputy Principal VPET (alternating according to student hosting institute),
- c) Director Outreach Services and Student Affairs
- d) Secretary to the Board (Non-voting member).

The Secretary to the Board shall keep the minutes of the proceedings.

5.3. If a Student wishes to appeal the decision taken against them by the IDB or IAB (but not MCDB), they are to send an email to registrar@mcast.edu.mt (as the Deputy Principal QA & Academic Management of Students is the Chairman of the MCAB) by not later than five college days from receiving the outcome/verdict of the specific Board, explaining the reasons and grounds for the appeal.

5.4. Copies of any documentation related to previous disciplinary board hearings (evidence, decisions etc.) shall be made available by the IDB/IAB to the MCAB prior to the hearing of the case.

5.5. The Secretary of the MCAB shall also ensure that the Board members, Institute Director, Student/s involved in the incident/s, parent/s or guardian (if the Student is under eighteen years of age) and witnesses, have been notified in good time and provided details that they must be aware of.

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- 5.6. The Chairman (Deputy Principal QA & Academic Management of Students or appointed designate) of the MCAB will start by outlining the case in the presence of the Student and the Director of the Institute.
- 5.7. The Institute Director shall then present their version of the case.
- 5.8. The Student will then be asked to respond. Any witnesses for the Student are then heard individually, in the presence of the Student. Minutes of the proceedings shall be kept by the Secretary to the Board who shall also prepare a report.
- 5.9. The MCAB will analyse the case in the light of the information and documentation provided by the IAB/IDB and the evidence provided by the Student and their witnesses during the MCAB hearing.
- 5.10. The Board shall decide within five college days. The MCAB may choose to either uphold the conclusion of the IDB, or change it either in favour of the Student. The decision shall be final and shall be communicated to the Student in writing by the Secretary of the Board.
- 5.11. If the Student's Appeal is upheld by the MCAB, the Secretary to the Board shall ensure that the Institute is informed accordingly.
- 5.12. The decision of the MCAB shall be final.

6. Notes to the Board Procedures

- 6.1.1. Cases of misconduct (petty; recurring; persistent; and/or serious) which occur on MCAST premises, which do not form part of a specific institute (i.e. MCAST Central library, Student House, Canteen, Sports Grounds, Gym etc.), are to be reported in writing to the Deputy Principal Administration, or as directed by same. The Director shall deal with such cases according to their severity, as outlined in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4 above.
- 6.1.2. Notifications to appear before any board (IAB; IDB; MCDB; MCAB) will be sent to the Student's parents or legal guardians in the case of Students under eighteen years of age. Parent/s and/or legal guardian/s of Student/s under eighteen years of age are to be notified that they may accompany the Student to any IAB; IDB; MCDB; MCAB hearing.
- 6.1.3. Before appearing before any board (IAB; IDB; MCDB; MCAB), the Student should be notified that they have a right to bring evidence and/or witnesses to support their case.
- 6.1.4. The Student is required to inform the Board about the presence and number of witnesses or other persons accompanying them, at least 24 hours before the start of the session.

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- 6.1.5. The Board Secretary shall notify the Student through the summons form about the presence and number of witnesses and the board members at least 24 hours before the start of the session.
- 6.1.6. During any hearing, the use of electronic recording devices by any party is prohibited.
- 6.1.7. Notification of the outcome of any board (IAB, IDB, MCDB, and MCAB) will be sent to the Student's parents or legal guardians in the case of Students under sixteen years of age.
- 6.1.8. If an underage Student fails to appear with one of the parents or guardian, the Student shall be asked to make a written statement to explain the absence. A copy of this statement will be forwarded to the parents/guardian concerned.
- 6.1.9. Student misconduct records that involve 3rd parties; e.g. cases of substance abuse referred to external parties / medical records etc. are to be filed in the Student's Sensitive Data file. All other records of Student misconduct are to be filed in the Student personal file.
- 6.1.10. In exceptional cases, time-lapses stated in the above procedures may be changed, e.g. if they are not appropriate to the case, or if a holiday period disrupts proceedings.
- 6.1.11. Substance abuse cases are regulated by the 'Illegal Substance Procedure' referenced below.

7. BOARD OF STUDIES (BOS)

As per the MCAST Act referred below, there shall be a minimum of 1 Board of Studies for each Institute

7.1 Board Composition

The composition of the Board of Studies is as follow:

A. For Institutes

- a) Director of Institute (Chair) *ex officio*;
- b) Registrar, or a representative of the office of the Registrar, *ex officio*;
- c) Deputy Director of the relevant section/s of the Institute/Unit *ex officio*;
- d) Institute Vocational Coordinators of the relevant academic units/sections *ex officio*;
- e) Two (2) members elected by and from among the full-time lecturers of the academic unit;
- f) One (1) student representative elected by and from amongst the students of the academic unit who shall hold office for a term not exceeding one (1) year;
- g) Two (2) members representing the Minister;
- h) One (1) member representing the industry appointed by the President;

7.1.1 The Registrar or their delegate shall act as a secretary to the Institutes' Board of Studies.

7.1.2 The Deputy Principal VPET responsible for the particular institute or section, and the Deputy Principal whose responsibility includes the Registrar's Office, shall have a right to be informed of and attend the meetings of the respective Boards of Study

7.1.2 Personnel responsible for different academic functions within the Institute or Unit may be invited to the meeting as may be necessary.

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7.1.3 The Deputy Principal responsible for the Institute or section, shall have the right to convene a meeting of the Board of Studies whenever they may deem it necessary. In such case they shall preside the meeting.

Note: When Institutes plan to propose programme changes, which include the Key skills, the Director of Education and Training Programmes is to be invited to the Board of Studies meeting since Key Skills fall under their responsibility. It would then be up to the Director of Education and Training Programmes to take up the discussion with the subject coordinators and working groups of the respective Key Skills units in order to implement any changes necessary. In any such event no decision is taken at the Board of Studies before it is sanctioned by the Centre for Learning and Employability Board of Studies.

Reference Document

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology Act, 2023

B. For the Centre for Learning and Employability (CLE)

- a) Director Education & Training Programmes (Vice - Chair) *ex officio*;
- b) The Registrar (or their deputy) *ex officio*;
- c) Deputy Director of Education and Training Programmes *ex officio*;
- d) Key Skills Coordinators *ex officio*;
- e) 2 members Member elected by and from among all the full-time Lecturing staff of the CLE;
- f) 1 student representative elected by and from among the students of the academic unit who shall hold office for a term not exceeding 1 year;
- g) 1 member representing the industry appointed by the President

The Deputy Principal responsible for the Institute or section, shall have the right to convene a meeting of the Board of Studies whenever they may deem it necessary. In such case they shall preside the meeting.

7.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Board of Studies are as follow:

- (a) to develop and direct an academic plan for the academic unit or institute
- (b) to approve and oversee all full and part-time curriculum programme matters at the academic unit or institute;
- (c) to draft and propose bye-laws relating to the Institute in terms of the provisions of this Act;
- (d) to advise and support the Principal in providing administrative, academic, training and development operations within the College.
- (e) to nominate examiners for consideration for approval of the Vocational and Professional Council;
- (f) To propose research and continuous professional development projects to the Vocational and Professional Council

7.2.1 Policies and Procedures which are made by the Board of Studies shall be sent to the Vocational Professional Council for its approval and shall not be presented to the Board of Governors to be considered unless the Vocational Professional Council only gives a conditional approval.

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7.2.2 Bye-laws made by the Board of Studies shall provide for matters of an academic nature and shall bind the institute represented by the Board of Studies that made those bye-laws.

Reference Document

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology Act, 2023

7.3 Frequency and Quorum of Meetings

The Board shall meet at least once every six weeks, and the quorum of the meeting shall be of fifty percent (50%) plus one.

Proposed Schedule

All institutes/Centres/Academic unit shall have seven (7) Board of Studies meetings in one (1) Academic year i.e. a minimum of one (1) Board of Studies meeting every six (6) weeks. BoS meetings shall be normally scheduled on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons from 12:30h to 15:00h.

A schedule of meetings for the Academic year shall be issued by the Office of the Registrar via email to all Institutes. The schedule shall be uploaded on the MCAST website at the following link: <https://mcast.edu.mt/mcast-academic-calendar/>

7.4 Agenda for Board of Studies

The items on the basic agenda include:

- Apologies
- Reading of minutes
- Matters arising from minutes
- Matters for report
- Agenda Items
 - New programme proposals (refer below para 7.5)
 - Cyclical programme reviews (refer below para 7.6)
 - Key performance indicators (refer below para 7.7)
 - Programme performance Full-Time
 - Student performance
 - Programme performance Part-time
- Items pending from the previous agenda
- Items not in agenda raised by members
- Any other matters

7.5 New Programme Proposals

The documentation required for discussion are described in section 3 of the 'Design, Development and Approval of Programme Qualifications Procedure' (Doc 013) referred to below.

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The documentation will then be forwarded to the Executive Management Team for endorsement and submission to the Curriculum Department under Phase 1 requirements for programme development.

Reference Document

Doc 013: Design, Development and Approval of Programme Qualifications Procedure.

7.6 Cyclical Programme Review

The documentation required for discussion are described in the 'Programme Cyclical Review Procedure' (Doc 028) referred to below:

The above documentation will then be forwarded to the Curriculum Department as Feedback for the programme review cycle.

Reference Document

Doc 028: Programme Cyclical Review Procedure

7.7 Key Performance Indicators

The following key performance indicators are reported and monitored during the Board of Studies Meeting.

7.7.1 Programme performance Full-Time

- Resourcing
 - Lecturing staff
 - Physical resources
 - Materials and equipment impacting delivery
 - Administrative support issues
- Assessment
 - Assessment schedules
 - Workload distribution
 - Timeline analysis
 - Verification cycle analysis
 - Sampling and publication of results
- Delivery schedules
 - Actual vs projected hrs
 - Timetable issues
 - Delays of factors that are impacting delivery
 - Individual unit progress
- Results publication and analysis (semester-based)
 - Mean and Median for each unit within the programme
 - Comparison between classes (where applicable)
 - Comparison with previous cohorts (where applicable)
- Work-based Learning
 - Issues with placement

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- Monitoring
- Industry feedback (to also inform programme review)
- Classification of Degrees (annual cycle – full-time/part-time)
 - Overall results analysis
 - Individual unit analysis
 - Classification proposal for DRB to ratify
 - Dissertation evaluation and proposed action in case of marginal/failures
 - Individual marginal programme failure analysis and proposed action for the DRB to sanction

7.7.2 Student performance

- At risk students based on attendance
- At risk students based on results
- At risk students based on lecturer feedback (may also include social aspects)
- Disciplinary issues (micro and macro)
- Report on appeals and disciplinary boards held.

7.7.3 Programme performance Part-time

- Resourcing
 - Lecturing staff
 - Physical resources
 - Materials and equipment impacting delivery
 - Administrative support issues
- Assessment
 - Assessment schedules
 - Workload distribution
 - Timeline analysis
 - Verification cycle analysis
 - Sampling and publication of results
- Delivery schedules
 - Actual vs projected hrs
 - Timetable issues
 - Delays of factors that are impacting delivery
 - Individual unit progress
- Results publication and analysis (semester-based)
 - Mean and Median for each unit within the programme
 - Comparison between classes (where applicable)
 - Comparison with previous cohorts (where applicable)
- Industry feedback (to also inform programme review)
- Funding opportunities and approvals

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8. Master's Degree Committee (MDC)

8.1 Purpose and Scope of Board

8.1.1 The MCAST Masters programmes bring with them a set of requisites and challenges that are quite unique:

- a) They function under a blended learning methodology that combines physical interventions with eLearning and with significant VLE involvement;
- b) They have a stronger research component, with dissertations making up at least 25% of the total content;
- c) They depend much more on external expertise, visiting lecturers and collaborating professors;
- d) They are largely populated by mature industry-driven candidates, with strong expectations;
- e) They often delve into the expertise that is not necessarily strong in the collaborating MCAST Institute;
- f) They are paid programmes, making them an objective of commercialisation;
- g) They do not always run annually, meaning that they can drop off the radar and reappear as necessary, making standard QA mechanisms more challenging.

All of these factors lead to the necessity of an overarching monitoring and regulatory setup that can operate with a degree of inter-dependability with the Institute's Board-of-Studies and with other mechanisms such as the MCAST Degree Ratification Boards and the MCAST Admissions Board.

8.2 Board Composition

8.2.1 The MDC is composed of a minimum of 6 members, supported by a non-executive secretary as follows:

- MCAST Principal and CEO (Chair)
- Deputy Principal R&I (Vice-chair)
- Deputy Principal Vocational and Professional Education and Training- Arts and Social Sciences
- Deputy Principal Vocational and Professional Education and Training- Technology and Applied Sciences
- Director R&I
- Academic staff representative
- Non-executive Secretary

8.2.2 All members of the MDC need to be in possession of a doctoral degree and have a high level of knowledge and insight into MCAST's operations.

8.2.3 All members of the MDC shall hold a 2 - 3-year term of office, extendable or replaceable forthwith by the Principal.

8.2.4 Members are to be identified by the EMT and appointed by the Principal.

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8.3 Regulatory Remit, Operation and Reporting

8.3.1 The main regulatory remit of the MDC shall be to oversee and regulate the implementation of two specific regulations at Masters level (EQF/MQF Level 7):

8.3.1.1 Regulation 013 and 028 – focusing on the design, development, approval and cyclical review of all full-time, part-time, blended accredited and non-accredited courses that are new, require significant curriculum changes or require changes to resources or mode of delivery.

8.3.1.2 Regulation 005 – focusing on the operational implementation of programmes at Levels 5, 6 and 7. The MDC shall convene at a minimum every 8 weeks, and more often according to necessity.

8.3.2 The MDC shall contribute to the approval stages (as identified in Doc 013 'Programme Design, Development and Approval procedure) relating to the feasibility of masters programmes, level of preparedness, viable duration periods, necessary collaborations & support, and correct implementation.

8.3.3 The MDC shall collaborate extensively with Institute management, IRC's, key academics, MG2i, and all other relevant MCAST internal functions.

9. DEGREE RATIFICATION BOARD (DRB)

9.1. Purpose and scope

The table below describes the oversight required when confirming the classification of degrees.

Award / Qualification	Oversight	Document Number
EQF/MQF 6 Bachelor Degree Qualifications	Degree Ratification Board	Doc 188 : College Board Procedures
EQF/MQF 7 Master's Degree taught programmes <i>Typical structure: Taught units (60 ECTS) and Dissertation (30 ECTS)</i>	Degree Ratification Board	Doc 188 : College Board Procedures
Masters in Research - PG Cert (30 ECTS)	Viva Board	Doc 237: Viva Procedure - Applied Research Master's Degree Programmes
Master in Research - PG Dip (30 ECTS)	Viva Board	Doc 237: Viva Procedure - Applied Research Master's Degree Programmes
Masters in Research (Final year)	Viva Board	Doc 237: Viva Procedure - Applied Research Master's Degree Programmes
Masters by Research	Viva Board	Doc 237: Viva Procedure - Applied Research Master's Degree Programmes

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<i>Typical structure: Taught unit (16 ECTS) and Dissertation (74 ECTS)</i>		
Doctorate Programme	Viva Board	Doc 008: Viva Board procedure for MQF 8 Doctorate programme

The main function of the Degree Ratification Board is to:

- i. review and ratify the process for issuing student results
- ii. confirm the results and proposed classifications (MQF Level 6 and 7 qualifications) prior to the conferment of the Degrees.

DRB meetings are held at the end of the programme cycle. A DRB meeting is held for every programme (or group of related programmes).

9.2. Degree Ratification Board Composition

The Board shall be composed of:

- Chair: DP Academic Management of Students or Registrar
- Co-Chair: Director (for respective Institute/Centre/Programme under review)
- Member: DP (for respective Institute/Centre/Programme under review)
- Member: Deputy Director (for respective Institute/Centre/Programme under review)
- Member: Director of Quality Assurance
- Member: External Peer Reviewer (as required)
- Non-executive Secretary

The Secretary to the Board shall keep the minutes of the proceedings.

The Chair to the DRB may request the presence of the Institute Vocational Coordinators (IVC) and/ or the Degree Coordinators to attend the meeting.

9.3. Viva Board Procedure (Pre-DRB)

9.4.1 The Viva Board sessions are organised by the Institute management prior to the DRB meeting in order to confirm (or otherwise) the result assigned by the Dissertation Supervisor. The members of the Viva Board are assigned by the Institute Management.

9.4.2 Once the result of the dissertation is confirmed by the Viva Board, the Institute Management shall classify the overall results of the individual students taking cognisance of:

- a. Entitlement for compensatory passes;
- b. Borderline cases;

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- c. Documented evidence of claims for extenuating circumstances by the individual students (or as identified by the Institute Management) as confirmed by the Student Support Services Department or other professional/s;

9.4.3 The Institute management is required to forward, at least ten days prior to the date of the DRB, the following documents to the Chair of the DRB:

- a. broadsheet (results) for the individual cohorts;
- b. proposed classification of the student results;
- c. a list of names of students that have justified claims for extenuating circumstances as confirmed by the Student Support Services department or other professional/s;

9.4. External Peer Reviewer process (pre-DRB)

9.4.1. The External Peer Reviewer is provided access by the Institute Management to the student results, graded dissertation, student logbook, grading rubric and any other teaching, learning and assessment material as deemed necessary (by the Peer Reviewer). The roles and responsibilities of the external Peer Reviewer are described in the 'Procedure for External Examiners' referenced below.

9.5. Degree Ratification Board process

9.5.1. At the start of the DRB meeting, the Chair explains the procedure to be followed and then provides a copy of the broad (result) sheet for the degree programme under review to the Board members.

9.5.2. The Chair invites the External Peer Reviewer to provide overall comments and also feedback on the individual student work sampled. The feedback includes but is not restricted to:

- i. the degree programme/s;
- ii. the assessment process;
- iii. the individual dissertations sampled during the peer review, including comments on borderline cases;
- iv. the individual and overall classifications.

9.5.3. The decisions by the DRB are also guided by the Degree Programme Regulations (Doc 005, section 12)

9.5.4. All Board Members sign the result sheet and any comments or decision agreed by the Board.

9.5.5. A copy of the result sheet is forwarded by the Board to:

- a) The Institute Management for communication of results to the students;
- b) The Office of the Registrar for transcript and certification purposes.

10. WORK BASED LEARNING (WBL) OPERATIONAL BOARD

10.1. Composition

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10.1.1. The Work Based Learning (WBL) Operational board is comprised of the following members:

- a. The Deputy Principal for AWBL as Chairperson
- b. The Director AWBL
- c. The Director for Education & Training Programmes;
- d. One institute Director per VPET area;
- e. The AWBL Manager as Secretary.

10.2. Function

10.2.1. The WBL Operational board shall be in charge of:

- a. Adapting (where possible) existing curricula into training programmes including a work-based learning component;
- b. Reviewing training programmes;
- c. Setting up a Board of Examiners for each training programme;
- d. Establishing regulations and policies for the Board of Examiners which shall include admission of learners for the assessment, the structure of the assessment and the criteria for assessment;
- e. Overseeing the operations of the boards of examiners;
- f. Establishing regulations for the assessment of training programmes.

10.3. Meeting Schedule

10.3.1. The Board is required to meet once a month. The Meeting Agenda is to be prepared by the Board Secretary in consultation with the Director of Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning.

10.4. Actions

10.4.1. All decisions to be taken by the Board need to be documented and implemented accordingly by the WBL Department.

10.5. Minutes

10.5.1. Minutes of the meeting are to be recorded by the Board Secretary.

11. WORK BASED LEARNING (WBL) APPEALS BOARD

11.1. Function

11.1.1. The Work Based Learning (WBL) Appeals Board deals with cases related to:

- a. Appeals by any party against decisions of the WBL Operational Board;
- b. Disputes between the VET Provider and the Sponsor.

11.1.2. Any party wishing to submit an appeal to the WBL Appeals board is to do so in writing via an email sent to the following address: registrar@mcast.edu.mt. The Appeal will then be passed on to the Chair of the WBL Appeals Board.

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11.2. Composition

11.2.1. The WBL Appeals Board shall be comprised of an Independent Chairperson and two independent members appointed by the minister as per Chapter_576_Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act.

11.2.2. The members of the Appeals Board shall hold office for a period of three years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Doc 013: Design, Development and Approval of Programmed Qualifications Procedure
- Doc 028: Programme Cyclical Review procedure.
- Doc 038: Student Conduct Regulations
- Doc 083: Procedure for External Examiners
- Doc 133: Record of Verbal Warning for Student Misconduct (Form)
- Doc 212: Mind-altering Substance Procedure
- Doc 284: Summons for the Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB) Hearing (Form)
- Doc 286: Record of Decision Following Institute Disciplinary Board (IDB) Hearing (Form)
- Doc 099: Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- Doc 429: Notification of Suspended Dismissal and Student Support (IDB)



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APPENDIX 1 : STUDENT DISCIPLINARY BOARD PROCEDURE

Board Composition and Terms of Reference

(Note: Substance abuse cases are regulated by Doc 212 ‘Mind-Altering Substance Procedure’)

