



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 1 of 11
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GENERAL INFORMATION

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	Document was totally re-written in order to match current legislation and practices related to Mind Altering Substances. Terminology was updated and a Policy was also added to the document. Document structure also updated with a number of Appendices added at the end of the document.			
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	Updated Document title and MCAST Logo			
	Updated title of Director Support Services to Director Outreach Services and Student Affairs			
	Updated all instances referring to the Principal and CEO and changed them to the Deputy Principal			

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Continuous Improvement

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Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 2 of 11
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued 03.08.2023

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Aims.....	3
3.0	Objectives.....	4
4.0	Definitions.....	4
5.0	Legal Requirements.....	4
6.0	Incidents Involving Mind Altering Substances and Alcohol Misuse.....	5
7.0	Procedure when Mind Altering Substances and related Paraphernalia are found on any MCAST Campus.....	5
8.0	Disruptive Behaviour by Students Suspected of Misuse of Substances.....	6
9.0	Suspected Substances and Alcohol Misuse Adversely Affecting Student / Staff Performance (Appendix B) 6	6
10.0	Disclosure by a Student / Staff Member of the use of Mind Altering Substances (Appendix B).....	6
11.0	Possessing, Dealing or Supplying Illegal Substances on College Premises.....	6
12.0	Sources of Information.....	7
13.0	Appendices.....	7
14.0	Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy and Procedure.....	7
	APPENDIX A: PROCEDURES WHEN MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCES AND RELATED PARAPHERNALIA ARE FOUND ON MCAST CAMPUSES.....	8
	APPENDIX B: PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF SUSPICION OF STUDENT / STAFF MEMBER MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES MISUSE OR DISCLOSURE BY THE STUDENT / STAFF MEMBER.....	9
	APPENDIX C: MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCES – INFORMATION AND EFFECTS.....	10
	APPENDIX D: REFERRAL AGENCIES.....	11



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 3 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

1.0 Introduction

Mind altering substances – legal and illegal, synthetic and natural - such as drugs, alcohol and tobacco (Appendix C) affect the individual's performance, conduct and relationships at the College, workplace, as well as one's private life. The use of such substances may give rise to harm both to oneself and to others.

MCAST believes in its responsibility to promote good health by raising the awareness of students and employees over the risks of substance misuse as well as through other services such as those offered at the Wellbeing Hub.

The College Policy on the misuse of substances is to comply with the laws of Malta and will duly notify the Executive Police if a student, employee or any other person on College premises is found to:

- Be in possession of suspicious illegal mind altering substances or items/material related to such abuse;

or

- Be supplying / providing / using or sharing such substances.

This Policy does not cover the consumption of caffeine / energy drinks.

1.1 The Policy

In order to enable students and staff to understand the implications of substance misuse, this policy contains information and guidelines on the:

- Principles of substance education
- Management of incidents of substance misuse and protection of the individual

The Policy and Procedures are focused on four key areas:

- Awareness on the use or misuse of legal and illegal substances
- Managing substance related incidents
- Training and Development for both students and staff
- Policy and Procedure monitoring, review and evaluation.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 To ensure the health, safety and welfare of all individuals, including employees, students, visitors and contractors/suppliers who use the College premises.
- 2.2 To provide a support mechanism for students and staff who experience misuse of mind altering substances.
- 2.3 To create awareness of individual and College responsibilities in the management of incidents related to substance use or misuse and the procedures to be followed in such cases.



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 4 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

3.0 Objectives

The Policy seeks to create a safe environment whereby students and staff are aware of:

- 3.1
 - a. The types of substances available and their adverse effects;
 - b. Sources of additional information about the misuse of substances;
 - c. Referral procedures for appropriate support where a student / member of staff requests assistance to overcome dependence on mind altering substances or alcohol.
- 3.2 The appropriate action/s to be followed when an incidence of substance / alcohol possession/use/misuse occurs (Appendix A).

4.0 Definitions

It is necessary to provide appropriate definition to assist the effective interpretation of this policy.

- 4.1 **'Misuse of Substances'** - The use of substances and their misuse whether deliberate or unintentional including prescribed medicines or solvents.

For the purpose of this College Policy misuse of substances shall include nicotine intake and vaping (whether anti-nicotine or otherwise).
- 4.2 **'Alcohol misuse'** - Whether intermittent or continual, alcohol misuse interferes with a person's health, social functioning and study/work abilities.
- 4.3 **'Anyone'** - Applies to every individual who enters MCAST Campuses.
- 4.4 **'MCAST Campuses'** - Centres where learning is provided to enrolled College students, buildings and grounds on the Main Campus as well as Satellite Institutes and Centres in Malta and Gozo.
- 4.5 **'College Authorities'** - This refers to the Principal and CEO, Deputy Principal, Director, Deputy Director of the specific Institute/Department or Head of Department/Unit.

5.0 Legal Requirements

- 5.1 MCAST embraces a healthy lifestyle approach hence discouraging the possession, use and/or supply of illegal mind altering substances on all College Campuses.
- 5.2 MCAST will take the necessary action against anyone found to be in possession, supplying or using mind altering substances on any of the MCAST premises. The College will immediately inform the police if a student, member of staff or visitor is found to be in possession, supplying or using mind altering substances and/or related paraphernalia on any of the College Campuses.
- 5.3 The use of tobacco, marijuana and vaping is strictly prohibited on MCAST Campuses. MCAST underlines Article 22 (2) (b) (ii) of chapter 101 of the Laws of Malta in that it provides that:

"where a person is convicted as provided in sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (b) and the offence has taken place in, or within 100 metres of the perimeter of, a school, youth club or centre, or such other place where young people habitually meet, or the offence consists in the sale, supply,



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 5 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

administration or offer to do any of these acts, to a minor, to a woman with child or to a person who is following a programme for cure or rehabilitation from drug dependence, the punishment shall be increased by one degree.”

- 5.4 That this Policy shall be read and understood in conjunction with the Laws of Malta regulating the use of Mind Altering Substances and this without prejudice to Section 5.1 above, in that the approach of the College is of zero tolerance towards the possession, use and/or supply of illegal mind altering substances on all College Campuses.

6.0 Incidents Involving Mind Altering Substances and Alcohol Misuse

Incidents involving mind altering substances are generally defined in relation (but not limited to) the following situations:

- 6.1 Substances and paraphernalia found on all College Campuses;
- 6.2 Disruptive behaviour by students / staff suspected of use / misuse of mind altering substances;
- 6.3 The academic performance of a student suspected of being affected by misuse of such substances;
- 6.4 Disclosure by students / staff that they are using mind altering substances on College Campuses;
- 6.5 Possession of or consumption of, or dealing / supplying on all College Campuses.

7.0 Procedure when Mind Altering Substances and related Paraphernalia are found on any MCAST Campus

- 7.1 Anyone finding illegal substances and/or related paraphernalia (syringes, spoons, plastic bags with traces of suspected substances, inhaling devices, silver foils, laces) or any other suspicious objects on College premises must immediately submit a report with MCAST Senior Officials within the Institute or Department.
- 7.2 A witness must be sought in order to observe the process and procedure.
- 7.3 In the event that the paraphernalia or substance found may pose a health threat to others, the appropriate protective gloves **must be used** to avoid cross contamination by the person/s removing the substances and/or paraphernalia or items/material related to such abuse.
- 7.4 A general view and a close-up photo of the substance / related material is to be taken prior to their removal in order that the original state in which the items were found is preserved. The items are then to be sealed in a clean recipient and safely kept in a locked place until, together with the photos taken, they are handed to the appropriate authorities. Should these items not be of a health hazard, the items are to remain where found and are to be guarded for eventual removal by the Police.
- 7.5 Syringes, needles and other equipment are to be sealed in the provided recipient held by the Institute / Department Director / and at the Student House Reception.
- 7.6 The Director of the Institute / Department concerned is to compile a report on the *DOC 198 Mind Altering Substance Incident Report Form* and inform the Deputy Principal Administration.
- 7.7 Photos and the suspicious substances and related materials will be immediately handed to the police for further investigation and eventual disposal. The appropriate form *DOC 204 Mind Altering Substance Receipt and Handing over of Suspicious Find* is to be duly filled in.



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 6 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

8.0 Disruptive Behaviour by Students Suspected of Misuse of Substances

Disruptive behaviour is covered by the Student Conduct Regulations – Doc. 038.

Any disruptive behaviour resulting from the suspected misuse of mind altering substances including alcohol will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

9.0 Suspected Substances and Alcohol Misuse Adversely Affecting Student / Staff Performance (Appendix B)

Where there is a degree of suspicion that a student / staff member is involved in misuse of mind altering substances, the College will, in the first instance, take a supportive and guidance role.

Actions resulting from supportive intervention:

- Referral to the Director of the Institute / Department support system
- Referral to the Wellbeing Hub

10.0 Disclosure by a Student / Staff Member of the use of Mind Altering Substances (Appendix B)

10.1 When a student / staff member approaches someone to discuss their involvement with such substances, the discussion will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

10.2 Following the meeting the student / staff member is referred to:

- ✓ Director of the Institute / Department concerned
- ✓ Director – Outreach Services and Student Affairs

11.0 Possessing, Dealing or Supplying Illegal Substances on College Premises

11.1 If any student / staff member or visitor to the College is found, or observed to be in possession of or supplying such substances on College premises, the person noting this activity must instantly report the incident to the College authorities.

11.2 College authorities report the incident to the Police.

11.3 The Director of the Institute / Department who has been notified of the incident is to compile a report on the 'Mind Altering Substance Report Form' (DOC 198).

11.4 The College may suspend the suspected individuals from accessing any College premises and the same individual may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 7 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

11.5 Users of mind altering substances are responsible for their own actions including those leading to their own or third party injuries.

12.0 Sources of Information

In support of the well-being of students and staff, MCAST will strive to:

- 12.1 Raise awareness of the dangers of the use of Mind Altering Substances including alcohol (Appendix C).
- 12.2 Provide help and support to students and staff requiring assistance.

Information will be provided to:

- ✓ Students, staff and parents who wish to increase their awareness of the effects of the misuse of such substances including alcohol.
- ✓ Students and staff who wish to access specialist advice and support (Appendix D).

13.0 Appendices

Appendices annexed to this document contain valuable resources and information for both students and staff.

14.0 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy and Procedure

The Outreach Services and Student Affairs Department will monitor the Policy and Procedure at least once a year to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the College. The results of the monitoring will be made available to the Principal and Institutes / Centres.

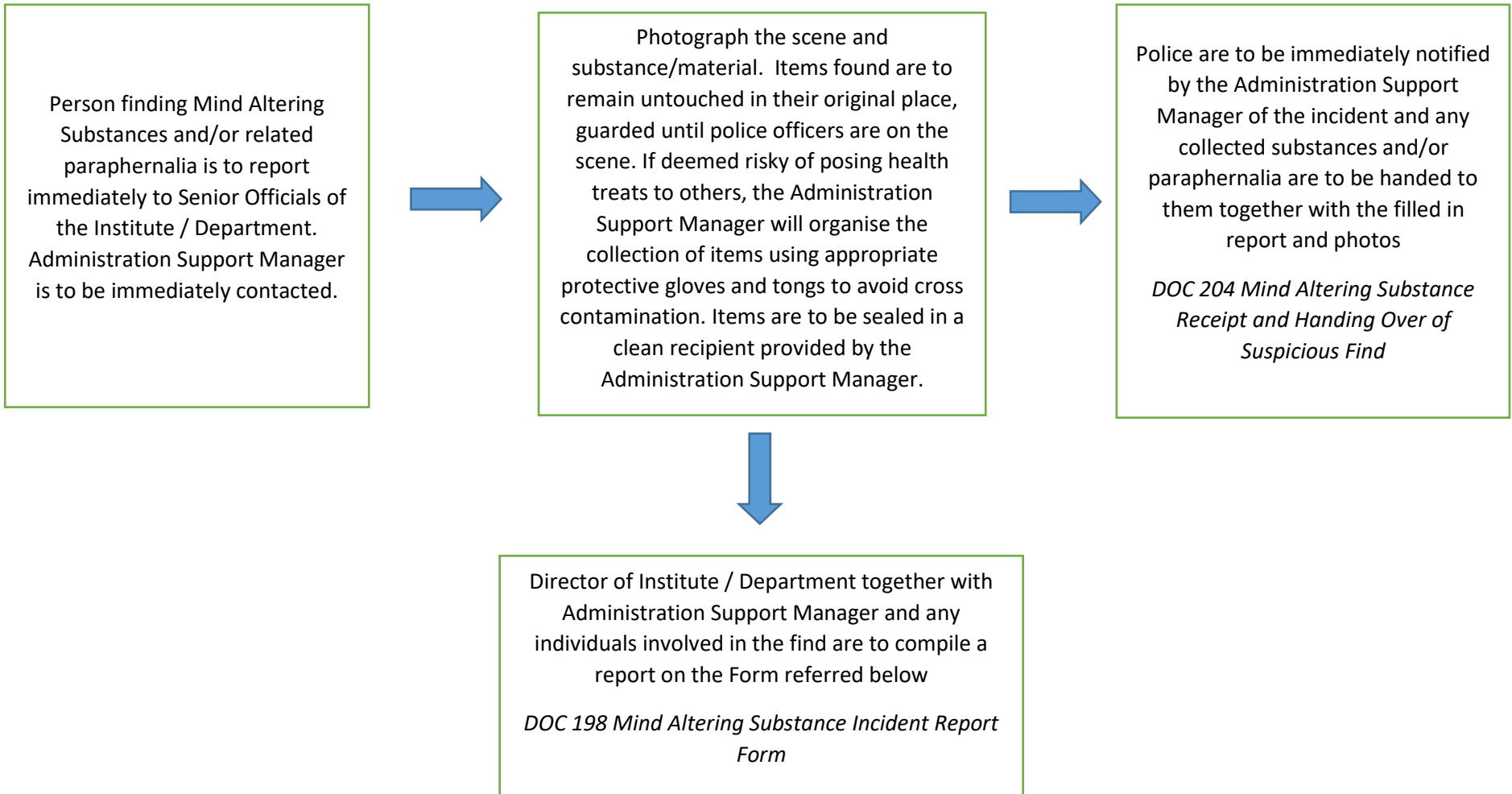
The policy will be reviewed regularly or in the light of changing information by the pertinent authorities.

Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 8 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

APPENDIX A: PROCEDURES WHEN MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCES AND RELATED PARAPHERNALIA ARE FOUND ON MCAST CAMPUSES

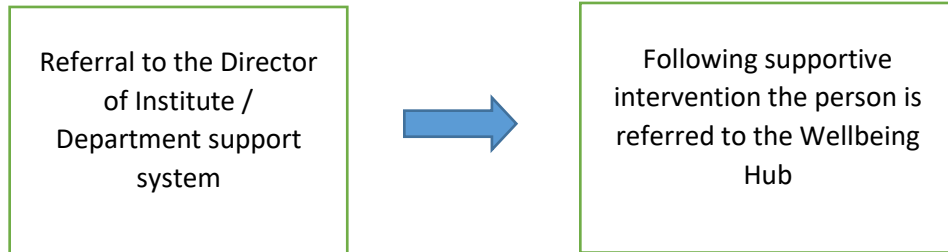




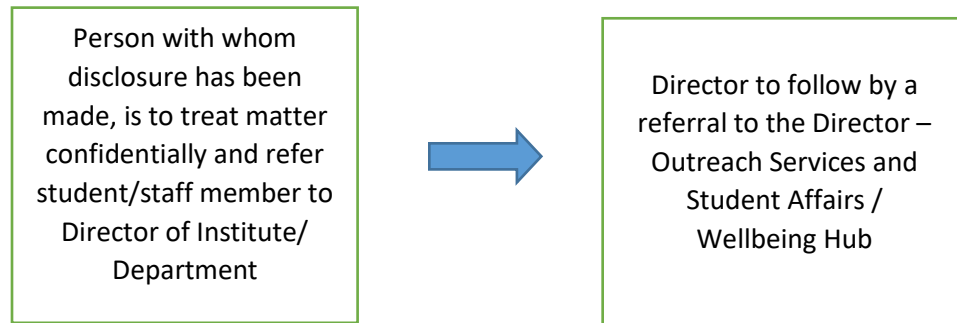
Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 9 of 11	
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued	03.08.2023

APPENDIX B: PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF SUSPICION OF STUDENT / STAFF MEMBER MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES MISUSE OR DISCLOSURE BY THE STUDENT / STAFF MEMBER

In case of suspicion, supportive intervention is taken:



In case of disclosure by student / staff member:





Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 10 of 11
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued 03.08.2023

APPENDIX C: MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCES – INFORMATION AND EFFECTS

Name	Street Names / Information	Short Term Use	Long Term use
Opiates	Heroin, Codeine, Meperidine (Demerol), Methadone, Pentazocine (Talwin)	Slows reactions and user can easily become addicted.	If injected it damages veins and skin; if sniffed it can damage the lining of the nose.
Cocaine	Powder, Crack – Smoking / Inhaling	Initially feelings of well-being and helps concentration. Sometimes anxiety and panic. After effects of tiredness and depression.	Can cause restlessness, nervousness and insomnia. Repeated sniffing can damage the lining of the nose. If injected it damages veins and skin. It may cause dependence.
Volatile solvents and inhalants	Glue, Thinner	Similar to being drunk. Inhaling gases can cause death instantly.	Regular use causes tiredness and a lack of concentration. Use after many years can cause liver, kidney and brain damage.
Amphetamines and other stimulants	Dexedrine	Initially user feels lively and energetic but may become restless and panic stricken.	Risks damage to blood vessels and can cause heart failure. If injected damages veins and skin.
Cannabis	Marijuana, hash, dope, weed, smoke, THC	Small amounts cause talkativeness, hilarity and relaxation. Increases sense of sound and colour.	If smoked it can cause lung infections, bronchitis and cancer.
Psychedelics	LSD, Mescaline	A 'trip' can last from 1 – 12 hours depending on the amount taken. Experiences vary from one person to another.	Can have serious mental effects. Sometimes vivid re-experiences known as 'flashback'.
Hallucinogenic mushrooms	Not easily distinguished from other mushrooms	Similar effects to LSD but last for a shorter time.	Trips may vary according to the setting where taken however repeated use may cause 'bad trips'
Sedative Hypnotics	Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines and other sedative hypnotics – eg. Chloral hydrate	Have similar effects to alcohol. Cause relaxation.	Nervousness, dizziness and insomnia. Regular use can cause dependence or death.
Alcohol	Taken as a drink. Mainly consists of water and ethyl alcohol which is made from fermented fruits, vegetables or grain.	Absorbed immediately into bloodstream which can last a few moments or a few hours. Excess causes drunkenness.	Can cause liver disease, heart and blood disorders. Regular use can lead to dependence.
Nicotine	Tobacco, Smoking, Vaping	The nicotine content can make people feel more relaxed for a short period of time.	Can cause heart disease, lung infections, bronchitis and cancer.

**** Note:** The above list is not exhaustive and may be updated accordingly



Document Title	MIND ALTERING SUBSTANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES			Page 11 of 11
Document Number	212	Document Revision	D	Date Issued 03.08.2023

APPENDIX D: REFERRAL AGENCIES

Caritas		
Community Centre	Mountbatten Street, Hamrun	22199000, 21237935
San Blas Therapeutic Community	L/O Zebbug	21462727
Sant'Anna P.I.P	Sant'Anna, Heritage Street, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq	21374293
Sexually Transmitted Infections		
GU Clinic	Mater Dei Hospital, Msida	25457494
HIV Malta	32, Parish Street, Mosta	99255559
Oasi		
Oasi Foundation Gozo	5, Wied Sara Street, Victoria, Gozo	21563333
Sedqa		
Main Office	3, Braille Street, St Venera	23885110
Support Line		179
Addiction Community Services (ACT)	3, Braille Street, St Venera	23885110
Santa Maria Therapeutic Community	Hal-Farrug, Luqa	21244528
Detoxification Out Patients Centre – DETOX (SMOPU)	St. Luke's Hospital, St. Luke's Road, Guardamangia	22261800
Detoxification in Patients Centre – Dar l-Impenn	2, Triq is-Sibbiena, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq	21227075
Alcoholics Anonymous		help@aamalta.org
Mater Dei Medical Emergency		112
Millenium Chapel	Church Street, St. Julians	21354464
Psychological and Family Services - ACTS	Galatea Building, St. Luke's Road, Guardamangia	Reception Appogg – 22959000 21244517 - 22583200