SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1	**Document category**	Procedure		
2	**Document approver**	CoI		
3	**Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update**	Principal & CEO; Deputy Principals; Directors & Deputy Directors; Senior Administration Officers; Guidance and Student Support Services Staff		
4	**Document change history**			
	A	**DCN #**	**Date released**	**Change originator**
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		- Written Procedure, first revision		
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		Change history (Section/change details)		

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Instructions for document users with access to College SharePoint System

All MCAST employees can access current, controlled and approved documents related to the Quality Management System from the College website mcast.edu.mt

*Document users who do have online access are therefore encouraged **NOT** to retain printed hard copies of the Quality Management System documents.*

If however a hard copy of the document is required, the user is to ensure that the printed document is the current revision.

Continuous Improvement

*Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be followed, implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated! Contact your Document Controller on Ext 7121 **today**. !*
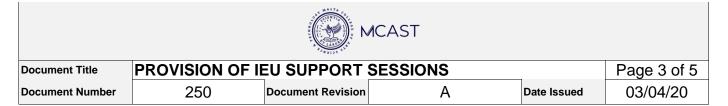
1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

1.1. The purpose of this document is to describe the process for the application for and provision of Support Sessions provided by the Inclusive Education Unit (IEU).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. The IEU offers Support Sessions to MCAST learners requiring academic and/or accessibility-related support.

2.2. Such sessions are provided on a weekly basis for the duration of one hour each and can spread over an entire academic year.

2.3. Support Sessions focus, although not exclusively, on the following areas:

Key Skills: Mathematics, Maltese, English, IT, Science, Accessibility / Learning Skills: assistive technology, assignment support, organisational skills, time management, study skills., etc.

2.4. The Additional Support programme is very flexible and is tailored to the needs of the individual learner. In view of this, learners who require any form of academic support (even if for something which is not listed above) are encouraged to approach the Inclusive Education Unit, and request assistance.

2.5. All sessions are scheduled during free periods according to the learner's timetables. This implies that no clashes with timetabled lectures and that learners, will never be pulled out of lectures to attend Support Sessions.

2.6. In highly reasonable cases, and subject to Learning Support Educator (LSE) availability, learners may be offered more than a single Support Session per week.

2.7. Learners requiring similar support may be grouped and supported through common sessions.

2.8. Sessions may be rescheduled according to the needs of the IEU.

2.9. Applications can be submitted from the first day of the academic year however, the provision of support sessions starts in November. This timeframe allows learners to obtain a better understanding of the areas in which they require support, and the IEU Administration to process the requests effectively during such a busy period.

2.10. Applications can be submitted at any point throughout the academic year for two main reasons:

2.10.1. Learners might wish to start their course without support sessions in order to evaluate the level at which they are required to perform and explore ways to cope independently. Should learners realise that additional support is not required at that point in time, they would still be able to submit an application at a later date. Should learners decide to submit an application after the initial evaluation period without support sessions, learners would have had the opportunity to better identify their areas of need and would consequently be able to request more specific support.

2.10.2. Support Sessions may be spread over a definite period (rather than just throughout the entire academic year as stated in clause 2.2). Such provision is geared towards supporting learners to achieve a particular skill (e.g. using an assistive technology aid) or to complete a specific task (e.g. an assignment). The number and period of support sessions in such cases would be determined by the learners' mastery of the skill or the deadlines involved.

2.10.3. Learners, who are 16 years or older, may decide to interrupt support sessions, even if these were intended to be provided throughout the entire academic year. This decision is entirely up to the learners and they are to assume responsibility for it. In the case of learners who are under 16 years of age the consent of parents and/or legal guardians needs to be sought.

2.10.4. In order to request the interruption of support sessions learners are to fill in and sign DOC 263 Declaration to Drop IEU Support Sessions. The form is to be signed by the student's parents/legal guardians in the case of students under 16 years of age.

3. REQUESTING SUPPORT SESSIONS

3.1. Applications for Support Sessions should be submitted through DOC 247 IEU Support Sessions Application / Referral Form by either the learner or another person assuming an active role in the learner's education. This includes, but is not limited to: lecturers, LSEs, student mentors, student support services coordinators, directors, or deputy directors. The form is available on the College website and at the IEU.

3.2. Applications should be submitted at the IEU along with an updated copy of the learner's timetable.

3.3. The area in which support is being requested should be clearly stated.

3.4. Before submitting applications on learners' behalf, the persons submitting the application should ideally make learners aware of the areas they require support in and inform them that an application will be submitted in their interest. Should this be not as straightforward due to the sensitivity of the case, an application could still be submitted with the section regarding the learners' awareness of the application duly marked as 'No'. The IEU will then discuss the learners' needs with the person submitting the application and reach out to the learners through sensitive and supportive ways.
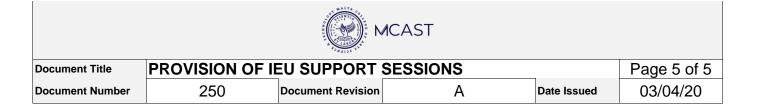
4. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

4.1. Applications for Support Sessions are processed by the IEU and any clarifications are settled either with the learners or their referees.

4.2. LSEs are then assigned by the IEU to provide Support Sessions to learners. This is done according to the timetable provided with the application and the available timetable time slots of LSEs.

4.3. Once applications are processed, the IEU Administration would inform learners accordingly through their official College email and/or by phone, providing them with the date, time and place of the first Support Session.

Should the support requested fall outside the IEU remit, the request cannot be fulfilled. Nonetheless, the IEU will try its best to refer the application to other entities within the College which would be able to satisfy, at least in part, the request for support. In order to achieve this, the IEU works closely with other departments, including the Learning Support Unit in particular.

5. LEARNER PROGRESS

5.1. A record of the support provided as well as the learners' attendance is kept by LSEs and submitted monthly to the IEU Administration. This enables Support Sessions to be planned and adjusted accordingly.

5.2. If possible and applicable, LSEs should liaise with respective lecturers in order to ensure an effective support plan and a common approach in supporting the learners. Such cooperation may be done verbally, through email, and/or by sharing learning resources and material covered during both lectures and Support Sessions through shared online folders.

6. LEARNERS' COMMITMENT

6.1. Learners should discuss the areas they require support in during their first Support Session, the aim of which is to gauge the learners' needs and devise a plan of support. Thus, for the first session learners should bring with them a sample of the work they need support in.

6.2. Learners are expected to attend Support Sessions regularly and complete the tasks assigned by the LSE.

6.3. The time of the slot provided should be respected.

6.4. Whenever learners cannot attend a Support Session, they should inform the respective LSE beforehand, preferably through their official College email account, and provide a reasonable justification.

6.5. Failing to attend 3 consecutive Support Sessions without a valid justification implies an automatic termination of the service.

6.6. Learners who miss sessions on a regular basis may be asked by the IEU to provide an explanation.

6.7. Since attendance for the support sessions is voluntary, it is not related to the College's attendance policy, consequently having no impact on the learners' maintenance grant.

7. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Doc 247 IEU Support Sessions Application / Referral Form
Doc 263 Declaration to Drop IEU Support Sessions