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GENERAL INFORMATION

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1. The Scope and Nature of RPL Activities at MCAST

1.1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the concept and the process which enables individuals to have their prior learning and experiences evaluated and recognised for a number of purposes which can benefit the individual, employers and the economy.

1.2. RPL can have multiple purposes, including:

- RPL to gain entry to an Award or Qualification; and
- RPL for the award of ECTS points in order to gain exemption from parts of an existing programme of study.

RPL is only being used for the two-listed purposes and MCAST will not provide programme certificates as part of this process.

1.3. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (the College) supports and recognizes learning which takes place in different contexts. Knowledge and skills can develop from many types of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The College recognises that current and prospective students¹ may acquire learning and skills in a formal learning environment, in employment or in other working/voluntary contexts.

1.4. All formal, non-formal and informal learning may be directly relevant to the vocational or professional education and training programme which a student seeks to follow at the College.

1.5. Recognition of Prior Learning can take many forms and definitions. At MCAST a distinction and a separate process is adopted for RPCL and RPEL and the document structure is organised accordingly, as explained below:

This RPL policy document is divided into three parts:

- i. Doc 358 RPL Policy considered as the overarching framework for all RPL at the College
- ii. Doc 360 Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) Policy for Exemption, focusing specifically on the concepts, policy and procedure for RPCL; and
- iii. Doc 361 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) Policy for Admission and Exemption, focusing solely on the policy, procedures, and guidance for RPEL.

All three documents need to be read in conjunction with each other.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, the term 'student' refers to both prospective or current students.



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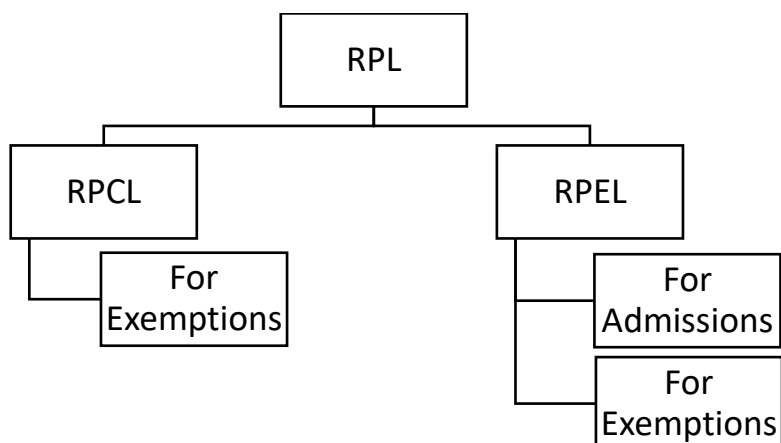
2. Definitions and Acronyms

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL is the process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university as well as outside formal learning situations as through life and work experiences” [SCQF definition, 2010 as published by MFHEA, 2021]. RPL includes both RPCL and RPEL.
Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)	RPCL is the process of gaining recognition of certified prior learning obtained at an accredited or recognised Institution which can lead to exemptions from parts of an MCAST study programme.
Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)	RPEL is the process of gaining recognition of informal and non-formal experiential learning which may have been acquired within a work environment, a voluntary organisation, life experiences or uncertified learning contexts, which can lead to admission and exemption from parts of an MCAST study programme. The process may also take into consideration learning obtained through formal education/qualifications.
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System, also referred to as Credits, referring to 25 hours of workload as defined by the Referencing Report (Referencing Report, 2016). ECTS are used for programmes at EQF/MQF level 5 and above.
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
EQF/MQF	European Qualifications Framework/Malta Qualifications Framework



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3. Different types of RPL services at MCAST and their application



4. Gaining access or exemptions

- 4.1. This policy, together with the two sub-policies, sets out the expectations, aims and principles, and procedural approaches in relation to RPL for admission or exemption purposes by the College.
- 4.2. The College recognises that central to this policy is the responsibility for the academic standards of all Qualifications and Awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students.
- 4.3. The College is ultimately responsible for the academic standards of its Qualifications and Awards. These are issued upon completion of the requirements of the set programme, which are expressed in terms of units, learning outcomes, EQF/MQF levels and credits.
- 4.4. With their RPCL or RPEL applications (documents referred below) students are expected to demonstrate prior achievements of elements of a programme at a comparable or equivalent EQF/MQF level. In such cases, and where appropriate evidence can be provided, the College may grant the student admission to programmes or exemptions from Units on the basis of demonstrated evidence.

Reference Documents

Doc 359 Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) application form

Doc 362 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) application form and portfolio

- 4.5. This RPL policy, which covers both the RPCL (DOC 360) and RPEL (DOC 361) procedures, allows for exemptions that shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the entire programme² of study (unless learning outcomes are identical to the MCAST Units and the prior learning has been certified using ECTSs). Provided that, all other regulations in Docs 360 and 361 are adhered to.

² IMPORTANT NOTE: The 30% exemption limit is per programme and not per procedure. Hence a student shall never be granted exemptions exceeding 30% of a specific programme of study via RPL, regardless of whether they applied for exemption using one or both of the MCAST RPL procedures (i.e. DOCs 360 and 361).



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5. Limitations

5.1. There may be some programmes of study that do not lend themselves to RPL such as:

- programmes of studies which lead to regulated professional accreditation.
- programmes that require a minimum number of hours to deem candidates “fit to practice”.
- programmes of studies delivered by MCAST but which are awarded by third parties.
- programmes of studies which lead to a professional warrant. This may include those professions included in the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, but may also include other programmes such as First Aid or others which may require a renewal of a licence to practice.

5.2. A list of programmes is available in Annex 1. This list may be updated from time to time.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Responsibility for the effective implementation of the RPL Policy lies with the Admissions Board, operating under the auspices of the Office of the Registrar.

7. Monitoring and Quality Assurance arrangements

7.1. Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of RPL Policy lies initially with the Registrar. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this process lies with the Quality Assurance Department.

8. RPL Staff development and capacity building

8.1. The College is committed to dedicate resources to the smooth running of the RPL procedures and to upskill staff as necessary.

8.2. Capacity building will be actively promoted and support will be provided for staff involved in the management, assessment, student support, and administration of RPL related procedures.



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9. Schedule of Fees

9.3. All requests for Recognition of Prior Learning are subject to the following fees (as per table below):

- RPL Consideration Fee (non-refundable)
- RPL Processing Fee (non-refundable)

			RPCL	RPEL FOR ADMISSION AND RPEL FOR EXEMPTION
			<i>Refer to DOC 360 for further details regarding the RPCL Process</i>	<i>Refer to DOC 361 for further details regarding the processes of RPEL for Admission and RPEL for Exemption</i>
Stage 1 1st payment	RPL Consideration fee <i>(non-refundable)</i>	EU Citizens	€200 per application	€200 per application
		Non EU Citizens	€300 per application	€300 per application
Stage 2 2nd payment	RPL Processing fee - Rate per ECTS <i>(non-refundable)</i>		N/A	€10 per ECTS
Total payment		EU Citizens	€200 per application	€200 per application + RPL Processing Fee (per ECTS)
		Non EU Citizens	€300 per application	€300 per application + RPL Processing Fee (per ECTS)
Disclaimer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fees are not applicable for exemption requests on MCAST units achieved through another same-level MCAST programme; Fees are not applicable for exemption from IT Levels 1,2, & 3 based on possession of ECDL; RPL fees may change on an annual basis 				



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- 9.4. Applicants interested in the RPL process will be requested to submit their applications via email to rpl@mcast.edu.mt (Stage 1).
- 9.5. Upon receipt of the application, MCAST will issue the applicants with an invoice for the RPL Consideration Fee (Stage 2, table in 9.3 refers) which fee the applicant will be expected to pay in order to initiate the RPL process.
- 9.6. Upon confirmation of payment of the RPL Consideration fee, the RPL board will carry out an initial vetting of the applicant's application and will issue the applicant with a quotation of the RPL Processing fee (table in 9.3 refers).
- 9.7. The quotation will cover the processing of the RPL request together with any support/guidance which the applicant may need.
- 9.8. The RPL vetting process will only start upon receipt of confirmation of payment of all applicable fee by the RPL/Admissions Board from the MCAST finance section.
- 9.9. The RPL/RPCL/RPEL involves a long process. Therefore, time is very important in this process as exemptions need to be in place before the start of the academic year.
- 9.10. In the case of a successful RPL outcome in which the applicant is granted entry to a programme and/or exemption from specific credits for a specific intake, applicants would need to avail themselves of such entry/exemptions in that specific intake as indicated by the RPL Board. Should an applicant fail to apply as a student in the indicated intake, they will be subject to an extension fee in order to maintain and re-activate their RPL process. The RPL Board will again issue a new quotation for the RPL processing extension fee.
- 9.11. In the case of an un-successful RPL outcome applicants will have the right to appeal as per the procedures listed below.

Reference Documents

- *DOC_360_Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) Policy and Procedure for Exemptions*
- *DOC_361_Policy for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) For Admission and Exemption*

- 9.12. The implementation date for any RPL/RPCL/RPEL request under these regulations will come into force from February 2022 for intake 2022-2023.

10. Disclaimer

MCAST shall not be held responsible for any licensing or warranting eligibility or decisions resulting from exemption decisions granted by MCAST as a result of the MCAST RPL policy. Furthermore, the student acknowledges that exemptions could affect their eligibility for any license or warrant which is granted by the competent board/panel/authority.



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11. Annex 1:

List of MCAST Study Programmes excluded from RPL (as of April 2025)

Institute	Programme	EQF/ MQF
IAS	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Nursing Studies	6
IBMC	ACCA Qualification	6/7
ICS	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Early Years	6
ICS	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Work	6
IET	Chief Mate	N/A
IET	Master Mariner	--
IET	Diploma in Deck Operations	3
IET	Advanced Diploma in Deck Operations (incorporating STCW OOW Navigation Course)	4
IET	Advanced Diploma in Electrical Installations	4
IET	Advanced Diploma in Electrical Systems	4
IET	Bachelor of Engineering (Hons)	6
IET	Bachelor of Science in Civil and Structural Engineering	6
IET	Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance (incorporating EASA Part-66 CAT A Basic Course)	3
IET	Diploma in Aircraft Structures and Repairs	3
IET	Advanced Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance (Aeroplanes – Turbine Engines)	4
IET	Advanced Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance (Avionics)	4
IET	Advanced Diploma in Aviation Operations	4