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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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## Section A. Policy

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is intended to govern the process of exemption on the basis of evidenced and certified prior learning by a prospective or current student<sup>1</sup> at MCAST.
- 1.2 Such exemptions may be granted on the basis of Prior Certified Learning or credits/awards already achieved in an accredited or recognised Further and Higher Education Institution.
- 1.3 This policy defines the requirements for the granting of exemptions, which vary depending on:
  - the type of exemption;
  - the basis of the exemption, and;
  - the context for the exemption.
- 1.4 This policy and procedures arising from it are distinct from the official MCAST Admissions Process
- 1.5 These procedures are administered by the Admissions Board.

### 2. Scope and Nature of RPCL services provided

- 2.1 This policy sets out the expectations, aims, principles, and procedural approach in relation to recognition of prior learning for exemption purposes by MCAST (the College).
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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 level and credits.
- 2.4 In addition to meeting the specified entry requirements, students may already have demonstrated academic achievement of certain 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 exemptions from Units on the basis of demonstrated certified prior learning.

### 3. Limits to the Exemptions

- 3.1 Requests for recognition of prior learning for exemptions will not be accepted if more than ten years have elapsed since the said certified learning has taken place.
- 3.2 Exemptions shall only be approved for whole Units and not for individual elements of assessment within a Unit.
- 3.3 No exemptions are possible in MCAST programmes at EQF/MQF Level 3 or lower.

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



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Provided that the *ECDL/ICDL/C3* certificate may be considered in lieu of the IT Key Skills Unit at EQF/MQF Level 3. Students reading for an MQF Level 3 course can request an exemption from IT upon presentation of the *ECDL/ICDL/C3* Certificate of Achievement by the *end of the first week of November of the respective academic year. No further exemption requests will be considered beyond this date.* Students are to refer to the Institute secretariat to be guided accordingly by filling in the required form.

- 3.4 All students requesting an exemption are required to attend all lectures for the requested unit, until a written confirmation of the exemption is issued by the Office of the Registrar.
- 3.5 Exemptions from Key Skills Units may be considered for MCAST programmes at EQF/MQF Level 4 and Level 5.
- 3.6 Students who at the end of an MCAST programme fail to obtain a unit/s of study of an MCAST qualification are allowed to apply for the RPCL process and transfer the completed units to a similar MCAST programme (same level) provided that the learning outcomes of the units being claimed for transfer are the same as those for the respective units of the intended programme.
- 3.7 Research or project components within MCAST programmes cannot be exempted.
- 3.8 Practice-based learning, such as units achieved through work-based learning, dissertation units and Project units, or similar cannot be exempted.
- 3.9 Exemptions cannot exceed 30% of the entire MCAST programme, unless learning outcomes are identical to the MCAST Units and the prior learning has been certified using ECVETs/ECTS credits.

Provided that in the case of EQF/MQF Level 6 Degree programmes, no exemptions shall be granted from the third year or beyond of a full time programme, or their equivalent on a part time basis.

- 3.10 Granted exemptions will be clearly identified on a student's transcript/ notification of performance (NoP) upon successful completion of the Qualification and Award and will be indicated as 'Exempted by RPCL' and excluded from overall classification, where applicable.
- 3.11 Credits for exemption will only be assigned to students at the end of the programme of study and only upon successful completion of the said programme. The NoP issued to students who terminate their programme prematurely will not include reference to exemptions awarded by RPCL.
- 3.12 Following review of particular cases, the Admissions Board may reserve the right to consider exemptions beyond those stipulated in the limitations listed above and/or in alignment with decisions taken by the Vocational and Professional Council.

#### 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 Responsibility for the effective implementation of Recognition of Prior Certified Learning for Exemption Policy lies with the Admissions Board, operating under the auspices of the Office of the Registrar.



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## 5. Monitoring and Quality Assurance arrangements

- 5.1 Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of Recognition of Prior Certified Learning Policy for Exemption lies initially with the MCAST Registrar. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this process lies with the Quality Assurance Department.



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## Section B. PROCEDURE

### 6. Using the RPCL Process for Exemptions

- 6.1 The College assesses the certified learning achieved before granting an award of exemption. This assessment is informed by evidence provided by the student, which must be:
- Sufficient;
  - Relevant;
  - Authentic and;
  - Current.
- 6.2 Claims and supporting evidence must be provided in Maltese or English (with any translations authenticated by independent certified translator). It is the responsibility of students to arrange any translation and/or supporting verification required by the College.
- 6.3 All requests for exemptions must be made using the online application form made available, which should be submitted to the Admissions Office through a link which will be made available
- 6.4 Notification of the deadline for the submission of applications will be issued by the Admissions Office. Deadline for applications will be set at 6 weeks before the start of the Units/Semester.
- 6.5 It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all required materials, and supporting evidence are enclosed with the application form. Additional evidence may be requested, and it is the student's responsibility to provide such evidence.
- 6.6 The College will, as a minimum, require the following evidence to support an exemption application:
- Full Transcript, Europass Certificate or Diploma Supplement or another type of qualification document: The information listed must clearly show the course title, subjects/modules undertaken, level of study, credit rating and outcomes attained
  - Certificate: Clearly listing the name of the awarding body/Institution, the course title or award conferred, and award date.
  - Full syllabus documents or programme specification for the modules undertaken for which exemption(s) are sought. These documents must be official documentation from the awarding institution and be date specific to the period the study was completed.
- 6.7 Resubmission of a claim with additional requested supporting evidence is considered as a new claim. Students are allowed only one resubmission.
- 6.8 Additional submissions may be considered not exceeding point 3.7.
- 6.9 The College will assess the claim and advise the student in writing within 30 working days.

### 7. Support for Students

- 7.1 Students seeking exemptions shall be assisted by the respective Institute, and by the student support services, as necessary.
- 7.2 The policy document, including the link to the application form shall be made available to students on the College intranet and/or website and through the main information portal used by students (digitally or in hard copy format).



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## 8. Assessing RPCL Requests

- 8.1 The application is to be referred to the Admissions Board that will undertake the preliminary review of the documents and upholds or otherwise the recommendation of any exemption.
- 8.2 The Admissions Board may seek additional advice, including internal or external technical advice (e.g. from the awarding body concerned).
- 8.3 The College reserves the right to set an additional assessment/tasks to test a student's knowledge and/or invite the student to attend for an interview.
- 8.4 Each application must be considered using the following criteria:
- **Acceptability** – *is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning claimed?*
  - **Sufficiency** – *is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate the achievement of the learning claimed?*
  - **Authenticity** – *is the evidence clearly related to the applicants' own efforts and achievements?*
  - **Currency** – *does evidence relate to current learning in the respective vocational sector?*
- 8.5 The confirmation or otherwise of exemption will be confirmed in writing by the Office of the Registrar within 30 working days of receipt of the application.

## 9. Appeals against Exemption decisions

- 9.1 Where, requests for exemption are not upheld the student shall have the right to appeal under the following terms, at the MCAST Grievance Office:
- 9.1.1 The student may request a review of the exemption decision to the MCAST Grievance Office on the provided templates by the said Office.
- 9.1.2 Any appeals to the decision need to be supported by further additional documentation, as necessary.
- 9.1.3 Appeals to the decision may be lodged within 10 working days of the decision communicated in writing.

## Section C: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### 10. Forms

- 10.1 Doc 359 Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) Application Form