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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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3	Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update		VPC Members	
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	Updated par 5.1 to include parameters against which the Principal as Chair of the VPC may delegate the chairing of the meeting to a Deputy Principal			
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		Reviewed the Document against the MCAST Act 2023 and applied changes accordingly. All instances referring to COI were changed to VPC. Updated the definitions section to meet the requirements of the MCAST Act 2023. Added Section 4 VPC Composition as per the MCAST Act 2023 Updated 5.1 by removing the following text reference to the college Registrar		
Updated 5.2 by removing the text in red and adding the text in blue: <i>The MCAST Registrar is the VPC Secretary. In the absence of the Registrar, the Registrar may delegate this function to one of the Deputy Registrars (in the spirit of the law).</i> <del>the MCAST Principal &amp; CEO may delegate this function to another Council Member whose grade must be at least that of a Director.</del>				
Updated par 6 by changing the usual venue of the VPC to a venue as convened by the Chair and communicated by the secretary Updated 6.5 (frequency of meetings) and 6.6 (quorum) as per the MCAST Act 2023. Deleted all text from par 7 (Agenda) and cross referred to DOC 349 in order to eliminate duplication of information Reviewed the document to apply gender neutral language				

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The MCAST ACT (2023) stipulates the Vocational and Professional Council (VPC) as one of the MCAST governing bodies (PART III 9[1b]). It also defines its composition and functions.

## 2. The MCAST ACT (2023) and the MCAST Vocational and Professional Council

- 2.1. The MCAST Vocational and Professional Council (VPC) shall be set up as indicated in the MCAST ACT (2023) It will perform the functions stipulated in the same Act.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1. 'Act' – The Malta College of Arts, Science, and Technology Act, 2023.
- 3.2. 'Chairperson' – the MCAST Principal & CEO, or their appointed substitute in their absence.
- 3.3. 'Vocational and Professional Council' – one of the four governing bodies instituted by the The Malta College of Arts, Science, and Technology Act, (2023) - also known as 'VPC.'
- 3.4. 'MCAST' – The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.
- 3.5. 'Meeting' – a Meeting that is duly convened and constituted of the Vocational and Professional Council or any Committee thereof.
- 3.6. 'Secretary' – the MCAST Registrar or the person appointed by the MCAST Principal & CEO to fulfil this role in the Registrar's absence.

## 4. Composition of the VPC

- 4.1. As stipulated in the MCAST Act (2023) the Vocational and Professional Council shall be constituted of the following members:
- a) The Principal, who presides ex officio;
  - b) the Deputy Principals, ex officio;
  - c) the Registrar, ex officio;
  - d) two (2) members representing the industry appointed by the President;
  - e) two (2) members appointed by the Minister;
  - f) the Directors of all the Institutes, ex officio;
  - g) the Director, Education and Training Programmes;
  - h) the Director, Quality Assurance;
  - i) the Director, Student Services;
  - j) two (2) members elected by and from amongst the full-time academic staff;
  - k) two (2) members elected by and from amongst the students who shall hold office for a term not exceeding one (1) year
- 4.2. Personnel responsible for different academic functions may be invited to the meeting, as necessary.
- 4.3. The VPC member requesting such personnel's presence is to inform other VPC members at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The function and the role to be fulfilled by the personnel member is to be included in the notification.



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## **5. Roles and functions of the VPC's members**

### **5.1. The VPC Chairperson**

The MCAST Principal & CEO presides the VPC 'ex officio'. When the Principal is unable to preside, the Principal may delegate one of the Deputy Principals to chair these meetings provided that:

- a) The delegation is requested for practical reasons (e.g., justified absence, conflict of interest).
- b) The Registrar shall notify all VPC members by email, at least one day prior to the meeting, that the Principal is deputising a Deputy Principal to chair the upcoming VPC meeting. At the commencement of the meeting, the Deputy Principal shall invite any objections to this arrangement; should any arise, a vote will be conducted, with the outcome—determined by a simple majority—to be formally recorded in the minutes.
- c) The meeting must be conducted in accordance with the terms of reference and applicable procedure and adopted procedural rules.
- d) Decisions made under the direction of the delegated Chair are official and binding on the VPC, assuming procedural integrity.

As the VPC Chairperson, the Principal & CEO is expected to fulfil the following tasks:-

- i. To facilitate the smooth and professional administration of the VPC meetings;
- ii. To liaise with the Deputy Principals and the Registrar when setting up the VPC meeting agenda;
- iii. To ensure the implementation of this Standard Operating Procedure for VPC meetings;
- iv. To lead VPC meetings in a spirit of collaboration with all participants, providing adequate space for discussion for all VPC participants while taking the necessary steps to enforce a spirit of mutual respect towards all VPC members;
- v. To call, in liaison with VPC members, for an extension of any meeting if and when this is necessary, such as in situations that demand critical decisions given the VPC functions (refer to 3 above);
- vi. To monitor the implementation of VPC decisions in every following VPC meeting;
- vii. To check that the VPC minutes are in order before they are distributed to VPC members;
- viii. To liaise with VPC members when it is necessary to invite non- VPC guests to address VPC meetings;
- ix. To establish, in liaison with the Deputy Principals, any training session required for the continuous professional development of VPC.

### **5.2. The VPC Secretary**

The MCAST Registrar is the VPC Secretary. In the absence of the Registrar, the Registrar may delegate this function to a Deputy Registrar (in the spirit of the law) .

Above all, the Secretary is responsible for the implementation of these tasks:-

- i. To invite the VPC members to put forward proposed agenda items.
- ii. In liaison with the VPC Chairperson, the Secretary will communicate with VPC members, explaining item(s) that were not accepted on the Council agenda.
- iii. To minute the proceedings of the Council Meeting and then present them to the VPC Chairperson for his approval before disseminating them among all Council members.



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- iv. To present the minutes of the previous VPC Meeting to the VPC Chairperson during the following VPC Meeting for signature.
- v. To retain the signed VPC Meeting minutes safe for future records.
- vi. To communicate any part of the full VPC Meeting with the VPC Chairperson's approval.
- vii. To share minutes that need to be implemented with those concerned who do not form part of the VPC .
- viii. To ensure that the VPC minutes are not altered in any way after following the Chairperson's signature. Any accepted changes must be reflected in the minutes of the following VPC Meeting.

### **5.3. VPC members**

All VPC members contribute to the agenda and the resulting discussions during the VPC meetings. To ensure the smooth administration of the VPC meetings, each member is expected to follow these few basic guidelines:

- i. to be well-prepared for the meetings by going through any related background material related to the agenda items, thus avoiding impromptu discussions and unresearched facts which generally lead to mistaken decisions by the VPC ;
- ii. to participate in such manner that befits the VPC, including the employment of a language and conduct that are appropriate for the VPC meetings; and
- iii. to contribute to the proposal of agenda items in line with Article 5 below, whenever necessary and whenever these fall within their, lines of duty.

## **6. Administration of the Vocational and Professional Council Meetings**

Council Meetings are generally held in a venue as convened by the chair and communicated by the Secretary, but may also occur in any part of the MCAST campuses. In very exceptional cases, the Council of Institutes Meetings may occur online.

### **6.1. Notification of meeting date, venue and agenda**

The Secretary of the VPC notifies all VPC members about the meeting date, venue, and agenda no later than ten (10) days before the VPC Meeting.

### **6.2. Attendance of Council members**

The VPC Secretary records the attendance of VPC members and it is communicated in the first part of the minutes of each meeting, including the names of those who are absent or under 'apologies'.

### **6.3. Duration of VPC meetings**

In general, unless there are exceptional and urgent circumstances, the VPC meetings should not exceed three (3) hours.

### **6.4. VPC meeting minutes**

The secretary shall produce a record of each meeting. Draft minutes shall be issued to the members within ten (10) working days following the meeting. Minutes will be formally approved in subsequent sessions.



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### 6.5. Frequency of VPC meeting

The Council of Institutes shall meet at least every six (6) weeks as stipulated in the MCAST Act (2023).

### 6.6. The quorum for the VPC Meetings

The quorum for VPC Meetings shall be of not less than one-half of the number of members plus one (1) as stipulated in the MCAST Act (2023).

## 7. The VPC Agenda

Details regarding the setting of the VPC agenda are available in Doc 349: Procedure for Setting of Agenda for Discussion in VPC Meeting

## 8. Voting procedure

8.1. If there is a need to vote, all VPC members except for the MCAST Principal & CEO have a right to cast their vote.

8.2. The MCAST Principal & CEO always retains the right of the casting vote. Voting in the VPC Meetings can occur by showing hands if all VPC members agree or by secret ballot.

8.3. The VPC Secretary will record all voting results in the VPC Meeting minutes.

## 9. Code of conduct for VPC members

9.1. All members of the Vocational and Professional Council are expected to be aware that such participation in VPC Meetings carries a high degree of ethical conduct and responsibility towards all of MCAST's institutions, learners and employees, mainly since much of the College's success and achievements depend on what is discussed and decided in VPC Meetings.

9.2. It is the duty and responsibility of the Chairperson to retain a smooth running of VPC Meetings.

## 10. Communication of decisions of the VPC

10.1. The VPC Secretary ensures that all VPC decisions are listed in their relevant VPC Meeting minutes. The Secretary shall also ensure that the VPC decision is circulated to management, academic/non-academic staff and within 5 days from the VPC meeting.

## 11. Setting up of VPC sub-committees or working groups

11.1. The VPC may decide to appropriately set up sub-committees and working groups to discuss further or analyse matters that require further study before the VPC takes its decisions on that particular matter. Such sub-committees and working groups need the approval of the VPC Chairperson and must be given clear terms of reference and a date deadline by when they should report back with their findings to VPC.



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## **12. Confidentiality**

- 12.1.** To ensure an open and unhindered discussion at the VPC meetings, all those present must refrain from disclosing the identity of persons contributing to debates taking place during the VPC.
- 12.2.** Additionally, items of discussion that are not reported in the document describing the decisions taken by the VPC are to be deemed confidential and hence not disclosed to third parties. All other documents including data and information (excluding the minutes of the VPC meeting) that are circulated to the VPC members before the VPC meetings are not considered as confidential (unless otherwise indicated by the Chair) and may be discussed by the lecturer and student representatives with the MCAST lecturers and students that they are representing, and their student or employee's unions.

## **13. Data Protection**

- 13.1.** The VPC members are bound to follow the Data Protection requirements as listed in the GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016) and the Malta Data Protection Act (Chapter 586, 28 May 2018).