



ISSUE 61

Engineering Board
approves

MCAST
Engineering
Courses

MCAST LINK

MCAST students
participate in

Special
Olympics
Invitational Games

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Editorial



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The College strives for quality and parity of esteem and is proud to announce that Bachelor of Engineering course graduates can now apply for a warrant to practise as professional engineers with all the rights conferred by law. They can now apply for the Engineering Warrant which will be at par with those following similar programmes at other approved institutions.

During the launch of the new MCAST Prospectus, the College announced six new courses that reflect the needs of industry. These new courses are: the Advanced Diploma for Dental Surgery Assistants; the Diploma in Cabin Crew Training; the Undergraduate Diploma in Auto Electronic and Electrical Technology; the Master of Science in Advanced Clinical Practice; the Master of Science in Professional Health Practice and the Master in Social Care Practice. These new programmes will be offered in October 2022.

This edition announces the newly formed Social Staff Committee which is comprised of MCAST staff members. The aim of this committee is to organise social networking events and outreach community activities aimed at creating a sense of belonging within the MCAST staff community and to fulfil the need to reconnect socially, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

MCAST students have participated in the first ever Special Olympics Invitational Games. MCAST is very proud that all its MCAST students that participated managed to secure medals and perform very well in all areas. MCAST students participated in diverse sports disciplines including athletics, aquatics, table tennis, bocce, bowling, and football. All pictures are featured inside the magazine.

A new MCASTlink Editorial Board has been set up comprising of MCAST journalism lecturers. The aim of this board is to take the magazine to another level by involving experts in journalism and MCAST journalism students in its coalition of material. Dr Natalino Fenech starts off by interviewing Mr Brady Briffa, Quality Manager at Methode about the attractiveness of employment at Methode. The College would like to thank the new members who have accepted to contribute to our magazine on a voluntary basis.

Message from the Principal and CEO



PROFESSOR JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

Another academic year ends. Notwithstanding the threats of COVID-19, overall, it has been a very good year. As is evidenced from this edition of MCASTlink, the College has seen an increase in the number of events and activities.

Each Institute Director and lecturing staff deserve our appreciation for their strong commitment towards the students and the vision of MCAST. Gradually we are experiencing the growth of a community college that embraces inclusion, equity and seeks excellence in all its operations. The external audit of its financial year 2021 has also shown that the institution has a high governance and managerial level of excellence, works in a transparent manner and internal controls are in place.

With additional resources and a structured programme, the internal audit function is bearing fruit and structures and procedures are always under scrutiny and improvement. The same can be attributed to the quality assurance regime of the College. Through more vigilance on reviewing qualifications, direct involvement of industry in the writing of E&T programmes and increased external

reviewers on all assessment procedures and standards. The event Exploring the 21st Century Key Competences in the Industry is a case in point where industry is increasing its contribution on campus by directly interacting with lecturing and managerial staff members.

It is therefore no surprise that also this edition is packed with activities that reflect the vibrant College that MCAST has become particularly with increased involvement of Institutes in the day-to-day running of the College. Institutes are the heart of MCAST. The reporting from each Institute is just a brief overview of selected events that involve students and lecturing staff. Of significance to all of us was the successful participation of nine MCAST students in the Special Olympic Games that took place in Malta earlier this year. The number of medals they managed to garner is outstanding thanks to their dedicated lecturer Amanda Cassar who confirmed that this was the first time that a Maltese contingent won so many medals in an Olympic competition!

We are also proud of lecturing staff and students who set up a beautiful stand at the Malta AgriFair 2022, the IBMC event Bicycle Bus and the Business Expo that attracted so many stakeholders to it. Similarly, the ICA organised the sixth Annual Festival with a brilliant display of talent at Spazju Kreattiv also thanks to the support from the Malta Arts Council and the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government. The IET Aerospace programme was showcased at the Dubai's Future Innovation Summit whereas the IICT MCAST HackSpace held an interesting ECSC Bootcamp Training and students

from this Institute also participated in an AI Hackathon in Lithuania. The Gozo Campus has also kept itself busy with a number of activities that promote community social responsibility and contacts for students with industry. The focus on community service and relations with industry is key to what the College stands for. We are committed to give every registered student a sense of direct participation in voluntary work and experiences in work places.

This philosophy is making MCAST a unique education institution. Students are now making the College their first choice. Employers and NGOs are increasing their support to our events. The large crowd of parents and students that visited MCAST campus in June on Open Day showed that the College is fulfilling its mission in society to provide holistic education and training programmes.

Have we achieved our strategy? Not yet. More needs to be done to engage more students in work-based learning and more infrastructural works and new equipment are necessary to entice learners of all ages to be lifelong learners. Governance and management must continue to work hand in hand to ensure the best working conditions for staff members and a sustainable return on investment through relevant programmes of E&T.

More must be done to be carbon free by 2030 and to instil in all learners and staff members a mindset that the physical and the well-being environments largely depend on our responsibility towards each other and future generations. These are ambitious targets that we are all determined to achieve together.

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Engineering Board approves MCAST Engineering Courses

On 25 May 2022 the Engineering Board approved the four Bachelor of Engineering programmes offered by MCAST. All current students will now be eligible to apply for an engineering warrant. This was announced by the Minister for Education Hon Dr Clifton Grima and the Minister for Public Works and Planning Dr Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi.

In 2020, the Engineering Board appointed the German quality assurance firm ASIIN to audit the College's engineering courses. Following a highly rigorous process and the positive audit results, the Engineering Board informed the College that it "has embraced

the conclusions of ASIIN and is approving the new BEng (Hons) programmes being offered by MCAST."

This announcement is a positive, decisive step for the College's current 90 engineering students. In 2021, the College had announced that MCAST engineering alumni who graduated before 2022 would be eligible to apply for a warrant once they completed the Pre-Warrant Qualification Course (PWQC). This recent development means that new graduates will be eligible to apply for the warrant without the additional course.

Since the first cohort in 2013, the College has registered 307 engineering graduates. More than 90% of these graduates are in full-time employment and working in sectors directly related to their studies.

MCAST's Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) offers four different programmes, namely the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Electronics Engineering, the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Electronics and Control Engineering, the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering (Manufacturing) and the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering (Plant). The Institute offers around 70 courses at different levels which are designed and delivered in close collaboration with the industry. The course offer also includes Master's courses in Mechatronics, Mechanical Engineering and Aerospace Engineering.

Professor Calleja said that, "This is a significant achievement for our graduates who can directly apply for consideration to be awarded the engineering warrant when they conclude the work experience component requirements, which will be at par with those following programmes of other approved institutions. We will always strive for quality and parity of esteem. Today's students are tomorrow's engineers and leaders who will positively contribute to our industry and society."


Institute Director Ing. Stephen Sammut explained that the evaluators, namely ASIIN Consult were satisfied with the standards achieved. ASIIN commented favourably on all the areas reviewed, namely curriculum, lecture delivery, lab resources and staff resources. He also mentioned the ongoing feedback from employers commending MCAST alumni for their hands-on approach and commitment to the engineering profession as they join top industry players in various fields.





Prospectus

2022-2023

A stack of colorful folders in shades of purple, orange, and green. Each folder has the text 'MCAST', 'Prospectus', and '2022-2023' printed on it in white. The folders are slightly offset from each other, creating a sense of depth.

MCAST

Prospectus

2022-2023

MCAST

Prospectus

2022-2023

MCAST launches new Prospectus 2022-2023 and introduces 6 new courses

The College launched its Prospectus for the coming academic year 2022-2023. The Prospectus was presented during the My Future seminar, which was attended by over 80 career guidance professionals. The publication, which is also available digitally, includes details on all 190 full-time courses offered by the College. These range from Introductory level courses to Master level.

MCAST announced six new courses, reflecting industry skills needs, that will be offered from October 2022: Advanced Diploma for Dental Surgery Assistants; Diploma in Cabin Crew Training; Undergraduate Diploma in Auto Electronic

and Electrical Technology; Master of Science in Advanced Clinical Practice; Master of Science in Professional Health Practice, and Master in Social Care Practice.

During the launch, College alumni and current students shared the stories of their learning journey, emphasising the relevance of courses to the world of employment. Industry professionals representing various sectors spoke about the need to raise awareness to the skills and competencies required and the importance of apprenticeships to equip students with the right attitude for the workplace.

MCAST launches first Staff Social Committee



The MCAST Staff Social Committee was launched on 26 May 2022 during an activity for the College's staff members. The Committee, which is comprised of staff representatives, provides networking opportunities for the College's staff complement of over 1,000 employees by organising events and outreach community activities.

The Committee intends to create opportunities for all the staff to acknowledge and further strengthen links with colleagues beyond their usual sphere through social networking activities. The activities aim to create a sense of belonging within the team and also enhance the idea of innovation, teamwork and cooperation.

Speaking at the launch event, the Principal and CEO, Professor Joachim James Calleja said, "As MCAST continues to grow, we must never forget each person's value and unique contribution. The College is much more than a workplace. It is a place for inspiring meaningful exchange where everyone's talent is appreciated. Passion is a driving force in what we do, and coming together helps create an atmospheric organisational culture and an environment where everyone can feel inspired and welcome."

Sandra Cortis, Chairperson of the Staff Social Committee, said, "The pandemic made us increasingly aware of the value of connecting with others to create a better workplace, authentic collegiality, and make sure we look out for each other's well-being. We are overwhelmed by the positive response and our colleagues' enthusiasm to contribute to the staff committee. We now look forward

to seeing how this initiative will be further strengthened and developed."

The event included the participation of the music band Iced Tea, whose musicians are staff members and lecturers at the Institute of Information and Communication Technology. Various committee members contributed during the event including a contribution by Antoinette Caruana, HR Manager and Company Secretary Farsons.

The event was celebrated by various staff members and was the first series of planned events.



MCAST Open Day attracts large crowds

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) successfully hosted prospective students and their families at the College's Main Campus in Paola during an open day event held on 24 June 2022. Over 3,000 visitors attended the open day enthusiastically seeking information about education and training opportunities.

Aspiring students had the opportunity to witness first hand the MCAST campus and explore the college facilities, including labs, workshops, and simulators. This experience helped visitors discover the dynamic learning environment that awaits them

next October. The College prides itself in offering a truly inclusive and supportive environment and this was reflected in the open day activities.

All MCAST Institutes held information talks at the College's new Resource Centre. Attendees enthusiastically participated by asking questions about various courses, the teaching approaches, and potential careers they could land within the industry. Tours were organised at the new Library with its impressive collaborative learning spaces.





Together with their lecturers, current MCAST students following different courses within all 6 Institutes also showcased their work and projects. This allowed prospective students to understand what they would be doing when following vocational courses at the College. The programme included drone swarm demonstrations, science experiments, Virtual Reality activity in Agribusiness, hair and beauty shows, and student project exhibitions.

MCAST's career guidance advisers also explained and provided individual guidance. By brainstorming potential work roles and jobs, advisers could guide the various suitable learning paths available at MCAST. Moreover, information about application procedures and stipends was also offered.

MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja met and greeted visitors. Professor Calleja said, "This event

allows aspiring students to learn about MCAST as a vocational educational college and understand the process behind offering quality education and training. Our staff and current students are our ambassadors as they showcase innovative projects in fields ranging from engineering to information technology, arts, social care and applied science. Our doors are open to all those who want to take the next step in their learning and career. At MCAST you can work, earn money and learn. The close relationship with hundreds of employers is the College's strongest asset giving students at Level 3 or higher the opportunity to find a job and fulfil their career ambitions."

MCAST currently has a full-time student population of over 7,000 individuals and offers 190 programmes of study in diverse areas, spanning from Level 1 certificates to Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees and a Doctorate.



MCAST launches Apprenticeship Exhibition

MCAST, together with the College's Salesian Chaplaincy team, held an Apprenticeship Exhibition at the MRC building in Paola.

The theme of this exhibition revolved around St John Bosco and his efforts in working for student apprenticeships. St John Bosco started hubs where young individuals could spend time, learn how to read properly, and learn a skill.

Fr Antoine Farrugia stated that, "St John Bosco initiated the use of apprenticeship contracts," with the first contract of apprenticeship entered into some 170 years ago, defending young people's rights to access the labour market under fair conditions. "Today MCAST follows in St John Bosco's footsteps," argued Fr Ebejer passionately.

During the event Fr Richard Ebejer, the MCAST Chaplain announced the proclamation of St John Bosco and Blessed Carlo Acutis as two role patrons for MCAST staff and students.

This proclamation ties well with the College's efforts and commitment in securing more work apprenticeships for all students in a bid to secure their future autonomy and success.

Speaking during the event, MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja argued that, "Apprenticeships are at the core of today's students' learning process." He elaborated on how "MCAST recognizes that different students learn in different ways and this is why apprenticeships are one of the values that the College is built upon."

MCAST students currently following courses at the College also had the opportunity to share their apprenticeship experiences and how these are helping them in excelling in their career.

Two new MCAST Board Members

Alex Fenech

Alex Fenech is a Pharmacy graduate and a Chartered Financial Analyst, with an MBA from Henley Management College.

He is the co-Founder and CEO of Brown's Pharma Holdings plc. He boasts proven first-hand experience of steering a business from start-up to a profitable cash-generator growing at double-digit rates. He is commercially astute, combining a natural entrepreneurial flair with business school savvy.

Mr Fenech possesses strong analytical skills and a passion for customer focus. He is hard-working, energetic, multilingual, ambitious and self-motivated.



Anthony Scicluna



Mr Anthony Scicluna was educated at St. Aloysius College, the New Lyceum and the University of Malta. He joined Bank of Valletta in 1984 and held positions mainly within the bank's branch network, finance and internal audit. Between 2005 and 2013, he was responsible for the Bank's Group Internal Audit function. In 2013 he served as Chief Officer responsible for human resources, ethics, training and employee development. He also formed part of the Bank's Executive Committee.

Anthony retired from Bank of Valletta in December 2021 and is now a freelance consultant and practitioner. During his career Anthony held positions on a number of boards, including management, risk and audit committees. He currently chairs the MCAST Audit Committee and is also Deputy Chairman at Heritage Malta.

Anthony is a certified public accountant and holds a practising certificate in auditing. He is a fellow member of the Malta Institute of Accountants, where he is also a member of the Institute's Disciplinary Committee. He also holds an honours degree in Business Management from the University of Malta.

MCAST and JAYE Malta sign Collaborative Agreement

MCAST and the Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JAYE) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with respect to enriching students' entrepreneurial skills and boosting their entrepreneurship education.

This collaboration between the two organizations will see MCAST raise the bar by promoting initiatives that enable students to cultivate their entrepreneurial knowledge and widen their career opportunities through entrepreneurship literacy.

During an event, MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja stated, "Entrepreneurship is a key skill and MCAST strives to develop this mindset as it enhances further success."

MCAST students will be able to participate in JAYE's "StartUp Programme" and "Company Programme" competitions. Selected students shall be allowed to use JAYE's in-house facilities and learning resources. This will ensure that all enlisted participants receive professional guidance and are able to complete and benefit from the entrepreneurial projects undertaken.

JAYE CEO Mr Matthew Caruana expressed his view that,

"The entrepreneurial mindset is critical as one is constantly evaluating situations to solve problems."

The College will also assist JAYE in expanding its operations within the realm of vocational education.

In line with MCAST's strategic vision, this collaborative agreement will help in providing more entrepreneurial exposure to students through different incentives.



MCAST and Malta Public Transport sign new Agreement

MCAST and Malta Public Transport (MPT) have signed an agreement to strengthen collaboration on vehicles maintenance courses.

The agreement was signed on 10 March 2022 by MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja and Malta Public Transport General Manager Konrad Pulé.

MCAST's Institute of Engineering and Transport will design and introduce new study modules focused on the maintenance of buses and other heavy vehicles and machinery for students following technician and mechanical courses at the College. The Institute has also recently introduced new courses on electrical vehicles.

Professor Joachim James Calleja said, “Our close relationship with industry and with other social partners is yielding results beyond our expectations. The number of apprenticeship places and partnership agreements bears evidence to this. This feedback is very encouraging, and we are pleased to be working with Malta Public Transport to offer opportunities to students that prepare them for the world of employment.”

Malta Public Transport will facilitate the use of its premises and machinery by MCAST lecturers and students. This agreement will also allow students to get vital on-the-job experience at the Company's state-of-the-art facilities. Importantly, MCAST students following these courses will have the opportunity to follow sponsored work placements with Malta Public Transport.

Konrad Pulé said: “Malta Public Transport looks forward to the collaboration with MCAST to share its expertise and resources in the transport industry. This collaboration will continue to address the local requirements for skilled people in the field of heavy vehicles, particularly in the maintenance of buses, and we are happy to support the College through work placements and by providing equipment to offer the opportunity to students to have hands-on training. Malta Public Transport will be providing an actual bus to MCAST so that students will have the opportunity to gain practical experience during their training.”

This collaborative agreement is part of MCAST's mission and ongoing efforts to provide industry-relevant vocational education and training to students while addressing the shortage of skilled workers in various local industrial sectors.

MCAST holds Armed Forces of Malta Expo Week

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) held an Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) Expo Week on campus.

The AFM representatives explained to MCAST students what it takes to pursue a career within this disciplinary force. The AFM band also attended and entertained students.

Diverse AFM personnel from different units, including representatives from the AFM Headquarters, the 3rd Regiment, the 4th

Regiment, the Marine Squadron and AFM Air Wing provided information to students about the work within these divisions.

Moreover, AFM personnel also displayed equipment, models and kits related to their trade.

MCAST Principal and President EfVET addresses WFCP

Professor Joachim James Calleja, MCAST Principal and CEO and President of the European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education (EfVET), was a keynote speaker at the Congress of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) in Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain.

The congress was organized in collaboration with TKNIKA, the Basque VET Applied Research Centre which is a world leader in vocational education research. WFCP is the largest association of colleges and polytechnics globally. The congress in fact gathered over 1,000 participants from all continents. The theme of the congress was TVET Excellence for All and focused on the future of work, sustainability, inclusion and equity. This was the second time that Professor Calleja was asked to address this World Congress. His first participation as a keynote speaker was in Quebec, Canada in 2016.

In his intervention Professor Calleja focused on how learning is changing fast and the need for VET institutions to create for young learners new forms of work-based learning. It is this method of learning that will retain more students in education and training by making learning more practical, relevant and attractive. MCAST Principal said, "Many young people today are smart, quick learners and target-oriented. Systems

of learning have to combine college-based and work experiences and hence the need to bring industry on campus and match more carefully what is being learnt to the jobs available on the labour market. One fundamental lesson learnt from COVID-19 in the context of education and training is that the future of work lies in the transformation of pedagogy. The internet of things has changed every space in which we live in a platform for learning, including and more incisively the workplace. Colleges and polytechnics must extend their learning spaces and add the workplace as a key learner's source for new knowledge, skills and competences."

The congress was Dawn Ward the President of WFCP, the Spanish Minister of Vocational Education and the Vice Minister of Vocational Education and Training of the Basque Country as well as other distinguished CEOs of VET colleges from Jamaica, Kenya, Australia, Brazil, the UAE, the USA, India and Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks Professor Calleja stressed that in VET colleges and polytechnics,

“we need to embrace transformation at all levels but in particular in the training of teachers, in modernizing the infrastructure for learning and in assessing learners throughout their learning process. Technology has transformed the way we live, learn and organize our lives. Grasping its added value will determine the future of further and higher education.”





Exploring 21st Century Key Competences in the Industry Event

MCAST held an event entitled “Exploring the 21st Century Key Competences in the Industry”.

More than 20 representatives from different sectors attended this event. Feedback regarding the key competences and skills required for students to be competitive and successful in the workplace was gathered during this event.

The representatives from industry stated that although technical subjects are very important to ensure that the individual is job competent, soft skills are also very important and everyone should have access to them. Different topics were discussed, such as the ability to work in a team, together with having the necessary self-confidence and autonomy to take wise decisions within the workplace.

The Director for Education and Training Programmes and Learning Support, Mr Ramon Mangion, and Deputy Director, Mr Duncan Vella, showed how each key competency offered by the College is important and beneficial for each student. The importance of contextualisation in the teaching of these competencies was highlighted. The different key skills subject coordinators highlighted salient points related to how MCAST approaches the teaching of these subjects and their relevance to vocational programmes.

In his message, MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja thanked the participants and underlined the importance of the fruitful cooperation that industry has with MCAST and which enables it to have a greater and more tangible presence. Professor Calleja encouraged industry partners to continue helping the College by taking on more students for apprenticeships to enable MCAST to adapt and build the competences required for the world of work.



MCAST met up with Mr Bugeja, Secretary General of the General Workers' Union (GWU)

1. WHAT ARE THE VALUES OF THE GWU?

Since its inception, the GWU has always been competent, consistent, and credible in supporting and protecting the members' health, safety and well-being.

Leading and listening are vital skills for us and working together to reach the best outcome is our day-to-day responsibility. We believe in empowering all our members to speak up for what is just. Irrespective of who you are, everyone has the right to be treated equally. We ensure that all workers can fulfil their potential in a healthy environment.

We look after and defend the interests of the workers, youths and pensioners, never showing any type of discrimination between individuals and believing in social diversity and inclusivity.

2. WHAT IS THE GWU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

We are currently concluding discussions on various collective agreements which will improve the salaries and working conditions of thousands of workers. We are participating in a number of projects. We are lead partners on a national study; we are

recruiting and organising new workplaces; and we are also collaborating with other NGOs. We are collaborating with other social partners on a number of social and industrial initiatives. We are lobbying the Government to legislate in favour of platform workers and the new forms of work. Through our European affiliates, we are lobbying with the European Institutions to introduce new benefits for workers like the work-life balance directive.

3. THE GWU TAKES ON MCAST APPRENTICES IN MANY AREAS. HOW DO THE MCAST STUDENTS PERFORM?

Their performance is excellent. They are highly skilled in their particular areas. MCAST apprentices brought new thinking and points of view that we did not have. They have contributed to the cultural change that was much needed. The absolute majority have integrated well in our structure, and they participate in collective bargaining and social dialogue at different workplaces. They are placed in different departments according to their abilities and studies. They perform well as part of a team or assigned individual projects. The experience is very positive and we will continue to invest in this area.

4. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE SKILLS OF THE WORKFORCE ARE?

Automation is transforming the way we work. Some call this change the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is characterized by a “fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres.” In short, technology is disrupting nearly every industry, at a pace that has never happened before.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the arrival of the future of work. The technological advancement, the greening of our economy, globalisation, digitalisation and new atypical forms of work will require new skills. In order to reach the Green Deal targets and to fill in all the vacancies that this new world of work will create we need to reskill/upskill our current workforce while we give new skills and abilities to current students. The prevailing and necessary future skills will be analytical thinking, lifelong learning, complex problem-solving, creativity, originality, leadership, technological knowledge, design and programming. Emotional intelligence, problem-solving, persuasion and negotiation skills will be the basis of our competencies. Trades and skills will be re-introduced as they are in high demand. The same will be for STEM subjects.

Digitalisation will accelerate change in different economic sectors and, in tandem with the COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine and the looming recession, is creating a double-disruption scenario for workers. The number of jobs destroyed will be surpassed by the number of “jobs of tomorrow” but the mismatch of skills and skills gaps continue to be high on the

national agenda. The future of work has already arrived for a large majority of the online white-collar workforce. In the absence of proactive efforts, inequality is likely to be exacerbated by the impact of technology and the creation of further atypical forms of work.

The window of opportunity to reskill and upskill workers has become shorter in the newly constrained labour market. Despite the current economic downturn, the large majority of employers recognize the value of human resources and a well-skilled workforce.

Companies need to invest in better metrics of human and social investment through the adoption of environmental, social and governance (ESG) objectives matched with renewed energy.

The state needs to provide stronger support for reskilling and upskilling for at-risk or displaced workers. This challenge starts at our educational institutions and trade unions can contribute to this change.

5. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE?

The job market will definitely change, and we are seeing signs of this already. Much of AI's promise will be realized through augmenting human effort and making many jobs easier. What we will see a lot of is a reconfiguration of roles as tasks become either displaced or augmented by the technology.

In reality, very few occupations will be fully automated in their entirety in the near or

medium term and so the impact that we will see on the workforce is not increased redundancies, but a repositioning toward more value-added work.

6. WHAT MAJOR CHANGES DO YOU ENVISAGE IN THE WORKFORCE?

The future of work is now. Digitalisation and globalisation have sparked radical shifts in how we live and work. The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated these beyond anything we could have imagined.

These changes raise essential questions about our jobs, the support available if we are unable to work or retire, the skills we need for current and future jobs, the quality of those jobs and what voice we have in shaping these outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted our economies and societies and has increased the gap between the most privileged and the most vulnerable.

Nearly 14% of jobs in OECD countries are likely to be automated, while another 32% are at high risk of being partially automated. Young people and those with low skills are those at the highest risk – but new technological developments are now also affecting the jobs of the high-skilled too.

Technology and internet access have allowed many of us to continue our jobs at home during the pandemic, but not everyone has this option. Jobs that require physical access are more likely to be held by lower-skilled workers and those in the retail, manufacturing and transport sectors.

The platform economy has created new employment opportunities, including in essential services during the crisis. But even before COVID-19, there were concerns about the quality and stability of some jobs there, concerns that the crisis has deepened. Young people have been hit particularly hard by the coronavirus crisis, and they need to be a part of this change.

Training and reskilling should be given to those who are at risk of losing their jobs. We need to help people navigate successfully the changing world of work by acquiring the right skills for new jobs and new tasks. People will need to learn not only at school but throughout their lives.

Whether a person has a good quality job or not has a profound impact on their well-being. Job quality is determined by wages, stability, and working conditions, from safety to human relationships.

These changes will have an impact on the quality of many jobs, affecting everything from workplace safety to wages or job stability. Even before the pandemic, those in non-standard work were more likely to have lower-quality jobs. Market regulation and collective bargaining can help ensure jobs are of good quality.

7. WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE UNION?

To be relevant in today's and future world of work.

Trade unions have important challenges ahead of them. The world of work is changing at a fast pace and so trade unions



must change to be relevant or become absolute. There are four drivers that impact the world of work. These are globalization, demographic changes, environmental changes and technological changes. These drivers affect the labour markets of today and tomorrow - and with that the future of trade unions. Social, economic, environmental, and developmental changes affect the future of trade unions.

The shift from manufacturing towards services, environmental change, the informalisation of the economy, digitalisation, automation and technological change, determines the capacity of trade unions to organize and help employees - and to speak with one voice to participate in inclusive and effective social dialogue. We believe that revitalization – diversifying, innovation and coalitions to strengthen trade unions as strong, relevant, democratic and representative social partners in a new and diversified workforce.

At the GWU we are going through a renovation and restructuring exercise to remain relevant in the changing world

of work and in society. We enhanced our workforce, increased the number of sections, opened a new office for Italians, catered for foreign workers, increased our participation in European and Global Institutions. The GWU was involved in social policies consultation and also invested more in students and apprentices. We believe that youths are the present and we need to invest. They give new and fresh impetus to our thinking, aims and values.

While we straightened our industrial relations and collective bargaining team, we are also diversifying our services to give value added to our current members and future members. We are on the verge to launch various products to enhance our portfolio. We launched our social media platforms and revamped our website.

Evolving according to the needs of the workforce and society, striking between fair and just working conditions, a safe and healthy work environment, and a balance between work and personal life. Is the vision that will further improve what we have already achieved together.

The passion that drives you

DR NATALINO FENECH INTERVIEWS BRADY BRIFFA QUALITY MANAGER AT METHODE

If you are creative, enthusiastic about engineering, like solving problems and are passionate about cars, then you should seriously consider Methode as your future employer. This in essence is a fair summary of an interview with Quality Manager Brady Briffa.

Methode Electronics was founded by William J. McGinley in 1946 in Chicago and is now an international company listed in the New York Stock Exchange. Malta is still the headquarters for European operations, but the company also has factories in Belgium and Egypt.

Methode is mostly renowned for the parts it produces for the automotive industry. The company develops switches and user interface controls and consoles, touch displays and buttons, sensors and backlighting. It has branched into other sectors and also produces innovative solutions for the medical industry as well as household appliances. So, if you own a car, you can rest assured there is a component made by Methode in it.

The company is now at the forefront of technology to produce parts for electric vehicles and works directly with car manufacturers, not just producing

components but sourcing and buying raw materials and designing products.

"We work with automotive giants such as McLaren, Ford, Jaguar, Volkswagen, Austin Martin, Renault, Chrysler Stellantis, Ferrari, and many others. In some there is one component, in others there may be several or all user interface products, interior lighting and control modules. The shortage of raw materials has led us to diversify to non-automotive products too. We are working with Bosch on e-bikes. We have devised a sensor that detects if one is going uphill so that if you are pedalling you feel nothing as the bike itself increases the power to compensate for the climb," Mr Briffa said.

His role in the company is an interesting but very challenging one. He deals with internal quality control as well as externally with customers who complain when something goes wrong within the warranty period. "We do our best to produce failproof products, but one has to appreciate the complexity of technology and we admit, nothing can be 100% foolproof".

"Beyond every challenge lies opportunity. The fast paced and dynamic environment Methode operates in is what fuels growth. But it does not come without risks. The high

product and process diversity coupled with vertical integration, that is, having control of its production rather than depending on suppliers, is what differentiates the Methode campus in Malta from any other business, in my opinion,” Mr. Briffa said.

Why would an MCAST student want to join Methode? This is where Mr Briffa’s passion and enthusiasm for the job goes in overdrive. “In Malta, Methode Electronics have the entire manufacturing ecosystem, from design and development of the product and of the manufacturing line and tools, to project management production, sales, procurement, planning and of course quality. Hence any engineering student passionate about cars, assembly, tool making and whatever specialised sector in any other industry, we have it here at

Methode. Many other companies work on specific issues. Here we work on such a wide range of specific issues that no other industry locally can give the experience we can.”

And what does Mr Briffa look for when interviewing candidates at a job interview? “I look for motivation and willingness to learn. These are the key aspects. Of course, you need to have knowledge, but whatever knowledge you have may never be enough. You need to have enthusiasm for whatever you do.

“In the end, I believe Steve Jobs said it best: It makes no sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; you hire smart people so that they can tell you what to do,” Mr Briffa said.





MCAST students participate in Special Olympics Invitational Games

Nine MCAST students have participated in the first ever Special Olympics Invitational Games. These games were held locally in diverse locations between 14 May and 18 May 2022. MCAST students participated in diverse sports disciplines including athletics, aquatics, table tennis, bocce, bowling, and football. A water polo game was also held during this event.

Amanda Dimech, a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Community Services Sports Department, Team Manager of the Women's Football National Team and Head Coach of the Special Olympics Athletics stated that, "This was the first time that the Maltese contingent won so many medals

in an Olympic competition." She said that, "It was impressive that all MCAST students participated in all disciplines and managed to secure medals and perform well in all disciplines."

Students following the BSc (Hons) in Sport, Exercise and Health at the College also helped during the event. This proved to be a valuable learning experience for them and will certainly help them in their future careers within the industry.

A total of 23 countries, including Malta, took part in these Special Olympic Games.

A look at the MCAST athletes:

Annemarie Bugeja is a first year student reading for a BSc (Hons) in Sport, Exercise and Health. She participated in 3 athletic events - 100m placing 3rd, Shot placing 2nd, and lastly, together with her teammates she won her second silver medal in the 4x100m Relay event. Annemarie has been part of Special Olympics Malta for over 16 years. She first started competing at a young age in Gymnastics, moving to Athletics in September 2021.



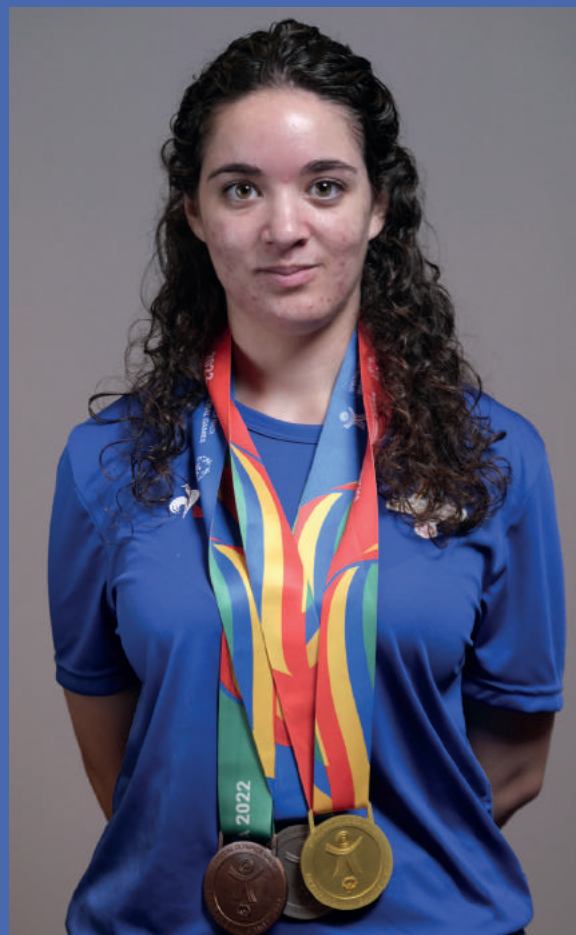
Samuel Farrugia is currently following the Office Award course at MCAST. He took part in the 100m placing 3rd, the 200m placing 5th, and won the gold medal together with his teammates in the 4x100m Relay, with a superb personal best of 54s lowering their previous time by 3s. Samuel has been part of Special Olympics Malta for the past 8 years. Both Annemarie and Samuel train together twice a week apart from the individual sessions they do on a weekly basis.

Miguel Caruana, who is a Level 1 Hairdressing student, competed in Swimming in the 100m Freestyle and 50m Fly placing 3rd and managed to win the gold medal together with his teammates in the Relay race. Miguel is a triathlete; he trains in three different disciplines having rest days on Friday and Sunday. Miguel has been with Special Olympics Malta since 2017.



Another athlete who participated in Swimming and won two silver medals during the invitational games is **Alessia Distefano**, a student who is currently following the Award in Office programme at MCAST. She has been with Special Olympics Malta for the past 11 years and trains twice a week. These were not her first competitions as she had represented Malta in Cyprus winning three gold medals.

Sasha Cini, a student at the Institute of Community Services following the Diploma in Sports, was also part of the Swimming team. She competed in Butterfly winning gold, in Relay where her team placed 2nd and the 100m Freestyle placing 6th. Like Miguel, Sasha is a triathlete and trains every day except for Friday and Sunday. She has been with Special Olympics Malta for the past 6 years. These competitions gave her the opportunity to showcase her abilities; they also motivated her to keep pushing further to improve.



Rachel Chircop, a student who is currently following the Advanced Diploma in Art and Design, participated in Bowling. During the games, which were her first ever competitions, she managed to win gold together with her unified partner. She has been with Special Olympics Malta since 2016 and she also forms part of the Athlete Leadership Committee together with Samuel Farrugia.

Mikkel Vaage and **Christian Zarb** both follow the Award in Vocational Skills – Retail Introductory course. They both participated in Bowling, making this their first ever competition to represent Malta. Mikkel won the gold medal in the singles category and silver in the teams category. He has been training Bowling with Special Olympics Malta on a regular basis for the past 7 years. On the other hand Christian, who has also been with Special Olympics Malta for 7 years, managed to win gold in the single category and placed 5th in both the doubles and the teams categories.



Samuel Borg, a student following the Level 1 Introductory Certificate in Care, took part in Table Tennis. He managed to win the single category and the bronze medal together with his unified partner. Samuel joined Special Olympics Malta 5 years ago doing Football and Table Tennis. However, at present his main discipline is Table Tennis and he trains six times a week.



Matthew Micallef, who is a member of staff at the Institute of Community Services, was part of the Football team. Together with his team they managed to reach the finals, winning the silver medal against a strong opponent. He has been with Special Olympics Malta for almost 8 years, training on a weekly basis.

For all these athletes and MCAST students, it was a great honour representing the country and making Malta proud. Winning gives them determination and courage to push further and improve. The next big event involving Special Olympics Malta will be held next year in Berlin, where some of the above-mentioned athletes might be representing Malta in the World Games.





Institute of Applied Sciences



MCAST participates in the Malta AgriFair 2022

Students from MCAST's Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences (CAAAS) participated in the AgriFair 2022 held at Malta Fairs and Convention Centre. They showcased and explained their work to visitors during this event. These included their studies on growing fresh agricultural products and a demonstration about beekeeping and honey making.

Mr Malcolm Borg, Deputy Director at the CAAAS elaborated:

“This initiative provided MCAST students with a chance to exhibit their work and explain to visitors the importance of the agricultural sector to the whole community.”

Moreover, members from the CAAAS and the MCAST's Applied Research and Innovation Centre (ARIC) teamed up to create a cutting-edge technological system to showcase the field and farm experience to visitors through the use of virtual reality.

The whole project, which took two months to complete, included the capturing of real-life agricultural experiences in diverse locations. These real-life experiences were then technologically adapted to create an immersive experience for users to cherish.

In the future, technologies of this type will be customized and used during lectures on campus, since they will allow students to grasp knowledge in an innovative manner while creating an engaging experience in

the classroom. Dr Ing. Clifford De Raffaele, Director of the Research and Innovation Centre, explained how "through our innovation drive, we are constantly seeking to integrate novel and state-of-the-art technologies to provide our students with the best educational experience through EdTech at MCAST."

Research done by Mr Steve Zerafa, Senior Lecturer at MCAST's Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET), on an automatic hydration system was also showcased. This industry advanced system automatically captures data from satellite images and, based on the climate, the machine produces the right doses of nutrients and water for agricultural practices.



Institute of Business, Management & Commerce

Bicycle Bus at MCAST



“Be part of the change that you want to see happen in the world.”

It is with this proactive mindset that on the morning of Friday 6 May 2022, MCAST's Main Campus in Paola was brought alive by the sight of 45 participants who made their way to campus using their bicycles. This was made possible thanks to the Bicycle Bus, jointly organised by MOVE, MCAST's Institute of Business Management and Commerce and Transport Malta (TM).

This involved students and staff members, together with a number of volunteers, meeting together at different locations around Malta and cycling their way together to the College, with every group having a leader who was familiar with the ideal route to make the ride as pleasant and as safe as possible, and with additional participants joining along the way in each route depending on where they live. Besides being more fun and safer due to the increased visibility of a group on the road, cycling in company enables novice cyclists to pluck up the required confidence to try commuting by bicycle.

On arrival at the “pjazzetta” in front of the IBMC, all participants were welcomed to a breakfast and each was given a bag containing cycling related freebies, whilst a number of participants also won €200 vouchers from cycling shops thanks to TM. Welding and fabrication students and lecturers from the Institute of Engineering and Transport contributed to these efforts by building bicycle racks for the main campus in Paola. TM's chairman and CEO donated a Pedelec to MCAST – this being a bicycle which is assisted by an electric motor which makes uphill feel like flat terrain.

The event was part of the global initiative “MOVE Week”, a recognised international week that aims to showcase the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle by encouraging physical activity and sports in our everyday lives.

Representatives of MOVE, MCAST and TM who spoke on the day augured that this event will be part of an ongoing long-term Change Management collaboration, so as to identify and address the challenges towards unlocking cycling as a sustainable means of transport which Malta badly needs. The provision of the right type of required infrastructure on the roads, together with educational campaigns and increased enforcement against reckless drivers, will make the roads safer, and this will enable more persons to start using their bicycle as a means of commuting.

Any MCAST students or staff members who are interested are invited to join the Facebook group “MCAST by Bicycle” or to visit the container of MOVE which is located next to the Student House.



Institute of Business Management and Commerce hosts Business Expo 2022

On 7 and 8 April 2022, MCAST's Institute of Business Management and Commerce hosted the Business Expo 2022 at the College's Main Campus in Paola.

Over the span of two days, all participating companies were given the unique opportunity to meet and interact with students in their academic environment. MCAST students took full advantage of this opportunity by visiting each stand and using the networking opportunities offered. College lecturers met with representatives from respective companies and enjoyed the chance to discuss the programmes

currently being offered at MCAST.

During the Business Expo 2022 students also attended a series of talks specifically targeted to spark interest in and debate on current affairs and to hear firsthand how their area of specialisation could be affected. The talks ranged from the importance of compliance to upskilling in the digital world and the role of the Public Service, as well as more practical talks such as interviewing skills and CV building.

This event was supported by FIAU, AQA Capital and PwC. Other participant

companies in this event were Fexserv, RSM Malta, the Institute for the Public Services, Zampa Debattista, Atlas Insurance, Apex Funds, Scope and APS Bank plc. Also

present were the Student Outreach Services who were able to answer any queries on the day in their capacity as career guidance.

Institute of Business Management and Commerce donates sum collected during Career Expo

The Institute of Business Management and Commerce presented the sum of €6,350 to His Excellency Dr George Vella, President of Malta, in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund.

This sum was collected during a Career Expo organised by the Institute, an event that provided MCAST students and industry with the perfect networking opportunity.

Institute for the Creative Arts

Embrace liminality – the 6th edition of MCAST's ICA Festival launched



The sixth edition of the MCAST ICA Festival was held from 7 to 31 July 2022 at Spazju Kreattiv. The Festival celebrates the talent and work of the students attending the Institute for the Creative Arts (ICA). MCAST and Spazju Kreattiv signed a memorandum of understanding for continued collaboration to ensure that students have the opportunity to showcase their work.

This was announced during the pre-Festival launch in the presence of the Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation Hon Clifton Grima and the Minister for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government Hon Owen Bonnici.

The Festival, supported by Spazju Kreattiv and Arts Council Malta, featured work from final year Bachelor of Arts students and talent from Advanced Diploma students. It demonstrated how students worked collaboratively across disciplines to develop the skills and knowledge needed in the sector. MCAST Principal and CEO Professor Joachim James Calleja explained that, “At the heart of each edition is the creative spirit of our students who participate in such an exhibition of talent and resourcefulness.” He added that,

“MCAST has become synonymous with opportunity and prosperity. Nurturing the learners’ creativity and preparing students thoroughly for the world of work is at the heart of what the College stands for. The yearly event also links the Institute and the local arts and design community.”



“Embrace liminality is the students’ chosen theme for this year’s Festival. It refers to what is simultaneously one of the most daunting and uncomfortable parts of the creative process that is also the final frontier before the next great idea. With this theme, the students aim to encourage individuals not to fear the unknown but embrace this liminal space of creativity and continue pushing for innovation and expression in one’s chosen discipline.”

The Chairman for the Creativity Foundation Rupert Cefai said that the Foundation served as a bridge that linked the educational sector to the creative industry. He stated that, “The transition from being a student to becoming a professional creative artist is never easy. However, thanks to initiatives and projects launched, the Foundation is following in MCAST’s footsteps to understand and assist students better. This kind of collaborations will help emerging artists in securing industry opportunities which will help them build up experience in the artistic and creative sectors.”

Minister for Arts, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici, who inaugurated the official opening, said, “Events like this are important as we see the progress of students who will soon be working in the creative sector. We need to build new audiences that can appreciate creative work across all areas, including graphic design, game art, fashion design and more.”

The Minister added: “This is also an opportunity for us to strengthen the different sectors, such as the performing arts. We will continue investing and strengthening

vocational education.”

This year’s edition of the MCAST ICA Festival also commemorated Donald Friggieri’s contribution to education in the creative arts. Mr Friggieri, who sadly passed away this year, was a pioneer in the appreciation and study of Design in Malta and a passionate educator for over 30 years. In 2001, he was appointed the first Director of what was previously known as the MCAST Institute of Art and Design. He inspired many people, particularly the MCAST community, where his legacy is still very much present.

The Institute for the Creative Arts offers over 25 courses, from entry level courses to courses at Bachelor’s and Master’s levels. The ICA has a student population of over 1,000 students.

Various study areas feature in this year’s edition, including creative media production, fashion, fine arts, game art, visual design, graphic design, interactive media, journalism, performing arts, photography, product design, and spatial design.



MCAST Performing Arts students present their annual productions

At the end of the academic year, MCAST's Performing Arts students present the fruit of their work with a series of public performances. Production modules at MCAST's Institute for the Creative Arts are key in preparing the students for the industry, in which performance, design, technical and management skills combine in a collaborative and creative spirit. Besides the ICA Festival, which gives third year Degree students the opportunity to present their work at Spazju Kreattiv, this year each cohort presented an original performance.

"Il-Mitlufin ta' San Duminku" was a site-specific performance hosted by the Dominican shelters. The performers retold what the shelter walls have experienced through the past decades. This performance by the Advanced Diploma students sought to question the freedom of lost souls in an

enclosed and protective space.

"We Speak Art" was another community-based performance, created by the second year Degree students. This work was a protest piece that highlighted the difficulties and the challenges that the local artistic community faces. Liam, an Arts student, enrolls in a course only to discover that the situation is not as rosy as he dreamt it to be. But does Liam manage to defy the system?

"In the light of her Dream" is a devised performance, based on several classical and contemporary texts, in which the first year Degree students tackled the delicate subject of violence against women. In a dream, Winona processes the causes which led to her sister Isabella's death at the hand of her boyfriend Marcus.

Institute of Community Services

Women's Week at the Institute of Community Services

**BY ELAINE ATTARD AND
STEPHANIE ANN FORMOSA**

Preparations for Women's Week started weeks ahead of the event, with the Institute's administration and lecturers meeting to plan all the details required to turn the event from ideas on paper to reality. The four-day event took place between 7 and 10 March 2022 to coincide with International Women's Day on 8 March. The theme was "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow".

The Institute reached out to various organisations that work with women in different sectors of civil society. Each organisation was invited to take part in the initiative by referring their female service users to receive hairdressing and beauty treatments by students. The invitations were very well received. In total, 15 organisations referred their clients. Most referrals were for women who would not be able to afford paying for hairdressing and beauty treatments. Others were treated to some pampering after experiencing hardship and illnesses. Each referred person received appointments for hairdressing or beauty treatments.



In the days before the event, lecturers discussed with the students the plans for the event. The students were organized in rotating shifts to take care of the different duties that they were allocated. Most worked directly with the clients to offer hairdressing and beauty treatments after carrying out personalized consultation sessions; others manned the reception desk; some ushered the guests to the salons to make sure they made it to their appointments or prepared refreshments for the visitors, students and lecturers. Throughout the four-day event, students not only practised the hairdressing and beauty skills gained through their course, but they also practised problem-solving skills, as if they were running their own salon. Necessary measures were taken to make sure that the event was compliant with the COVID-19 regulations in place at the time.

During Women's Week, the Institute's reception area and salons were buzzing with activity. All Level 3 and Level 4 Hairdressing and Beauty students and their lecturers participated. By the end of the event, students and lecturers were exhausted but certainly satisfied to see their hard work pay off as many women left the Institute's in-house salons with a huge smile on their face.



Institute of Engineering & Transport



Aviation Department College Institute launches new “MCAST in the Hangar” initiative

MCAST's Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) has launched a new initiative named “MCAST in the Hangar”. This initiative aims to expose students following aviation courses at the College to the latest aircraft technology.

This novel initiative is being launched in collaboration with top maintenance, repair and overhaul (MROs) industry players. The Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) has reached collaborative agreements with key aviation companies, namely Lufthansa Technik and Medavia.

Apart from their apprenticeship placements, students reading for MCAST aviation maintenance courses will also have the opportunity to follow some of their practical lectures inside the hangars of partner MROs. IET Director Ing. Stephen Sammut argued that this initiative is “part of the College's drive to get closer to the aviation industry.” He elaborated on how this take will transform the MROs' hangars into students' laboratories.

This initiative, coupled with the highly trained lecturer facility at the Institute and

the exceptional workshop set up on campus, will ensure that MCAST trainees are expertly trained and ready to take on challenges and opportunities that the aviation maintenance industry presents.

On top of this, MCAST students benefit from obtaining dual certifications in aviation courses. These courses are a milestone for the industry as they provide alumni with an academic qualification in addition to their EASA certification. Other training providers do not always offer this kind of dual certification.

Currently, the Aviation Maintenance Centre within the Institute of Engineering and Transport offers a total of 6 aviation courses, two of which are Level 3 Diplomas and the other four being Level 4 Advanced Diplomas. The Institute offers an online Master's programme (MSc) in Aerospace Engineering and many other short courses for the industry including CAMO (Continuing Airworthiness) and the EASA Part 66 Module 12 – Helicopter Aerodynamics, Structures and Systems.

MCAST's Aerospace Programme showcased in Dubai's Future Innovation Summit 2022

Dr Leonardo Barilaro, Senior Lecturer in Aerospace Engineering at MCAST, was invited as a speaker at the Future Innovation Summit 2022 in Dubai.

The event, focusing on the main topics of Space, Metaverse and Sustainability, is the biggest summit in the Middle East.

The invitation to present the MCAST Aerospace programme, the related MSc in Aerospace Engineering, and the activities in Aviation were made possible thanks to HE Madam Ambassador Maria Camilleri Calleja.

Her activity has been key to putting Malta on the map in such a big and international

event, showcasing the potential of MCAST in the very competitive aviation and aerospace field. Her support has greatly facilitated the networking and the creation of links with experts in the sector.

Moreover, Dr Leonardo Barilaro, who is also a professional pianist, was invited to premiere exclusively for the honourable guests, his composition for piano and synth "Maleth", which flew to the International Space Station on board the SpaceX CR25 rocket launch which departed from Cape Canaveral on 2022.

Dr Barilaro joined forces with Professor Joseph Borg of the University of Malta, a

molecular geneticist that started the “Maleth” Programme with the SpaceOMIX mission, paving the way for a bigger collaboration with MCAST in 2023. “Maleth”, which is the name of the running programme taking bioscience missions to space and the title of the composition, is the ancient Phoenician term for Malta. The idea of bringing the music into space has arisen from the desire of inspiring people and spreading awareness about this new era for mankind, on the path to becoming a multi-planetary species.

The music will be stored on the mission computer, integrated into an ICE Cubes platform managed by Space Application Services. After the launch and once it arrives on board the ISS, it will stay there for a total of 60 days. The music will be accessed from the mission control room managed by Arkafort Ltd. in Qormi, Malta, and broadcasted from space in a specially planned event.

This unique project will bring the name of MCAST into outer Space for the very first time.



Building and Construction Department

Students carry out repair works at MCAST's Institute for the Creative Arts

Students following Masonry Heritage Skills and Stone Heritage, Trowel and Tile Laying courses at the Institute of Engineering and Transport carried out repair works at MCAST's Institute for the Creative Arts in Mosta.

Lecturers Alex Caruana and Mario Schembri from the Building and Construction Department within the Institute of Engineering and Transport mentored and supervised the students.

Students following the Stone Heritage, Trowel and Tile Laying course expertly restored the low-level parapet wall found along the walkways within the Institute gardens. During this undertaking, they learnt how to press the mortar in between the stone courses and clean the superfluous mortar from the stone without causing any damage. The painting of the wall was done with a Hydraulic Lime mix.



The lecturers also helped students familiarise themselves with the biological growth that occurs on Maltese stone when this is left exposed to the natural elements. During the cleaning process for removing this biological growth from the stones, suitable brushes and clean water were used. The end result gave the parapet walls a clean finish which improved the overall look of the gardens, which can now be better appreciated by the students and personnel who frequent the Institute.

Students following the Diploma in Masonry Heritage Skills deconstructed and reconstructed part of the boundary

wall which had suffered vehicular damage. Students started by numbering the stones - a process that enhances their knowledge in documenting historic walls. They then cleaned the stones from any mortar, placed the same stones, and carried out the required painting.

Moreover, the students restored the two main stone statues found in the Institute's garden. Each student had to undertake meticulous work to clean the statues from vegetation growth and other physical damage that they had suffered over the years.



Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department KuržitàJiem National Event at ESPLORA

The national event entitled KuržitàJiem was held in April 2022 at Esplora Interactive Science Centre, Kalkara. The Centre is a science museum for hands-on science and exhibits, with a planetarium and educational theatre programmes.

MCAST plays a leading role in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. The Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department of the Institute of Engineering and Transport was invited to participate in this event.

The aim was to exhibit Engineering Projects, Teaching Resources and Research, to inspire young students to pursue a STEM field career.

MCAST also displayed short videos of previous Engineering Projects done by

students, practical assignments carried out by students during their study programme, and PCs with simulation software named Autodesk TinkerCAD, Arduino Kits and Raspberry Pi Kits. The aim was to make the public aware that MCAST courses are hands-on oriented.

PLC (Programmable Logic Controller) based automated equipment that is used by the students to learn Industrial Automation was on display. A robot called “EggBot” that was designed and developed from scratch by the students during a four-day competition named EuroSkills, was also on display. EggBot is a robot that is able to sketch an image on a spherical object. Some of the EggBot parts are also 3D printed.



Aviation Department First cohort graduates in Semiconductor Manufacturing

Fourteen employees from STMicroelectronics were awarded the MCAST Diploma in Semiconductor Manufacturing during a graduation ceremony held at the College. This Level 3 qualification is a specialised diploma in semiconductor manufacturing, the first to be organised in Malta.

Participants were trained in technical subjects that focus on the high technology processes involved in manufacturing microscale devices essential for the world's semiconductor industry. The MCAST's Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) designed and delivered the programme specifically for STMicroelectronics employees. The company is a global chip-making company with established roots in Malta.

This course gave operators at the company the opportunity to reskill and upskill and improve their career prospects within the company. MCAST and STMicroelectronics have established ongoing collaboration, particularly in training and development in engineering and electronics. In 2021, the first edition of the STMicroelectronics awards was organised to encourage excellence in engineering and encourage learners to further their studies at higher levels and subsequently find employment in electronics.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Director Ing. Stephen Sammut said, "Working with leading manufacturing companies ensures that our courses are industry-oriented and focused on the application of scientific knowledge which can be applied at the workplace. We encourage employees to keep upskilling and learning and use practical, transferable skills such as teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills to enhance their employability."

Soo Lai Lim, Senior Director of Operations at STMicroelectronics, stated that he was "delighted to be present and have the opportunity to meet and recognize in person the talented and promising employees who have taken the opportunity to evolve and take a new step forward in their career within STMicroelectronics Malta." Mr Lim elaborated on the "challenge of creating high-tech products and implementing new technologies within the STMicroelectronics industry. Such a fast-growing industry needs even faster institutions such as MCAST to provide it with a qualified and operational workforce," he concluded.





Institute of Information & Communication Technology

MCAST HackSpace holds ECSC Bootcamp Training

MCAST HackSpace in collaboration with MITA held a one-day ECSC boot camp training session at the College's Student House. A total of 17 participants attended the training session.

All participants followed training aimed at equipping them with the knowledge needed to compete in the National Competition which was held in June and July 2022.

Experts from Cyber Security Malta provided the students with four workshops, namely

training on reverse engineering, privilege escalation, memory forensics and web exploitation.

This training was part of a longer initiative which will see a group of shortlisted individuals receive online and onsite specialised training by local and international security professionals. A final group of ten participants will be selected by MITA to represent Malta at the European Cybersecurity Challenge, to be held in Vienna this September.

MCAST students win AI Hackathon in Lithuania



During the second week of May 2022, various teams from around Europe have participated against each other in a hackathon event hosted by the Kaunas Institute of Technology. The aim was to produce an AI-based prototype that would assist humans with improving their general quality of life by automating a given task through the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Malta, represented by MCAST ICT, was the winner of this event. The winning team was composed of Kurt Agius, Gabriel Bonello, Fabian Muscat, Luke Zammit and Luke Theuma. These students have shown interest in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning by voluntarily attending a number of units provided by the Institute of ICT as part of the Introduction to the Artificial Intelligence project funded by Erasmus.

From a project perspective, the team had to define the functional requirements and the overall goals to be reached. After prioritizing the goals into mandatory and optional objectives, they proceeded to use a SCRUM-based approach. SCRUM is a lightweight framework that helps teams organize themselves to address a given problem in a systematic yet adaptive manner. The main advantage of using an agile approach is that it allows developers to re-adapt themselves in a quick and effective manner when unforeseen problems are encountered during development.

The students had to address several challenges to meet the goal of waste collection and sorting. In terms of hardware, a JetBot Nano was used to handle the waste identification and relocation and a Dobot Robotic Arm was used for the collection and

sorting of waste. Both devices were fitted with cameras that would allow the robots to look around in search of objects to identify and recognise. The hardware is the infrastructure to the code (the software) that had to be developed by the students to accomplish the core logic of the implementation.

From a software standpoint, Computer Vision (a branch of AI) was used to accomplish this. Both devices were made to “talk” through the use of an API (Application Programming Interface) - this would later allow for both robots to synchronize the tasks between one another. Additionally this API was put to good use by creating a “Dashboard” for visualising stats and logs of past activity and photos of current robot activity. This ambitious implementation did come with its fair share of problems. There were firmware related issues with the JetBot setup in conjunction with the computer vision framework used. And the robotic arm had issues both with the localisation and the “range of motion” that it could effect, an issue which was later identified to be a hardware defect. What is highly commendable here is that the students tactfully worked around the problems that were encountered.

The students persevered up until the eve against all odds. The team dynamics worked well, and this goes to prove that hard work really pays off.

MCAST would like to congratulate the winning team and to thank the Kaunas Institute of Technology in Lithuania for hosting this event and Erasmus for making this project a reality.

MCAST Gozo Campus

Industrial Visits for work-based learning, job exposure and career opportunities

The Gozo Campus management organises industrial visits regularly in order to facilitate the vocational students' transition to industry.

At the start of the second semester, students enrolled on the Diploma in Electrical Installations and the Diploma in Mechanical Engineering visited Merit Malta and Merit Precision Tools at Xewkija, Gozo. Merit Malta is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of automotive switches and electrical accessories and is one of the local firms that provide apprenticeship opportunities to students. During this visit the students had the opportunity to view state-of-the-art equipment in the design and manufacturing of high-precision tools and switches for the automotive industry. Guided by their lecturers, students also had the opportunity to apply for apprenticeships directly with the employer.

In a separate initiative, in February 2022, while hosting a group of German students and lecturers from Berufskolleg für Technik (BKT) Lüdenscheid, a visit to Lufthansa Technik was organised for the Advanced Diploma in Electrical Engineering students and lecturers and the German group. BKT-Lüdenscheid is a technical college of the southern Märkisches Kreis focusing on Metal Technology, Electrical Engineering, Information Technology, Automotive Technology and Construction. Cooperation between MCAST Gozo and BKT

started in 2004 and continued along the years through the mutual collaboration of Mr Godwin Grech, Director Gozo Campus and Mr Harald Doerner, one of the BKT directors, who has been teaching for 42 years. During the visit at Lufthansa Technik Malta, the students and staff got to see and learn first-hand how aircraft maintenance teams work whilst appreciating the high standards required to maintain an aircraft safe and in line with the stringent standards that this industry entails.

Another initiative was taken specifically for the Foundation in Engineering Skills students. At this level, students do not normally have a work-based learning component as an integral part of their programme. To this end, the Gozo Campus management and the Institute Vocational Coordinator (IVC) organised a number of job exposure visits to various Industrial Settings to help the Foundation in Engineering Skills students to form a better idea about the progression options and related work-based learning opportunities.

At the Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz, the students were toured by hotel management and technical staff through a range of systems which supply different amenities within the hotel, ranging from a boiler plant

to an RO plant. At Steward Health Care Malta Gozo General Hospital, students were provided with an insight of all the systems present within the hospital, ranging from the in-house supply of potable water to the gasification of gases. At Merit Precision Tools Ltd Gozo, the Foundation students had the opportunity to appreciate the design and manufacturing process of precision tools and automotive switches. In a visit to Gozo Channel, students could also view

the engine room of one of the company's vessels and visited the control bridge.

The MCAST Gozo Campus management is particularly grateful to these industrial partners for their full collaboration in order to make such initiatives possible.

Corporate Social Responsibility in practice – some laudable initiatives taken at the MCAST Gozo Campus



The MCAST Gozo Campus community regularly organises fundraising activities in aid of philanthropic organisations and other just causes.

The Hairdressing lecturers and students organised a Fancy Hair Styling Fundraising activity which was open to students and staff against a donation. In addition, other students led by Ms Ann Marie Cini Magrin, student mentor, carried out a pizza and "ftira" sale, with all the profit going to philanthropic foundations.

In March 2022, the Hairdressing lecturers and students undertook another fundraising initiative in aid of Ukraine. This time, the Hair salon was open for hair

services to MCAST staff, students and the general public. The event was promoted on various social media portals and was sponsored by Kadus Professional Malta which provided free hairdressing products for this activity. Through this initiative, the sum of €430 was collected. Kudos to our hairdressing students and staff members!

The week before the Easter recess was an extremely busy period for our Certificate in Vocational Skills (Pathway) students and lecturers. A Figolli Sale in aid of Charity was organised. The initiative included promoting the sale, taking orders, preparing, baking, packaging and selling the figolli. The outcome of this initiative was beyond everyone's expectations in terms of sales as well as the quality of the figolli! The profit made from this activity amounted to €377.40 and the funds were donated to Puttinu Cares and Guatemala Missions.



As part of the wider CSR and charitable initiatives, during the Lent period a blood donation initiative was taken by MCAST Gozo Campus staff. Several members of staff participated in this generous gesture at the Blood Donation Centre in Xewkija.

In yet another laudable initiative taken by the Gozo Campus Hairdressing members of staff and students, at the end of April 2022, free hair services were provided to the service users and staff members of Aġenzija Support. The agency provides vocational placements to our Social Care students on a regular basis. MCAST Gozo Campus collaborates closely with this agency, and gladly offered these free services as a treat to the agency's service users and as a small gesture of appreciation to its staff.

Collaboration with foreign institutions and educators

French Educational Leaders' Job Shadowing Experience at the Gozo Campus

In February 2022, two French educators, Ms Claire Le Clam, Educational Inspector, and Ms Maïlys Berthault, Head, Lycée Professionnel Les Grippeaux, visited the MCAST Gozo Campus as part of an Erasmus+ project involving job shadowing and also to discuss possible mutual involvement in Erasmus+ projects and other forms of collaboration and mobility opportunities for the respective students and staff. The two French educators had the opportunity to view the training facilities at the Gozo

Campus and get a first-hand account of MCAST's programme provision and the student support services at the MCAST Gozo Campus. Dr Robert Vella, Deputy Director, presented a summary of his PhD research on "How do senior female educational leaders perceive and experience their positions?" This was followed by a discussion. During their visit, Ms Le Clam and Ms Berthault were also given a short tour of the main highlights of the island of Gozo.

Swedish Educators on Job Shadowing (Erasmus+) at MCAST Gozo Campus

Following a preparatory meeting with Maria Järgerstedt and Christina Sandström, two Swedish educators from Hulebäck Gymnasium (Gothenburg) were hosted at the MCAST Gozo Campus in October 2021.

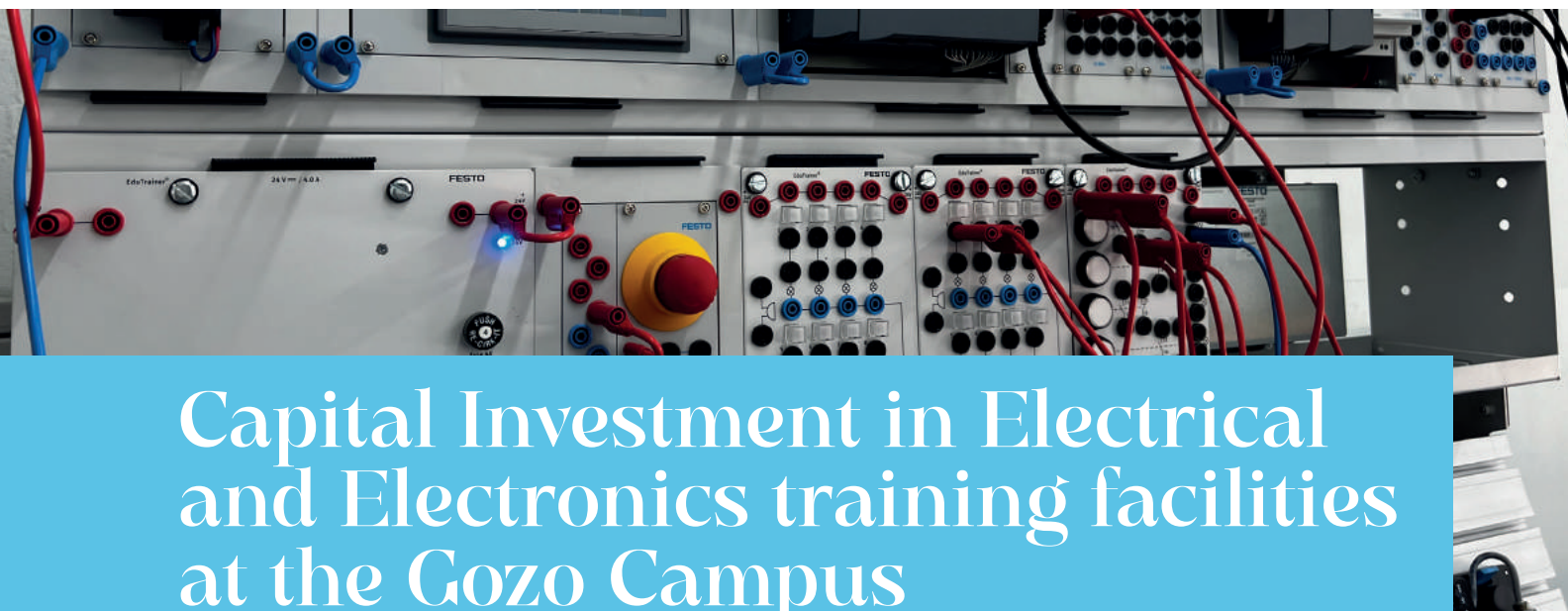
During this mobility, possible future Erasmus+ projects with their school were discussed and a number of industrial visits were also organised. These included visits to Ta' Ċenċ Hotel and to the Enemalta Distribution Centre. During the industrial visit to Ta' Ċenċ Hotel, Mr Bjorn Vella (an Advanced Diploma in Electrical Systems ,

alumnus of the Gozo Campus and currently head of maintenance at Ta' Ċenċ Hotel) gave a detailed technical overview of the daily maintenance, technical work and plant operations that are typical of a hotel environment. At the industrial visit to the Enemalta Main Distribution Centre in Xewkija, Ing. Josef Micallef explained the whole process involved in delivering electricity from the main power stations to industry and domestic households.

Visit by Italian Educators

A group of Italian educators from Liceo G.D. Cassini San Remo visited the MCAST Gozo Campus during an Erasmus+ mobility in Gozo. The aims of this Erasmus+ project with the name TIME (Teachers in Mobility in Europe) is to update the educators' teaching methodologies and foreign language skills.

During their visit at the Gozo Campus, the group were given information about MCAST and the courses offered at the Gozo Campus. They were also given a tour around the Campus where they interacted with the staff members and students present.



Capital Investment in Electrical and Electronics training facilities at the Gozo Campus

Over the past two years MCAST Gozo Campus has made a substantial investment in its three Electrical and Electronics workshops. The €186,000 investment included the setting up of a new Electronics and PLC workshop and the upgrade of testing/training equipment in two Electrical workshops.

The new Electronics and PLC workshop includes two distinct spaces: one area has been designed for hands-on teaching and laboratory practicals where students carry out their practical sessions in control, automation and systems engineering; whereas the other space is reserved for practical sessions in analogue and digital

electronics. The setup is thereby suitable to integrate the teaching of theoretical aspects with hands-on practical activities that complement, reinforce and consolidate the students' understanding and practical competencies.

The investment included new, state-of-the-art PLC training boards. These training boards will enable students to have first-hand experience in wiring, setting-up, programming, and troubleshooting PLC systems. The investment also included the procurement of new digital electronics test and measuring instruments, including benchtop oscilloscopes, triple power supplies, signal generators and others. Additionally, the electrical testing equipment for the two electrical workshops has been replaced with new one such that our students are trained on the type of equipment that they would eventually find in industry. This included the procurement of a power analyser, several four-channel benchtop digital oscilloscopes,

digital single-phase and three-phase power clamp meters and digital multifunction clamp meters. One of the workshops is now equipped with a photovoltaic system installation, complete with new photovoltaic test kits and an infrared camera for testing purposes.

This investment increases MCAST's overall capacity and significantly improves the quality of the electrical and electronics instrumentation and facilities, which will ultimately render a better educational experience to the learners. It will prepare them more effectively for their transition to industrial employment by matching the skills and competences imparted to the emerging needs of industry. The improved facilities will also enable the MCAST Gozo Campus to extend its portfolio of training programmes, including part-time courses to reskill and upskill employees already employed in the sector.

Gozo Campus Award Presentation Ceremony

A Graduation Ceremony for students completing their programmes of studies at the MCAST Gozo Campus in the academic year 2020-2021 was held on Friday 4 March 2022 at Ta' Ċenċ Hotel. 104 students were presented with awards in recognition of their efforts and success, after having successfully completed programmes at Levels 2, 3 and 4.

19 students successfully completed a Level 2 Foundation Certificate programme, 37 students successfully completed a Level 3 Diploma programme, 3 students successfully completed a Level 4 award, while 43 students successfully completed a Level 4 Advanced Diploma programme. Another 2 students were presented the Certificate in Vocational Skills award after successful completion of this programme.

The ceremony was presided by Dr Mario Cardona, Deputy Principal.

Kristle Jo Xerri, an MCAST Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development graduand, who is currently following the first year of the Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years at the Gozo Campus, delivered the student speech on behalf of all the graduates.

In her speech, Kristle took the attendees through the situation at the Gozo Campus during these last two years, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak, and how the students and the lecturers had to cope with the situation. She emphasized that although the situation was very difficult, the students found great support from all the staff at the MCAST Gozo Campus. Kristle Jo continued that through these extraordinary

circumstances and measures, she and fellow students learned to appreciate life more, became more resilient, and are now able to appreciate more thoroughly the value of respect for one another in life, in their interaction with other persons including their own peers as well as staff and persons in authority. She concluded her speech by thanking all those who, in one way or another, helped them achieve their objectives despite the extraordinary times and all the sacrifices that were required.

In his speech, Mr Godwin Grech, MCAST Gozo Campus Director, congratulated all successful students on their achievements. After the distribution of the certificates, Dr Mario Cardona, Deputy Principal, closed the ceremony with a short speech.

Collaboration with foreign institutions and educators

Aġenzija Żgħażaġh Workshops



In February and March 2022, in collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, a number of workshops were organized for all student groups attending the MCAST Gozo Campus.

The workshops' main theme was discrimination. Students had the opportunity to learn about equality and the community's diversity and diverse needs through non-formal activities carried out by a youth worker. They also had the opportunity to explore different values such as equality, inclusion and respect. During the sessions, the students investigated

why discrimination, bullying, stereotyping and stigmatization occur through different real-life scenarios and applied theatre. They reflected on respect and treating everyone equally and on how they can promote equal access to all when they are at school, at the workplace, within their family and in the community. Through these sessions, students interacted with each other and enhanced their teamwork, communication and creativity skills. They also learned more about the different services and opportunities offered by the National Youth Agency.

Youth Theatre

In collaboration with the Director Outreach Services and Student Affairs and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, a Youth Theatre initiative was also held at the MCAST Gozo Campus in March 2022. This served as a space to encourage guided discussion and reflection with young people aged 16 and over on the subjects of sexual consent, boundaries,

commercialization of the body and body dysmorphia. This initiative consisted of a theatre production by four young actors under the mentorship of Studio 18 and a panel discussion with experts, youth workers and young people.



Discrimination and Inclusion Activity at Comino

During this academic year, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh organised workshops with the theme of “Discrimination and Inclusion” for all student groups studying at the Gozo Campus. This series of workshops ended with a planned activity following feedback that was gathered from the participating students. In order to stick to the main theme of “Discrimination and Inclusion”, the final activity coordinated by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh brought together MCAST students and staff

with Aġenzija Sapport and Santa Martha Day Centre service users and staff. The activity was held in Comino, where mass was celebrated in the Island’s chapel by the Gozo Campus Chaplain, Fr Vince Pavia and the Chapel Rector, Fr Joseph Attard. A number of fun activities on Santa Marija beach followed. Around 100 students and staff members from the various entities participated in this event.



New PhD Graduate at the Gozo Campus

In October 2021, Dr Ing. Christian Zammit defended his PhD at Delft University of Technology. Dr Ing. Christian Zammit is a Senior Lecturer II lecturing Engineering at different EQF Levels and an Institute Vocational Coordinator (Engineering) at the Gozo Campus. Prior to joining MCAST, Dr Ing. Christian Zammit held the position of Research Officer II at the University of Malta and was involved in research in relation to both FP7 EU and MCST projects. Through his three and a half years at UoM he enrolled and successfully finished his MSc cum laude entitled “Autonomous taxiing of fixed wing aircraft in low visibility conditions”. During his time at the UoM he attended numerous consortia meetings in different EU states and also published four conference papers in collaboration with partner Universities and industry.

Dr Zammit's PhD, entitled “3D path planning for UAVs in dynamic environments in the presence of uncertainties”, initially focused on assessing the performance of state-of-the-art path planning algorithms in the context of autonomous 3D path planning of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) with no a priori knowledge of the current and future states of the environment and the obstacles and constraints residing within it. Consequently, a set of contributions were developed, assessed and discussed that enhanced path planning performance with

respect to the current state-of-the-art even in the presence of uncertainty in sensing and control on board the UAV.

As part of his PhD journey, Dr Ing. Christian Zammit presented his work in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), the world's largest aerospace technical society. Also as part of his PhD, he successfully presented his first conference paper entitled “Comparison between A* and RRT Algorithms for UAV Path Planning” in Kissimmee, Orlando, Florida. This paper was followed by another four conference papers, also within AIAA conferences, in San Diego, California, Orlando, Florida and Nashville, Tennessee that investigated shortcomings of the standard A* and Rapidly-Exploring Random Tree (RRT) algorithms and their variants, real-time 3D path planning, dynamic environments and uncertainty.

Dr Ing. Christian Zammit has also published a journal paper in the Unmanned Systems Journal and is in the process of submitting other journal papers related to his PhD. As a result of his research output, he has been nominated as a reviewer for both conference and journal bodies, namely AIAA Ground Navigation and Control, Journal of Intelligent and Robotic Systems, Springer, Chinese Journal of Aeronautics and IEEE Transactions on Aerospace and Electronic Systems.

Furthermore, through his PhD journey, Dr Ing. Christian Zammit had the opportunity to visit Napier University, Edinburgh in Scotland and Reykjavik University in Iceland where he was able to network with different research groups and discuss common research interests. Moreover, he was invited to visit NASA Ames Research Centre, Moffet Field, San José, California where he was able to visit research facilities and network with NASA engineers about common research interests.

Dr Ing. Christian Zammit would like to thank all academic and support staff and fellow PhD students at Delft University of Technology for making his journey as a PhD candidate a wonderful one. Moreover, he would like to thank the Principal, his Director and colleagues at MCAST Gozo Campus for always being supportive in all his research ventures while keeping MCAST students as top priority. Finally, special thanks go to his family and his fiancée for their support and unconditional love.

Continuous Professional Development

MY EXPERIENCE AT THE “CAREER GUIDANCE SHAPING COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES” SEMINAR IN BRATISLAVA

BY VERONIQUE VELLA MUSKAT

The transnational seminar “Career Guidance Shaping Communities and Societies” was held between 25 and 27 May 2022 at the Piszatory Palace in Bratislava. We were 40 career guidance practitioners from 14 different European countries. The seminar was organised by the Slovak Euroguidance Centre in cooperation with the Slovak National Agency Erasmus+.

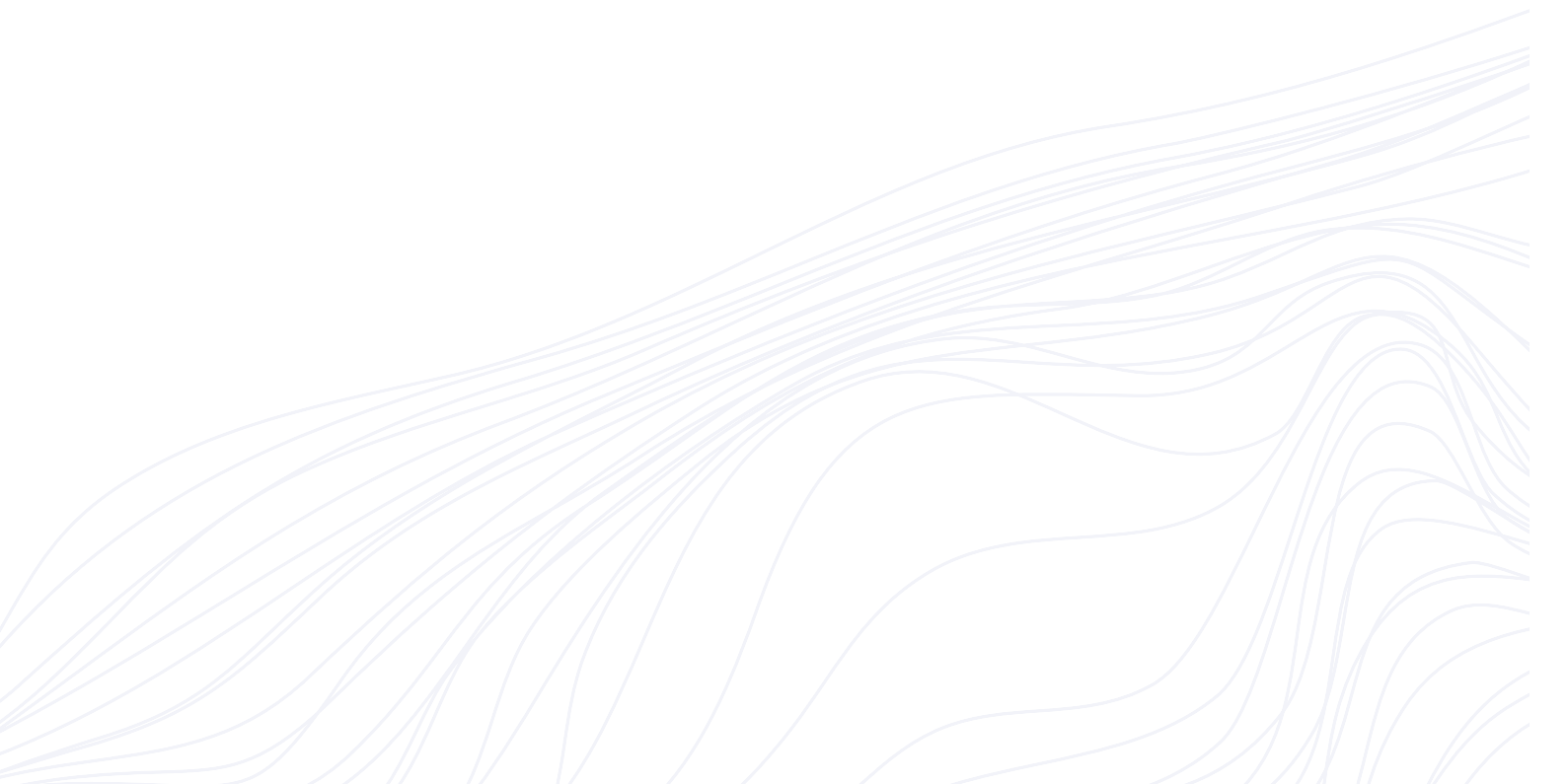
I applied for this seminar because I was interested in gaining insight into how career

guidance is evolving nowadays in the field of social cohesion, with the pandemic and the labour market changes that the pandemic brought forth. The purpose of the seminar was to explore the social impact of career guidance and its transformative potential towards more sustainable and inclusive societies. The meaning of social justice and social inclusion and how they can be actively practised in career guidance were explored in depth.

During the seminar, we looked at how career guidance can be beneficial to various communities, how it can encourage fairness and promote social cohesion.

We had the opportunity to listen to insightful keynote speeches by Professor Ronald G. Sultana (University of Malta) and Helena Košťálová. We also visited two organisations – Mareena and Profesia – which are doing some highly important work in the field of inclusion within the community and the labour market. We learnt about other inclusive practices in Slovakia. We also played an active role as we developed several inspiring project ideas during a group activity. The projects involved the Development of Career Management Skills, Eco Guidance and the Professionalisation of Career Guidance in European Countries.

In addition to the learning content, the seminar gave us an opportunity to network with other career guidance practitioners in Europe, exchange ideas and learn good practice from each other.



MCAST Graduation Ceremonies

MCAST CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS

MCAST held two graduation ceremonies at the College's Main Campus in Paola to celebrate the success of 185 students. Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation Hon Clifton Grima was present for the first ceremony.

During the first graduation ceremony, MCAST presented certificates to 106 graduands of the Higher Certificate in Inclusive Education, the Undergraduate Certificate in Customer Care and the Undergraduate Certificate in Restorative Practices.

Seventy-nine students were awarded postgraduate qualifications in various areas in the second ceremony. During this ceremony, the success of the first cohorts of the following courses was celebrated: MA in Product Design, MSc in Exercise and Sports Science, MSc in Mechatronics, MSc in Integrated Resource Management, and MSc in Environmental Engineering.

The graduation coincided with the successful conclusion of the EU Funded Programme ESF 3.003, which enabled MCAST to develop, launch and provide free of charge postgraduate opportunities to the community. This EU funding ensured that the College successfully delivered a comprehensive upskilling opportunity across the different sectors of the MSc programmes.

During the closing speech, Minister Clifton Grima said: "This graduation is an opportunity to celebrate your hard work and success. Thanks are also owing to your families, who supported you throughout your learning journey. You will face daily challenges in your careers, and I hope that you will keep aspiring to learn more each day and bring positive change at the workplace and in our communities."

I Belong Programme



MCAST in collaboration with the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) offers the I Belong programme for non-Maltese citizens residing in Malta and Gozo. The programme comprises two different levels: the Pre-Integration stage 1 at MQF Level 1, which consists of 60 hours of training, 20 hours of functional Maltese language, 20 hours of functional English language and 20 hours of cultural and societal orientation; and the Integration stage 2 at MQF Level 2, which includes 50 hours of Maltese language for integration and 100 hours of cultural orientation. The latter comprises the social, economic, cultural and democratic history and environment of Malta with specific focus on the Constitution, law, democratic values and practical sessions at MQF Level 2.

The Integration programme is a pre-requisite for individuals to be eligible to apply for long-term resident status.

During the Awards Ceremony that was held at MCAST on 26 April 2022, 460 students who successfully completed the Pre-Integration stage 1 programme were presented with certificates jointly conferred by MCAST and HRD.

To date 1,447 individuals successfully completed the Pre-Integration I Belong stage 1 programme, whilst 220 individuals successfully acquired Integration I Belong stage 2 certificates.

International Office

MAKEMYFUTURE

Together with 7 other partners from Italy, Spain, Germany and Poland, MCAST is taking part in a Cooperation partnership in the vocational education and training sector (KA220-VET) funded under the Erasmus+ programme – Improving Digital Competences for Advanced Manufacturing Industries through Maker Education. The name of the Cooperation partnership is “MakeMyFuture”.

The Maker Culture has become an important player in today's economy. This culture can help students gain appropriate useful skills needed for industry 4.0. Through this project the partners will support students in acquiring advanced digital competences. The partners will develop VET curricula focused on the latest key digital competences. VET teachers, experts in industry 4.0 and maker education will be involved in each partner country in questionnaires and interviews that will help define the most important digital skills for Industry 4.0. After this research the project will start empowering VET lecturers to carry out maker-based activities aimed



at teaching students advanced digital competences. 51 VET teachers and 100 VET students will be involved in testing the output produced by the project. The project will develop and deliver a massive open online course (MOOC). The results of this project will be made available to all educators on the official project website. Ing. Damian Brincat (from the Mechanical Engineering Department within the Institute of Engineering and Transport) will be coordinating the implementation of the project on behalf of MCAST.

MakeMyFuture - Improving Digital Competences for Advanced Manufacturing Industries through Maker Education is an Erasmus+ Cooperation partnership in the vocational education and training sector (Project number 2021-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000034613).



EQVEGAN PROJECT

A year into the project, the MCAST team working on the EQVEGAN project has collaborated with European partners and contributed towards the successful completion of several tasks.

The aim of the project is to provide training to current and prospective employees of the vegan food industry, which has seen significant growth in the past decade.

So far, MCAST's major contribution to the project has been on three tasks.

In the first task, MCAST developed a template of learning outcomes for units that will be used by different European education institutions who will develop units

for training. Following the development of the draft template, feedback was given by the project partners and a final version was finalised and shared.

A major outcome of the project is the development of training material. MCAST contributed to the development of units on plant-based technology, digital skills and automation, green skills and soft skills. A total of 16 units in these four areas have been developed and these are pegged at EQF Levels 4 to 7. At the end of March 2022, MCAST staff joined other partners and presented examples of some of the training materials prepared.

Another task which MCAST led was the development of a report on the current situation on work-based learning opportunities. The project partners contributed to this report by sharing best different processes and practices and the report facilitated the sharing of these.

Currently MCAST is working on another major task of the project, which is the implementation and quality assurance, together with the certification and recognition processes of the developed units.

The EQVEGAN project is being led by the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Portugal and includes education institutions, government agencies, industry representatives and multiplier institutions from Spain, France, Finland, Austria, Turkey, Croatia, Turkey, Greece and Malta.

More information on the project, which is being coordinated by the Erasmus+ Projects and Mobility Office at MCAST, can be found on the project website www.eqvegan.eu.

This project is being funded with support from the European Commission.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

MY EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRIA BY NIKOLAI CAMILLERI

I am pursuing a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) degree in Mechanical Engineering at MCAST. I successfully completed a two-month Erasmus+ placement in Graz, Austria, with the company Knapp AG. The automation devices created by this company include stackers and de-stackers, box sorting machines, and automatic storage-retrieval machines (also known as shuttles). The majority of this company's procedures revolve around metals.

I worked in all four areas during my internship: production, assembly, mechanical engineering, and shuttle. Processes like CNC Laser Cutting, CNC Punching, CNC Bending, CNC Turning, CNC Milling, Welding, and Powder Coating are all done one after another in the Production Department. With the exception of milling and powder coating, I worked on most of the operations outlined and installed numerous types of conveyors in the assembly section. Curved roller conveyors, straight roller conveyors, belt conveyors, and other specialized varieties were among them. The final product is fully assembled, tested, and ready for shipment at the Mechanical Engineering Department. I assisted the technicians in this department in assembling this equipment and positioning the laser sensors correctly.

The Learning Workshop was very interesting as it is dedicated to the apprentices that work there and is equipped with a variety of machinery and tools. I also became a part of this incredible group of apprentices and met a lot of new people.

I strongly recommend Erasmus+ placements as one gains better course related experience and has the opportunity to explore international possibilities.





Library and Learning Resource Centre

The Library services at MCAST started in 2003. Libraries have changed considerably since then. The need to house the growing collection and have better premises with modern facilities for the users led to plans to set up a new Library building. The process began years ago when the idea of having a larger campus materialized. A sub-committee began discussions that involved the Library requirements and architectural plans. Gradually the new building started to take shape. The Library team familiarized themselves with the building layout by visiting the site. Regular meetings and discussions were held on how to organize the migration of the Library collection to the new building.

The process to start the migration was accelerated as the construction stage was coming to its final stage. In March 2021 the staff started the long process of packing and recording every item that was to be taken to the new Library. Then lockdown was declared due to the outbreak of another wave of COVID-19. Most Library services were suspended for about a month even though the online services were unaffected. This gave the staff more time to concentrate on the task of packing. The books were packed in order; the boxes were labelled, numbered and kept in order. The database created by the Library team helped to locate easily any materials in the boxes. The shelves and shelving parts were dismantled section by

section and were packed in bundles. Every item was recorded.

By the end of May 2021 the bulk of the packing process was ready. The Library staff was extremely busy during the three months of packing. It should be noted that during this period the team kept offering regular library services.

Packing nearly 60,000 books, 34 boxes of educational toys, around 2,000 archive periodical boxes and dismantling about 2,000 metres of shelving was not a small feat.


The physical migration process started during the first week of November 2021. This was a very demanding time for all the staff. Working for long hours, the staff supervised the handling and transportation of materials, followed the movers and assisted in placing the materials in the correct location. It was an exhausting and stressful routine that no doubt proved to be a challenge. Yet, in spite of all the difficulties that were encountered, the staff maintained a professional attitude and a cheerful disposition. Some student volunteers were also instrumental in giving us a hand, together with the MCAST maintenance team.

The next challenge was the shelving and organizing the Library in the new premises. This was once again approached with determination, despite the pressures and deadlines. At the same time, services to our users continued with the least interruptions possible. The process lasted till the first week of January 2022, when the new Library was sufficiently in place for the use of our patrons.

inaugurated on Tuesday 15 February 2022. The building was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Hon Robert Abela, the Education Minister Hon Clifton Grima and the EU Funds Parliamentary Secretary Hon Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi. The highlight of the building is the new MCAST Library and Learning Resource Centre which is housed on the second and third floors of the Resource Centre. After the official inauguration, the distinguished guests were then taken on a tour of the Library by the Library Director Ms Liza Franco along with the Principal Professor Joachim James Calleja and Deputy Principal Dr Tatjana Chircop. The MRC is named after the late Professor Oliver Friggieri, a Maltese poet, novelist, literary critic and philosopher, in consideration of his contribution to the Maltese Language and the Maltese culture.

The new spacious Library has a stunning view of Malta (180 degrees) and has modern facilities.

- The attractive and comfortable study pods have already turned into favourite spots for students.
- The new Library has designated floors for group discussions and silent study.
- The group study rooms are equipped with internet facilities and 55 inch monitors which the students and staff can book.
- There is a room dedicated for dissertations and projects.
- There is a room filled with educational toys and games for the Early Years' Education students.
- There is an open terrace where the students can relax with a cup of coffee and enjoy the beautiful scenery!

A photograph of four students sitting at a long white table in a modern library or study area. They are focused on their work, with some using laptops and others writing in notebooks. The background shows a bright, open space with large windows and modern architecture.

During this period, many distinguished guests including international dignitaries visited the Library and they have all showered words of appreciation. Working on such beautiful premises and receiving such positive feedback from students, staff and guests, makes one feel that all the sacrifices done throughout the previous months were worthwhile and fills the Library team with pride and determination to continue their mission of acting as professional librarians at the service of MCAST.

MCAST holds Research Symposium

The theme of this year's Research Symposium centred around a project, namely "ESF 02.058 Adding Value: Nurturing Learning Journeys in IVET at MCAST". The first publication of a special edition of the MCAST Journal of Applied Research and Practice was launched during the Research Symposium.

In the Research Symposium an overview of the research carried out was presented. The research focused on four main areas, namely gamification, online learning, mentoring, and challenges and barriers in education.

The aim was that of setting up state-of-the-art support structures for students and individuals pertaining to vulnerable groups. During the lifetime of this project, MCAST's aim was to identify the typical barriers to training encountered by socially excluded individuals. As a result of this exercise, MCAST will be able to create long-term structures that can provide immediate support for vulnerable students while they are following MCAST courses up to MQF Level 3.

Apart from research development, the project also includes the development of innovative technologies for fun learning. Moreover, a new platform, the "Operational Tools and Information System" is being developed. This IT system will enhance students' educational experience by using

technologies that are similar to those that young people use regularly in their everyday life.

In parallel, another system is being developed which will enable professionals and students to identify their interests, strengths and weaknesses and empower students to gradually develop their own learning journey.

A number of Key Skills curricula will also be enhanced through gamified components whereby the possibility to learn topics through games will be made possible.

Short 20-hour courses (Skills Kits) at Level 1 are also on offer for the general public with the aim of attracting young people to vocational education. These are also available for secondary schools with the aim of giving young students the opportunity to experience vocational education through these courses.

A very important part of the project is the student mentoring service being offered to all students up to MQF Level 3. Student mentors ensure the well-being of each individual student, empowering students to explore their options and supporting them in overcoming challenges thus encouraging them to remain engaged in education.



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