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MCAST Manual of Administrative Procedures

Chapter 15: Student and Staff Grievances Policy and Procedure

Process Owner	Grievance Officer
Document Approver	Administrative Council
Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update	Principal and CEO, Deputy Principals, Directors, Deputy Directors, All other administrative and academic staff. All students.

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	- Extracted document from MOP Chapter 1 and transferred to a new stand-alone chapter (Chapter 15) - All instances referring to the Deputy Principal Responsible for the Grievance Office have been changed to refer to Senior Grievance Officer		
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	111/2026	29/09/2026	Ing. Pierre Dalmas; Av. Jean Abela, Av.Thea Cesare Lynn, Ms Sandra Cortis, Av. Carolne Demarco
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	Updated to reflect intended provision of the MCAST-MUT 2022-2027 Collective Agreement.		

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Continuous Improvement

Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated!

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In the case of a conflict in the interpretation between the Manual of Procedures and the Collective Agreement(s), the Collective Agreement(s) shall prevail.

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1. MCAST Grievance Policy

- 1.1 The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) spares no effort to ensure that all its community members, including full-time and part-time students and staff, operate in a conducive environment where they can live together guided by sound values of inclusion and respect in the light of social and cultural diversity.
- 1.2 In any human community, there are incidences of disagreement, when individuals or groups feel the need of voicing a divergent opinion, dispute decisions or distance themselves from sharing their community's ideals due to lack of self-confidence in obtaining their entitlements. Conflicts may lead to many other problems, including increased liabilities, negative publicity, and possibly lawsuits. A positive approach when handling concerns and complaints results in a better culture on MCAST Campus, where students and staff are the major beneficiaries of a more harmonious and authentic community spirit.
- 1.3 The scope for establishing the MCAST 'Grievance Office' is to address such issues. The Grievance Office has the role of assisting MCAST students and staff to share and obtain advice about their concerns, complaints and grievances. The Grievance Office and all associated procedural and operational workflows shall fall under the exclusive jurisdiction and administrative oversight of the Principal & CEO. The Grievance Office seeks, above all, to promote and facilitate a culture of truthful dialogue-by intervening and obtaining a solution for minor disagreements at the earliest possible stage. Whenever it is necessary, the Grievance Officer guides the complainant and the other party to reach an informal resolution to the satisfaction of all concerned. The complainant is entitled to opt for a formal grievance procedure, where the Grievance Board investigates the formal grievance, issues its findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.4 Any grievance presented to the Grievance Office under the formal and informal route must be in writing. The Grievance Board is totally committed to the investigation of any grievance impartially, while priority is given to the communication of the Grievance Board's findings, conclusions and recommendations within realistic time frames following the conclusion of the investigation.
- 1.5 This policy aims to ensure that problems among the MCAST community are dealt with in a timely manner, fairly and consistently. The Grievances' procedure enhances the transparency of the entire process. The 'Grievance Office' provides appropriate support for all MCAST members who may need more guidance in their individual circumstances.

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2. Grievance Scope, Definition and Principles

2.1 The Grievance Office provides its services to all registered MCAST full-time and part-time students and staff. The overall aim is to actively promote and safeguard their well-being by dealing with their grievances and offering fair and adequate counsel to assist in bringing grievances to a satisfactory closure for the benefit of all concerned.

2.2 A grievance is considered as an official expression of a complaint that may be resolved. The complainant can choose to resolve a complaint either:

- a) informally through the raising of a concern or a grievance in writing, followed by discussions, meetings and/or correspondence between the parties concerned, with the assistance of the Senior Grievance Officer, in an effort to resolve the matter informally, or
- b) formally by completing and submitting the prescribed Grievance Form to the MCAST Grievance Board via the Grievance Office, to the attention of the Chairperson in accordance with the established grievance procedure.

2.3 The MCAST Grievance policy and procedure have five underpinning principles:

- a) full respect to the human dignity of all concerned,
- b) handling of grievances under the strictest confidentiality,
- c) Where an informal resolution is voluntarily reached by the parties, the agreement shall be acknowledged. Where the agreed resolution is not implemented, the complainant may pursue the formal grievance procedure in accordance with the established policy and procedures.
- d) transparency of communication, and
- e) the complainant may choose to be accompanied by one person of their choice during the grievance hearing Board sessions.

2.4 MCAST employees and students may contact the MCAST Grievance Office for general information either by phone (23987130), or by email (grievance@mcast.edu.mt) or by visiting the Grievance Office at Reno C Borg Building, Administration, Ground Floor Building, Ground Floor. All meetings require that complainants set up an appointment with the Senior Grievance Officer responsible for the MCAST Grievance Office.

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3. Submitting a Grievance Complaint

3.1 Informal Grievance Route

- 3.1.1 A complainant may choose to pursue the matter through the informal grievance route. The concern or grievance shall be documented in writing to ensure that the relevant information is accurately recorded and available for consideration. Where appropriate, and depending on the nature and circumstances of the grievance, the complainant may also be required requested to complete the relevant grievance form and provide any supporting documentation. The matter may then be addressed through discussions, meetings and/or correspondence between the parties concerned, with the assistance of the Senior Grievance Officer, in an effort to achieve an informal resolution. Any relevant documentation shall be reviewed and, where necessary, verified as part of the process.
- 3.1.2 Where, during the initial meeting between the Senior Grievance Officer and the complainant, it becomes apparent that the matter raised falls outside the scope of the grievance procedure or requires consideration under other established MCAST policies, procedures, regulations, or applicable Collective Agreements provisions, the Senior Grievance Officer shall advise the complainant on the appropriate and applicable way forward and direct the matter to the relevant authority / governing body. Where the circumstances indicate that advice or professional support is required, the Senior Grievance Officer shall also provide guidance on the available support functions mechanisms, in the best interests of the complainant.
- 3.1.3 A complainant may, at any stage, decide not to continue with the informal grievance route and may proceed with the formal grievance route by completing and submitting the prescribed Grievance Form to the MCAST Grievance Board via the Grievance Office, to the attention of the Chairperson, in accordance with the applicable procedures.
- 3.1.4 The Senior Grievance Officer shall submit summary reports to the Grievance Board in accordance with an agreed reporting framework, which shall define the frequency, format, scope and content of the information to be provided, while ensuring compliance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

3.2 Formal Grievance procedure

- 3.2.1 At any stage when the complainant would like to opt for the formal grievance procedure, the complainant shall fill in Form A 'Grievance Form' and submit the form to the MCAST Grievance Board via email at grievance@mcast.edu.mt to the attention of the Chairperson of the Grievance Board.
- 3.2.2 The Complaint Form provides a link to the MCAST Staff and Student Grievance Policy & Procedure.
- 3.2.3 The Form shall also include the possibility for the complainant for a voluntary, optional initial clarification meeting with the Senior Grievance office to ensure

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that there is a clear and commonly agreed understanding of the alleged grievance.

3.2.4 Lack of details and signature on this Form may delay unnecessarily the handling of a grievance.

Reference Document

Formal Student or Staff Grievance Procedure Form (MOP ADM 001 015 Form 01)

Formola ghal Procedure tal-Ilment (MOP ADM 001 015M Form 01)

4. Grievance Board

- 4.1 The composition and terms of reference of the MCAST Grievance Board are included in respective MOP.
- 4.2 The Grievance Board acknowledges to the complainant the receipt of the Grievance Form. This acknowledgment also includes the Unique Reference Number (URN) allocated for the grievance, which consists of the calendar year in digits, a hyphen and the number of the grievance in sequence of submission.
- 4.3 The Grievance Board will convene to investigate the grievance in a timely manner, fairly and with the strictest confidentiality.
- 4.4 The Board shall ask the complainant to attend the Board session to substantiate the case. Where the Board considers that its findings, conclusions or recommendations may materially and adversely affect the rights or legitimate interests of a person who is not a party to the grievance, that person shall, before the Board concludes its deliberations, be afforded a reasonable opportunity to make representations on the matter insofar as it concerns them. That person may be accompanied by one person of their choice.
- 4.5 A complainant may choose to be accompanied by one person of their choice during the proceedings of the MCAST Grievance Board.
- 4.6 The Grievance Board has the discretion to conclude that no further investigation of the grievance is warranted in case the alleged grievance lacks any supporting evidence or when it is clearly established that the alleged complaint has no grounds to justify its investigation, or in cases when no further investigation of the grievance is warranted.
- 4.7 The investigation of all grievances and the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Grievance Board shall take into consideration the applicable MCAST regulations, policies and procedures, the Collective Agreements between MCAST and the recognised Unions, and any relevant local legislation, including where applicable the GDPR and the Malta College of Arts, Science, and Technology Act (Chapter 638 of the Laws of Malta Act).

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4.8 Following its investigation, the Grievance Board shall reach a conclusion as to whether the grievance is upheld or not upheld and shall provide its findings and any recommendations arising from the case.

4.9 The Grievance Board shall compile a Final Report setting out its findings, conclusions and recommendations within 10 working days following the conclusion of the hearings and investigation. The hearings and investigation should ordinarily be concluded within two (2) months of receipt of a correctly completed Grievance Form.

4.10 Once the Final Report is concluded, it shall be forwarded by the Board to the complainant and the MCAST Principal & CEO. Where the grievance concerns the Principal & CEO, the Board shall instead submit the Final Report to the complainant and the President of the MCAST Board of Governors.

4.11 The MCAST Grievance Office will keep a record of all documents, meetings and correspondence related to each grievance.

5. Exceptions and Conflict of Interests

5.1 Board Members shall declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest prior to participation in a case.

The complainant may also raise a reasoned objection to the participation of any Board member on the grounds of an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Any such objection shall be submitted in writing, stating the grounds upon which it is based, as soon as reasonably practicable after the complainant becomes aware of the circumstances giving rise to the alleged conflict.

Where the objection concerns a Member other than the Chairperson, the objection shall be determined by the Chairperson. Where the objection concerns the Chairperson, the objection shall be determined by the Principal & CEO. The person whose participation is being challenged shall not participate in the determination of the objection but shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to provide any information or representations relevant to the alleged conflict.

A Board member with a conflict of interest shall:

- a) Recuse themselves from all deliberations and from participating in the formulation of any findings, conclusions or recommendations related to the case.
- b) Not have access to case documentation beyond what is strictly necessary to determine the conflict

5.2 Where the conflict concerns the Chairperson or other member of the Board, the Principal & CEO shall ensure that a replacement member is appointed where

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required in order to ensure that the integrity and impartiality of proceedings is safeguarded.

5.3 In the event that a formal grievance is lodged against the Principal & CEO, the Grievance Board shall submit the report to the complainant and the MCAST President of the Board of Governors. However, before reaching any finding, conclusion or recommendation adverse to the Principal & CEO, the Principal & CEO shall be informed of the material allegations and afforded a reasonable opportunity to respond.

6. Further recourse

The Board's findings, conclusions and recommendations are non-binding. Complainants may, where they consider it appropriate, seek recourse or review through other fora available to them.

7. Effective Date

The effective date of this procedure is 1st October 2026.

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Annex 1 : Informal and formal Grievance Procedure for Staff Members and Students

