

## **CIRCULAR TO ALL LECTURING STAFF**

Following the decision to extend the closure of all educational institutions up to the end of the current academic year, management, in consultation with the Board of Governors has agreed to the following plan of action:

- The current academic year will end as scheduled on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020 for the majority of the study programmes.
- The new academic year 2020-2021 will open on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October.
- MCAST plans to hold only certain practical components during September or in later months according to the exigencies of Individual Institutes.
- All other assessments which can be finished by 10<sup>th</sup> July will be concluded as planned. Where mandatory practical components are involved, these will be completed by early October 2020 where possible. These dates apply for graduating, continuing and progressing students across all Levels.
- All lecturing staff are expected to use online learning until the end of the current academic year.
- Dissertations will follow set deadlines with the proviso that extensions can be allowed where the request is justified.
- Where possible, Master's programmes will commence by the end of November 2020 to cater for candidates that require a post-summer extension to complete their degree.
- MCAST is currently providing, on request and as much as possible, hardware and software material to students to enable them to follow online learning.

### **Online Learning.**

The following actions have been agreed with the Malta Union of Teachers:

- Online teaching is to continue at all levels until Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Assessments should be finished by the 15<sup>th</sup> June. Results, including synoptic assessments, should be submitted by the end of the academic year.
- All lecturing staff are expected to communicate with all their students and provide an educational service. Lecturing staff are encouraged to use any of the platforms provided by the

College to reach students. Should there be any other safe and secure platforms that lecturing staff wish to use, the later should keep the IT Department informed.

- Any direct real-time interaction with students shall be carried out during timetabled slots. This cannot extend beyond the respective College hours or days unless agreed by the individual lecturer and students. Whereas a level of contact and service is to be expected by all professionals, no pressure should be placed on lecturing staff members to carry out live teaching through video streams or otherwise.
- Lecturing staff have the right to disconnect from online platforms and from work outside their working hours. All communication from management and all online teaching must be conducted during normal College hours. Lecturing staff will do their best to provide timely feedback to students.
- During the latter part of the second semester, lecturing staff are encouraged to finish as much as possible the programme of any particular qualification. Management will be monitoring from time-to-time the process of online learning and issuing new instructions together with the Union as deemed necessary.
- Full and complete support will be given to all lecturing staff members to ensure that their rights are protected both with regards to intellectual property rights related to all original material and resources used online as well as to potential misuse of such material by third parties.
- Lecturing staff and students have the right to feel safe online. A zero tolerance approach will be adopted in assertively addressing any verified reports of inappropriate or abusive behaviour. All applicable legislation on abusive behaviour generally will be enforced as required.
- Lecturing staff who may experience difficulty in contacting their students online are to liaise with their respective Institutes or use the College helpline 2398 7100 or MCAST web portal [www.mcast.edu.mt](http://www.mcast.edu.mt)