

The MCAST Practical Handbook for Sponsors of Placements & Internships

Under the Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (AWBL) Act, Chapter 576 of the Laws of Malta

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the MCAST Internship/Placement Sponsor Handbook. This guide aims to support employers, companies, and organizations interested in providing placements or internships to students enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs at the MCAST under Malta's AWBL Act.

Work-based learning offers practical experience, enhances skills, and fosters closer collaboration between education providers and industry.

Your contribution as a sponsor is vital to the success of our students' learning journeys and their future employability. Thank you.

2. Work-Based Learning Opportunities (besides Apprenticeship)

- **Internships:** Time-limited work experiences focusing on skill development; may be paid or unpaid, typically shorter than apprenticeships. Internship still requires a signed training agreement.
- **Placements:** Practical work elements integrated into a training program or course. Placements may be paid or unpaid but always require a signed training agreement.

Each program type involves different commitments and responsibilities governed by the AWBL Act. Internships and Placements can be remunerated or not remunerated.

Internships and Placements are administered by the respective MCAST Institutes.

3. Legal Framework & Employer Obligations

The Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Act provides the legal basis for these programs. Employers/Sponsors must:

- Enter into a formal agreement (provided by the MCAST) with the learner/student and VET provider.
- Adhere to national legislation with regard to third country nationals (if applicable)
- Provide a safe, supportive workplace in compliance with Maltese laws.
- Respect agreed working hours
- Reach agreement regarding remuneration (if applicable).
- Offer adequate training and supervision.
- Maintain insurance coverage for learners in accordance with The Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Act, including public liability and employer's liability insurance
- Notify the VET provider of any issues or changes.

Compliance ensures legal protection for all parties and a positive learning environment.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
Sponsor/Employer	Provide quality training, supervision, safe workplace, remuneration if applicable, and collaborate with the VET provider.
VET Provider	Deliver theoretical education, monitor learner progress, coordinate placements, and support sponsors.
Learner/Student	Engage fully in learning, comply with workplace policies, and communicate openly with sponsors and VET providers.

5. Placement/Internship Agreement

The training agreement outlines:

- Placement/Internship duration and work schedule.
- Learning objectives and training activities.
- Remuneration details (when applicable).
- Health & safety obligations.
- Roles of supervisor and communication channels.
- Procedures for reporting, assessment, and issue resolution.

A sample agreement is available from the MCAST Apprenticeship website.

6. Supervision and Mentoring (by employer)

Effective mentorship supports student learning and professional growth. Supervisors should:

- Have expertise relevant to the placement field.
 - Guide and support learners in day-to-day tasks.
 - Provide constructive feedback regularly.
 - Facilitate communication with the VET provider.
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7. Monitoring and Evaluation

To help sponsors, here is a checklist guiding the placement/internship lifecycle:

Sponsor Checklist for Placements & Internships

Before Placement

- Confirm signed agreement among all parties.
- Define clear learning objectives.
- Agree on duration, working hours, and schedule.
- Assign a qualified supervisor.
- Ensure health & safety compliance and provide necessary training.
- Clarify remuneration and leave/sick entitlements (if applicable).
- Ensure compliance to local legislation vis-a-vis third country national students (if applicable)
- Prepare induction and orientation materials.
- Verify insurance coverage for learners.
- Establish communication lines with the VET provider.

During Placement

- Provide supervision and regular feedback.
- Monitor learner progress and encourage logbooks or portfolios.
- Maintain a safe working environment.
- Assign meaningful, relevant tasks.
- Report attendance or performance issues immediately.
- Complete required progress reports (if applicable).
- Encourage learner feedback.

After Placement

- Hold a final review meeting.
 - Submit evaluation reports to the VET provider (if applicable).
 - Provide certificates or references (if applicable).
 - Collect feedback for continuous improvement.
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8. Health & Safety

- Ensure compliance with Maltese health and safety regulations.
 - Provide learners with appropriate training and protective equipment.
 - Maintain a safe workplace and emergency procedures.
 - Ensure insurance coverage is in place for learners, including public liability and employer's liability insurance.
 - Report accidents or incidents promptly as required.
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9. Benefits to Sponsors

- Access to motivated, skilled future employees.
 - Enhance your organisation's community engagement.
 - Potential eligibility for government incentives.
 - Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions.
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10. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: Can we offer unpaid placements/internships?

A: Under the AWBL Act, unpaid placements / internships are allowed only if they are primarily for educational purposes. Placements and Internships may be both paid (remunerated) or not paid (not remunerated).

Q2: What if the learner is frequently absent or late?

A: Regular attendance is crucial. Please report absences or punctuality issues promptly to the VET provider so they can support the learner and take appropriate steps.

Q3: Are sponsors responsible for the learner's health and safety?

A: Yes, sponsors must provide a safe working environment and comply with health and safety laws. This includes, but not only, the obligation of providing necessary training and protective equipment.

Q4: What insurance should sponsors have for learners?

A: Sponsors should have public liability and employer's liability insurance that covers learners during their placement to protect against accidents or injuries.

Q5: Can we terminate a placement early?

A: Yes, but this should be done in accordance with the signed agreement. Early termination must be communicated immediately to the VET provider with reasons, and efforts made to resolve any issues.

Q6: Who supervises the learner?

A: Sponsors must appoint a qualified supervisor (who ideally is not directly related to student) who will mentor and oversee the learner's daily activities and development.

Q7: How many hours can a learner work?

A: Working hours should comply with the terms set in the training agreement and Maltese employment laws.

Q8: What should we do if the learner faces difficulties or underperforms?

A: Report any concerns to the VET provider promptly. Together, you can develop a support plan or consider alternative solutions.

Q9: Are we required to pay the learner?

A: Internships and placements may be paid or unpaid, subject to AWBL regulations.

Q10: Can the learner perform the same duties as a full-time employee?

A: Learners should be assigned tasks that support learning and skill development, as per course requirements.

Q11: How do we assess the learner's progress?

A: The supervisor should regularly review the learner's progress, provide feedback, and complete any reporting or assessments required (if any) by the VET provider.

Q12: What documentation is required from sponsors?

A: Sponsors must maintain records of attendance, progress reports, and any incident reports, and share these with the VET provider as requested.

Q13: Can learners be assigned to hazardous tasks?

A: Learners should not be exposed to risks beyond their training or age-appropriate limits. Sponsors must assess risks and ensure safety measures are in place.

Q14: What support does the VET provider offer sponsors?

A: The VET provider coordinates placement arrangements, offers guidance, conducts monitoring visits (where applicable), and serves as a **contact point for any issues**.

Q15: Are other legal frameworks besides the AWBL Act applicable?

A: Yes. Depending on the nature of the placement, **other Maltese legislation** may apply, including those relating to employment, data protection, and health and safety.

S.L.452.921 – Subsidiary Legislation 452.92 -Young Persons (Employment) Regulations is also applicable to minors.

Additionally, **Jobsplus** (Malta's public employment service) may have specific requirements, especially if the placement is registered through national schemes or involves government incentives. Sponsors should ensure compliance with all relevant laws and consult Jobsplus or the VET provider if in doubt.

11. Useful Contacts and Resources

- Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Department:

Address: AWBL Department
Administration Building | Main Campus
Corradino Hill | Paola PLA9032 | Malta

e. industrypartner@mcast.edu.mt | www.mcast.edu.mt |
www.mcast.edu.mt/apprenticeships-mcast/
t. 23987144/7149

- Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Act – Chapter 576 of the Laws of Malta:
[<https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/576/eng/pdf>]
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Recommendation for Sponsors:

To ensure full compliance and access to any potential benefits:

- **Register the placement/Internships** — it protects both the sponsor and the learner legally and administratively – Kindly indicate registration as ‘part-time; casual- definite’.
- **Contact Jobsplus** directly or visit their official site: <https://jobsplus.gov.mt>
- **Ensure compliance** vis-a-vis third country national students with Jobsplus
- **Inform the respective MCAST institute** early in the process so they can guide you through any required steps.