

MCAST LINK

Issue 58 // SPECIAL EDITION 2021



MCAST

SUCCESS STORIES



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2021



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MCASTlink is produced by the MCAST Communications and PR Office

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Message from the Principal and CEO

Prof. JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

EVERY TIME I go through such a publication, I do not just see students with a career. However, I see dedication, commitment, perseverance, and a positive attitude in their chosen career. From Software Engineers, Beauty experts, Environmental Officers, Managers, Content Creators, IT officers, Educators, Fashion Designer, Designer, Mechanic, Childcare coordinators, Hairdressers, Maritime Officer and many more. All these success stories give a glimpse of what MCAST offers our students while also showing that even a person who requires a more inclusive approach to learning can make their career.

Throughout my experience in education and working with young people and various people from different strands, one's success is determined by not just studying a particular field but by the community that supports that path. MCAST is an educational institution and a community of people that supports all students. This publication does not showcase our best students, but these are stories of students from diverse backgrounds who have been successful in the labour market.

Today, MCAST's curriculum is more than ever before designed to provide the necessary up-to-date skills required within the labour market. MCAST focuses not only on the teaching itself but also on the student's learning process, exposing those to modern techniques, current industry practices, concepts, knowledge and tools. We strongly consider work-based learning the foremost value of all learning experiences at MCAST. Our strong network with private companies and the public sector helps us link learners' talents to the needs of the labour market. We are proud of our relationship with employers. We help our students visualize clear possibilities of where they wish to advance in their careers.

I invite you to look through this publication and explore how our students



have achieved their remarkable milestones through MCAST's platforms.

As CEO and Principal of MCAST, with pride, I can say that nowadays, the MCAST prospectus features over 191 courses across its six institutions. The courses vary from finance insurance, retail, aircraft maintenance, robotics and artificial intelligence, health, design, transportation and logistics management and many more. As a vocational and professional education and training college, we ensure that all qualifications are relevant to the different skills and competences needed in industry today and in other traditional jobs and workplaces.

I look forward every year to seeing many of our students succeeding in their profession. In recent years, vocational careers have gained more importance with very promising future paths in different sectors.



MCAST





AXEL CURMI

Software Engineer at CCBill



FROM A young age, I enjoyed learning how computers work, how computer games are designed and how computers communicate with each other. I always wanted to work in a technical role. Upon finishing my secondary education, I enrolled in post-secondary education with a focus on Engineering. However, after completing the first year, I felt detached and decided to take a different path.

In 2014, I decided to join the MCAST Institute of Information and Communication Technology. I enrolled in the BTEC Extended Diploma in IT Level 4 course, and in 2019, I graduated with a first class Bachelor of Science (Hons) degree in Software Development. After completing five successful years at MCAST, I greatly appreciate my time at the College and believe that the MCAST Institute of Information and Communication Technology was the best option. I gained a lot of knowledge as well as hands-on experience from MCAST and also found a lot of support from lecturers that have shaped and inspired me as a professional in the IT sector. The lecturers are great role models and a great inspiration to anyone aiming to work in IT.

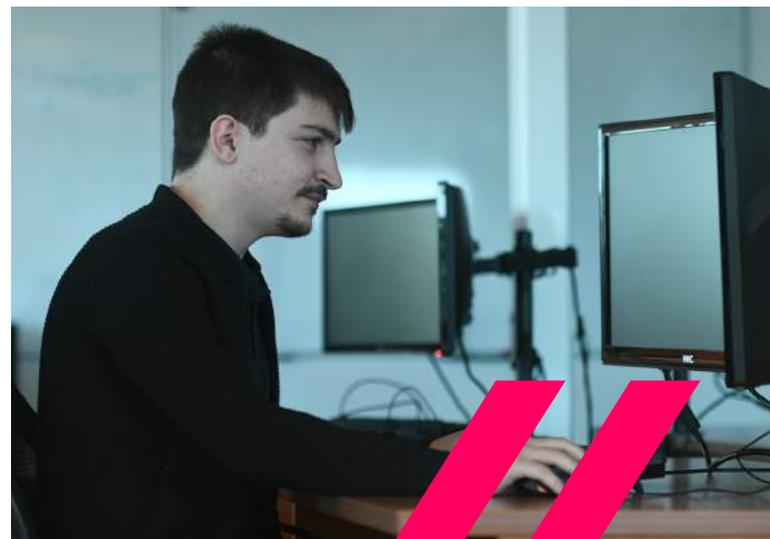
Apart from learning at a practical and theoretical level, I was supported to take my studies and research to an international level. This decision was not easy because I had to do extra work by writing research papers with my mentor while also working and studying. I am very grateful to have been given this support as it led to the successful publication of two research papers at international workshop proceedings with my mentor in Germany.

I am currently employed as a Software Engineer at CCBill and also studying for a

postgraduate degree in Computer Science at the University of Malta, thus contributing further to research.

At MCAST I found great inspiration and motivation from the lecturers and was able to see that my passion lies in cyber security. This passion has led me to win the 2021 National Cyber Security Challenge and also to represent Malta in Prague's 2021 European Cyber Security Challenge.

I wish to thank the MCAST lecturers and staff for supporting and shaping me into an IT professional. I highly recommend MCAST to any prospective students who are aiming for a career in IT. The College provides a great learning environment, with excellent and experienced lecturers, a mix of theory and hands-on studies, and working experience to bridge the gap between education and working in the industry as a professional.





LARA FARRUGIA

Nurse at Mater Dei Hospital

I HAVE always wanted to pursue a career in a hospital-related environment and always wanted to have the opportunity to help others in need. I studied Chemistry and Biology at Advanced Level and Physics and Psychology at Intermediate Level. These subjects have paved my way for a nursing career.

On completing my post-secondary studies, I came across the MCAST Prospectus. After doing some research, I considered my options and with the help of the College's career guidance services, I opted for the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Nursing Studies course offered by the Northumbria University in collaboration with MCAST (MQF Level 6).

While studying at MCAST, I had the opportunity to carry out several hours of clinical practice, theoretical work and also simulation work. The clinical practice sessions were held in various clinical settings. I was also assigned a mentor to help me gain crucial experience. The practice hours were held around Malta and Gozo including Mater Dei Hospital, the Gozo General Hospital and other hospital settings. These different practice settings have made my study experience very enriching.

Whilst reading for the Nursing course, I was given a lifetime opportunity to carry out part of my studies abroad as part of the Erasmus+ programme. I can strongly state that this experience was an unforgettable one and was key to reaching my personal, academic and career goals.

During the course I had the chance to develop on a personal level too as I became more responsible and independent. MCAST has moulded me into the nurse I am today and helped me gain valuable knowledge which I will surely put to use when taking care of my patients.







NIRVANA AVELLINO

Assistant Environment Protection Officer at the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)

EIGHT YEARS ago I started my journey towards a career in science at the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences. Since I did not have any background knowledge in any of the science subjects, I started at Foundation Level and eventually progressed to the Diploma in Applied Science (Level 3).

Having completed Level 3, I had to choose a path that would determine which career I would be pursuing in the near future. Given that I was passionate about the environment, I opted for the MCAST Advanced Diploma in Environmental Sustainability (Level 4). This was because I wanted to further my knowledge on several environmental issues especially climate change and pollution and how they are affecting us and our surroundings. After two years, I had to make yet another choice: either stop studying and seek employment within the environmental sector or read for a degree. I discussed this matter with my lecturers that provided me with different perspectives of what I could achieve and discussed what my ambitions were. I decided to further my studies by enrolling in the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Environmental Engineering. Deep down I knew I could do it but I also knew that it would be challenging, so I had to work hard and stay motivated. Thanks to the lecturers at the Institute of Applied Sciences, I managed to successfully complete my degree and also with flying colours.

Since MCAST prepares its students

for the industry by giving them the chance to experience apprenticeship and work placements, I gained experience on what to expect, thus being ready to face confrontations when working in the industry. I am now an Assistant Environment Protection Officer at the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) within the Compliance and Enforcement Directorate. I am responsible for safeguarding the environment by enforcing the environmental law and by making sure that, if a breach occurs, a consequence follows.

MCAST has provided me with numerous opportunities that go beyond my academic endeavours and helped me develop skills that are vital in both my personal and my professional life. For instance, this year I had the opportunity to represent MCAST by presenting certain aspects of my dissertation at an international conference. The research topic was about electricity generation transition in Malta from heavy fuel oil to liquefied natural gas. It was an amazing experience and a proud moment as I got to present and share my research with experts in the field.

I am grateful for these opportunities and for all the dedication that my lecturers have constantly demonstrated towards us, their students. They have helped us to set our aims high and to achieve them successfully.





VIOLET VELLA

Beauty Therapist, Makeup Artist & Lecturer at MCAST

MY MOTTO is “Never Stop Learning!” In 2019, MCAST introduced the Master in Vocational Education Applied Research 4.0 (Level 7) as a weekend course. I decided to enrol in this course and graduated with a Post-Graduate Certificate at this level. This was not an easy task as I was already 58 years old. I was going to give up after the first weekend but thanks to my mentors at MCAST and especially to Dr Nadia Vassallo, I was encouraged to continue.

At age 34, with three young children, I changed my career from one in an administrative role to a beauty therapist. I was employed with a leading French skincare brand as a trainer and brand executive for over ten years. I was sent to Paris several times to train on all new face and body treatments and products.

I started lecturing the evening courses held at MCAST, which were all introduced and structured by me, namely Makeup Techniques, Advanced Makeup Techniques and Introduction to Beauty Therapy. After five years, I then began lecturing the morning full-time beauty therapy classes.

I am a Gold Pro International Makeup Artist card holder and attend workshops at the International Makeup Artist Trade Show every year. At these Trade Shows I learn different makeup techniques, especially special effects, body painting and airbrush. These techniques and product knowledge are then passed on to my students during the makeup lessons.

In addition to beauty therapy, I followed courses in Airbrush Makeup, Airbrush Body Painting, and Eyelash Extensions, Fashion and Photography Makeup and International Health, Safety, Security and Employment Standards at Level 4. I also read for a Level 5 Diploma in Teaching Adults.

Throughout the years, I attended many other courses such as Aromatherapy, Crystal Healing, Indian Head Massage, Theatre Makeup and Special Effects, Introduction to Nutrition, Camouflage Techniques in Makeup, Bridal Masterclass Makeup (London) and Marketing courses.

In 2017 I was chosen, together with three other colleagues from MCAST, to be part of the MATSEC syllabus panel for the Hairdressing and Beauty syllabus that was going to be introduced in all secondary schools in Malta. We worked for two whole years together with the MATSEC board to establish a high standard syllabus appropriate for Years 9, 10 and 11.

Since I have been both a student at MCAST and also a lecturer for over 13 years, I can truly say that the College offers several opportunities to study VET subjects in a work-related atmosphere. All lecturers are very passionate about their job and are not only qualified with appropriate diplomas, but most have industry-related experience. I highly recommend that future students who finish compulsory secondary education look into the several courses which MCAST has to offer.





JUSTIN MICALLEF

Sales Manager at FIN Ltd

BACK IN 2013, I was very unsure about what I wanted to do with my future. An MCAST advert had caught my attention. As I sifted through the Prospectus, I learnt about the wide array of programmes and courses offered at MCAST. Embarking on the Diploma in Business (MQF Level 3) was not an easy choice. Yet, as the academic year commenced and days went by, I became more and more convinced that I had made the right choice.

Progressing to the Advanced Diploma in Business Administration (MQF Level 4) shaped my career and future endeavours. As part of this programme, I had the opportunity to participate in an apprenticeship programme at FIN Ltd. Through the apprenticeship scheme I was able to apply the theory learnt, whilst gaining first-hand knowledge and experience. It also provided me the opportunity to develop competences to widen my skill set portfolio. When my apprenticeship came to end, I was offered a part-time job as an Office Administrator within the company.

The College has also provided me with the opportunity to further my studies. Year after year, I continued to progress until I successfully managed to graduate from the Institute of Business Management and Commerce with a

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Enterprise. The path to graduate was not a walk in the park, but the way that the curriculum is designed helps students to continuously build their knowledge. Every year serves as a stepping stone. Throughout my degree I had the opportunity to participate in a work placement. This experience further exposed me to the sector in which I still work. Following my graduation, FIN Ltd offered me a full-time contract as a Sales Manager. Without MCAST's work-based philosophy, I would not have been able to attain this position.

Throughout my final year of the degree, I experienced abnormal circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, MCAST did not cease to amaze me. In just a couple of days the College managed to introduce and adopt new learning systems and platforms which made it possible for me to continue my studies and eventually graduate. The transition to e-learning was a smooth and effective one.

I recommend MCAST's Institute of Business Management and Commerce as the ideal platform for anyone who envisions a career within a business managerial role. Indeed, MCAST provides the ideal route for all those who have an inherent motivation and a strong will to learn.





JEAN PIERRE BORG CUSCHIERI

Freelance Content Creator



MY PASSION for cinematography began from a very tender age. I vividly remember taking photos and film moments as a child. Picking up that first camera gave me the spark to pursue the excitement I felt! Anyone can take a picture, but not everyone can take a great picture!

Luckily, at the moment of making a career choice, I discovered the Extended

Diploma in Creative Media Production offered by the MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts. Shortly after successfully completing the course, I furthered my studies and enrolled for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Creative Media Production. I completed my degree successfully in 2018.

MCAST provided me with the knowledge, expertise and necessary skills needed to

pursue a professional career in content creation. Throughout my years at MCAST I learned how to understand client briefs, work under pressure, deal with ethical issues, listen to clients, prepare presentations in real-life scenarios and much more!

During my time at MCAST, I gained the qualifications and initial experience which eventually led me to develop my own business. My experience so far has contributed to satisfying the customer base I built these last few years and engaging new clients to acquire more knowledge and experience in my line of work. Like all businesses, I have invested in building the technical and process aspects for the cinematography services I provide. But I also take a personal interest in perfectly

portraying the vision that my customers have for their company, events, services or products.

Video is the strongest medium to engage customers, build brand loyalty, increase social media reach and tell their story. My projects have ranged from content for social media to large corporate or government events. I work with all my customers to find the best way to tell their story. I bring moments to life and capture the passion of the moment!

Success comes from hard work and dedication. It also comes from a constant search to improve, embrace new technologies and develop partnerships with customers and with your team!





DARREN AVELLINO

IT Support Officer at Credorax

I GRADUATED from MCAST in 2020 with a first class Bachelor of Science (Hons) degree in Computer Systems and Networks. I am currently employed at Credorax as an IT Support Officer.

As a technology enthusiast from a very young age, I was always intrigued by how technology works, and how it may be used in our day-to-day life in order to make certain things more convenient. This bond with technology helped me understand what I wanted to do further on in my life.

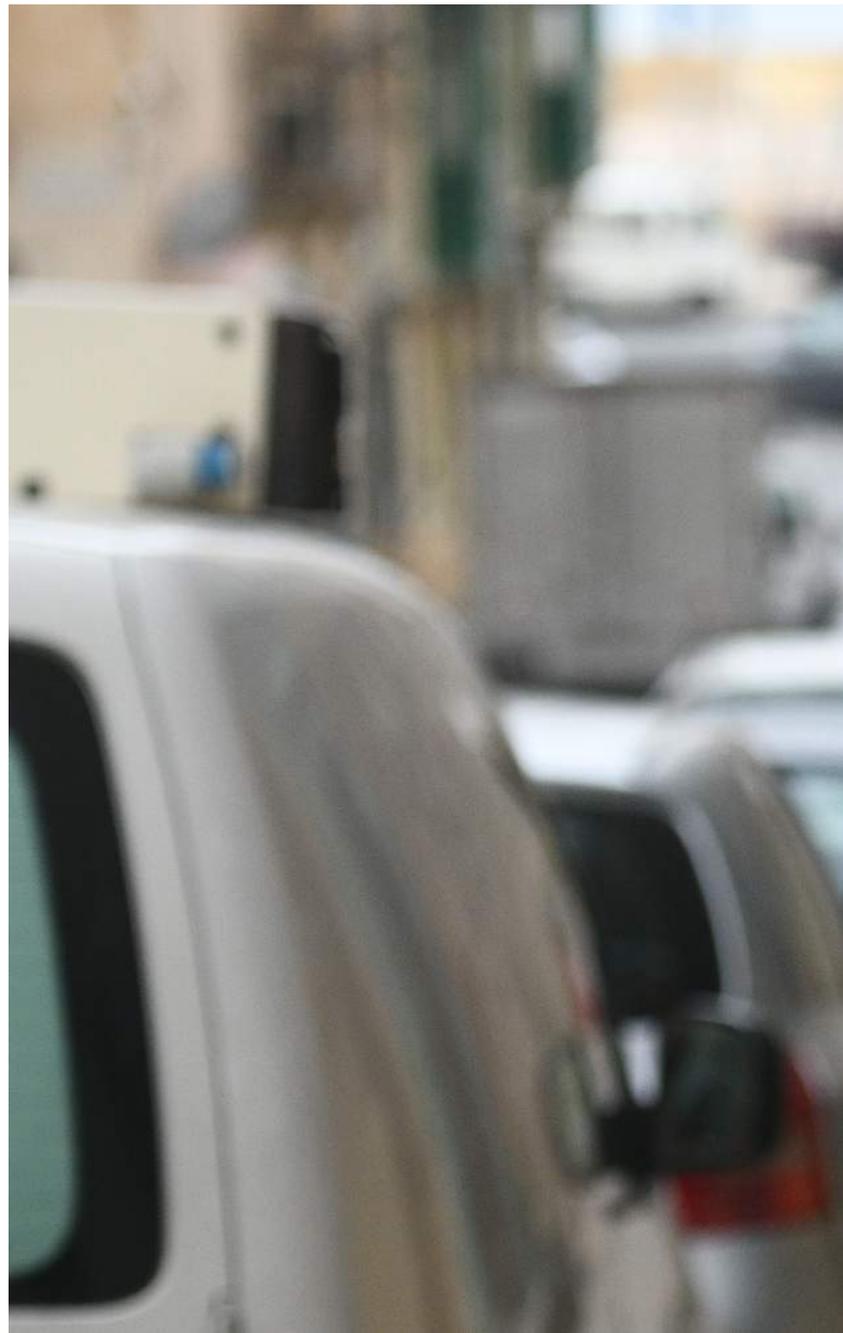
After completing my secondary education I was presented with several opportunities, and choosing one was no small feat. I decided that MCAST would be the right choice for me in order to achieve my goals, and to this day, I still believe that that was the best decision I could have taken.

At MCAST, I was introduced to several new and different technologies. In addition to the theoretical studying, MCAST also provided me with the ability to enrol as an apprentice, which meant that I had the opportunity to work in the IT field whilst also pursuing my studies. With this scheme, MCAST helped me obtain job exposure in the field which I was striving to work in. The combination of learning at MCAST and learning on-the-job was very challenging yet very rewarding.

There were times during my studies when I struggled to grasp certain modules yet, with the help and support received from the

lecturing staff, I managed to overcome the hurdles. This type of help from the lecturers is something that I will appreciate forever.

I have now graduated and have been working for one year. The knowledge



I obtained from MCAST has been very beneficial to me as it helped me to quickly grasp the technologies which are used in the real world.

I would like to thank the lecturing

and administrative staff at the MCAST Institute of Information and Communication Technology for providing me with the help and support I needed to achieve my goals. I will forever cherish my days at MCAST.





IAN BORG

Learning Support Educator



MY journey at MCAST started when I enrolled in the Childcare Learning and Development course at Level 4 and then progressed to the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Inclusive Education at Level 6. I have now graduated as a Learning Support Educator (LSE). I look back at my time at MCAST with great pride, joy and great appreciation for all that I have learnt and achieved.

MCAST provides a very sound education. Lessons are highly interested and address the employment reality outside of MCAST. Throughout the course a lot of importance was placed on hands-on work and experience. I participated in several assignments and projects which helped me form a very solid foundation for my future employment. During my time at MCAST I also carried out work placements in various childcare centres, kindergartens, primary, secondary and tertiary schools all over Malta. A good balance between the theory and hands-on work provided me with the knowledge and skills that I required.

I believe that my personal development at MCAST was important as my academic journey. Teaching and learning are most effective when the right attitudes of both educators and students are present. During my time at the Institute of Community Services I have experienced a very positive attitude

to education and learning. Lecturers do not simply disseminate information. More importantly they pass on their experiences with a positive attitude. The great care and support displayed towards us students and the willingness to listen are attitudes that have led to my success and that of my classmates. My time at MCAST is not marked by just academic success but also by the care and support provided by the lecturers.

I would like to thank MCAST for the excellent five years that I spent there!



RICARDO SCIBERRAS

Software Developer Cloudigo



IT WAS simply a Java calculator that I created during a computer studies lesson in secondary school that made me realise the beauty of coding and the satisfaction of creating new tools by just inputting a few commands.

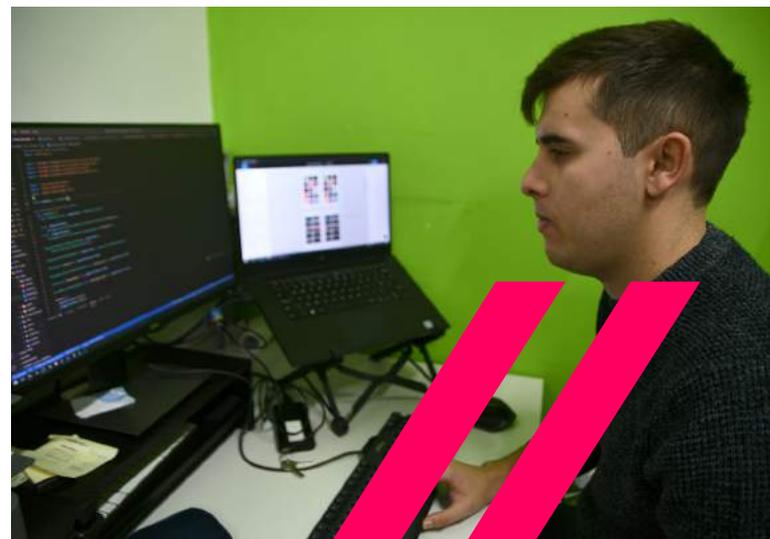
I am lucky that my academic journey led me to a career which gives me the same satisfaction on a daily basis despite all the challenges that I encounter. In 2013, just like any other 16-year-old, I was not quite sure what path to take or what post-secondary school to choose. I gave in to my friends' suggestions and enrolled in one of the leading post-secondary schools on the island. I did not even consider MCAST at the time, a decision which I regret in hindsight.

A year into my studies, I realised that the subjects I was studying lacked hands-on experience, something which I felt was crucial to me. After looking at the various opportunities that MCAST had to offer, I realised that by enrolling in the Extended Diploma in Software Development, I could still attain my principal academic goal, that of graduating and working in the ever growing field of IT.

During my first year I was introduced to the various aspects of IT, which included multimedia design, networking and business. I chose to further my studies in Software Development. Two years into my degree, I started working with a start-up company, Cloudigo, as its first software developer. This was a very exciting yet challenging opportunity which enabled me to utilise the skills I was learning at the College. Problem-solving, creativity and organizational skills were all very important. I gained these skills through the many projects I undertook during my studies and through them. I was able to spearhead campaigns and tackle challenges in my day-to-day work.

One of the first decisions taken by the company was to develop a mobile application. I took on this task with great confidence, even though I had to learn a new programming language and make use of a brand new framework. MCAST had given me the tools and foundations which enabled me to learn and deliver this application successfully. Having no one to turn to for guidance, I had to use all the knowledge I acquired from my degree to solve issues encountered on a daily basis and to face the intensive demands that a start-up company entails.

One of the most memorable experiences at MCAST was when I presented both my second year project and thesis at the IEEE conference in Berlin. The second year project seemed quite a hurdle at the time, however I had an idea and, with a great deal of help from my mentor, I managed to focus my research on utilising surveillance cameras in monitoring road traffic. The research and methodology employed in this project were then furthered in my thesis a year after. With constant support, trust and motivation from my mentor, both my project and thesis were published in the IEEE conference paper.





CHIARA MARIA DEMANUELE

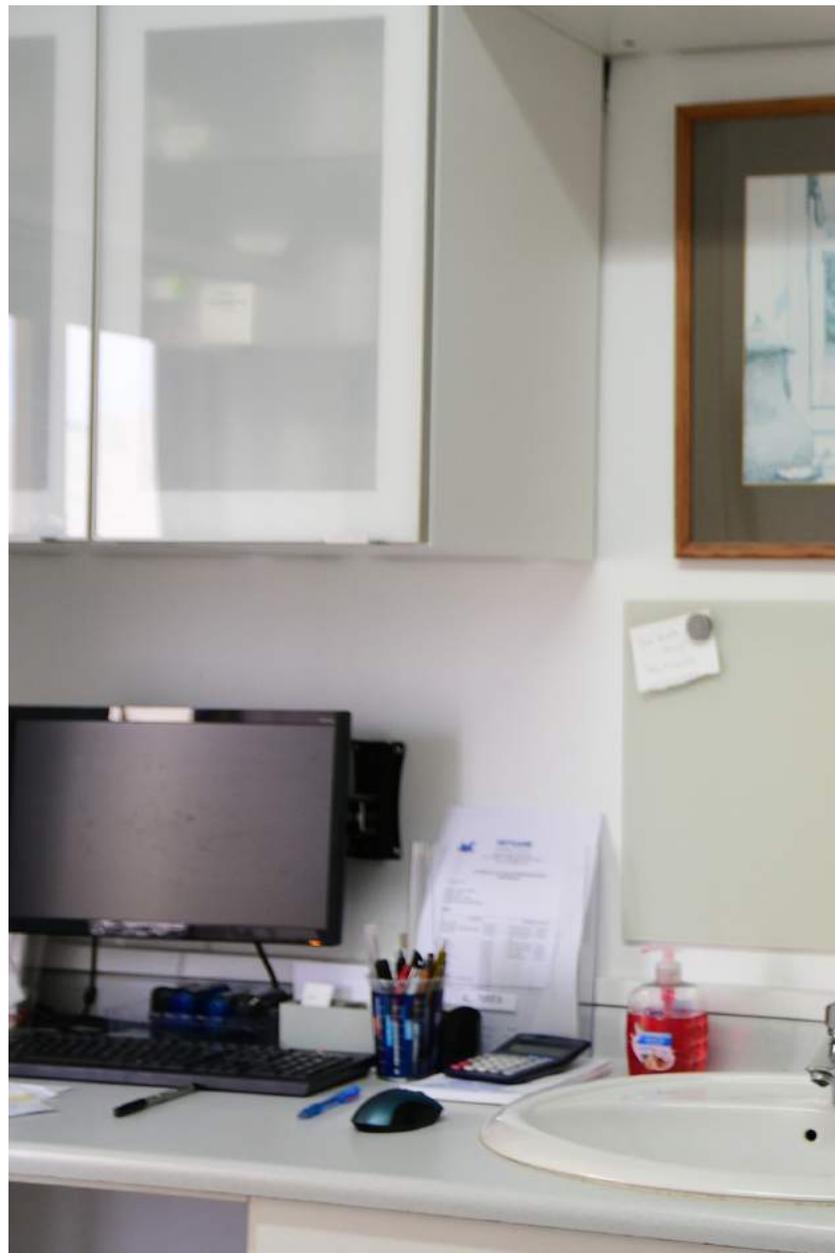
Veterinary Nurse at Vetcare Animal Clinic

I HAVE always loved animals and this passion led me to enrol in the Animal Management course offered by the Institute of Applied Sciences – Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences.

I opted for this course as I was eager to learn the scientific side of the care of animals. At MCAST I studied animal management, including veterinary nursing and assistance both from a theoretical and also a hands-on approach. The course also covered the care of a wide variety of exotic animals. For me this was a very new and exciting experience which provided challenges that highly enriched my skills and competences.

The highlights of my studies at MCAST were the internship opportunities provided by the College through the Erasmus+ programme. I am an avid horse lover and had the chance of participating in an equine practical experience in a foreign country. These internship opportunities helped me to further develop my professional and personal skills.

After graduating I immediately found employment as a full-time veterinary nurse at APH Veterinary Hospital. Since then I moved on and I am presently employed at Vetcare Animal Clinic.





MCAST prepared me very well for my full-time employment especially through the hands-on opportunities which instilled a lot of confidence in me, making it easier for me to adapt and integrate into the veterinary nursing line of work.



RITIENNE ZAMMIT

Fashion Designer



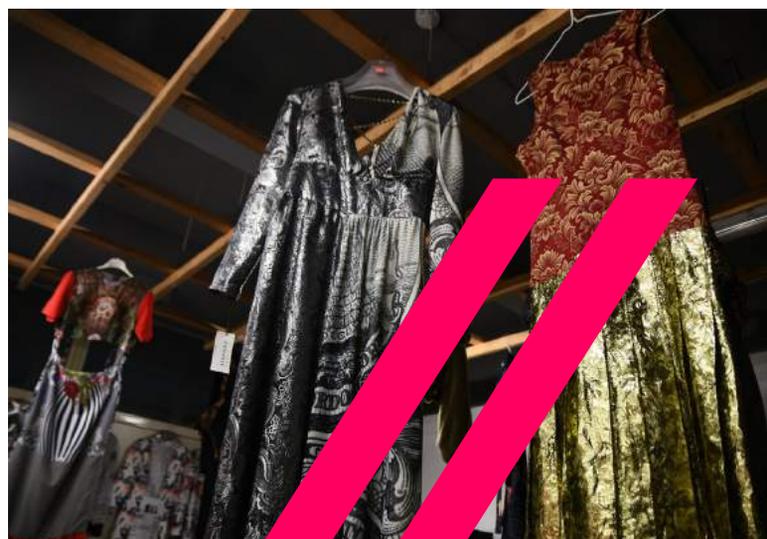
I GRADUATED from the MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts. I obtained my Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in 3D Design and Interiors with a thesis which focused on censorship and changing the mentality of traditionalists. I have been a tenant at the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre (MEC) at the KBIC Corradino since 2018. Through the mentoring and help of this Centre, I have established myself as one of the leading Maltese fashion designers on the island.

Through the MEC I have participated in various trade fairs including the MFCC Malta Trade Fair and Kwalità Malta. I have also been responsible for Ira Losco's looks during her concerts, music videos and appearances.

With each patriotic line of apparel, I paint my appreciation of my heritage and the rich history of the Maltese islands onto the canvases that are my collections. My passion and perception of Maltese tradition, coupled with my accomplished print design, is the perfect concoction for the most extraordinary runway creations.

In 2009-2010 I was awarded The Most Outstanding Student of the Year Award by MCAST. In collaboration with the Malta Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, my audience began to grow and many were aware that I would evolve in my successes. After accepting the New Designer Award in 2013 at the Malta Fashion Awards, I took charge of Malta's fashion scene and began polishing my product. My runway presentations turned heads at Serbia Fashion Week in 2014, 2015 and 2018. I was

even commissioned to create the official Malta Fashion Week Dress in 2017. I strive to continue refining my brand by weaving rich history and theory into high fashion designs. The aim is that the execution of these designs not only portrays the value of the design, but also the passion and integrity that I, as a designer, hold within me.





DANIEL BUHAGIAR

Self-Employed Electronics Engineer



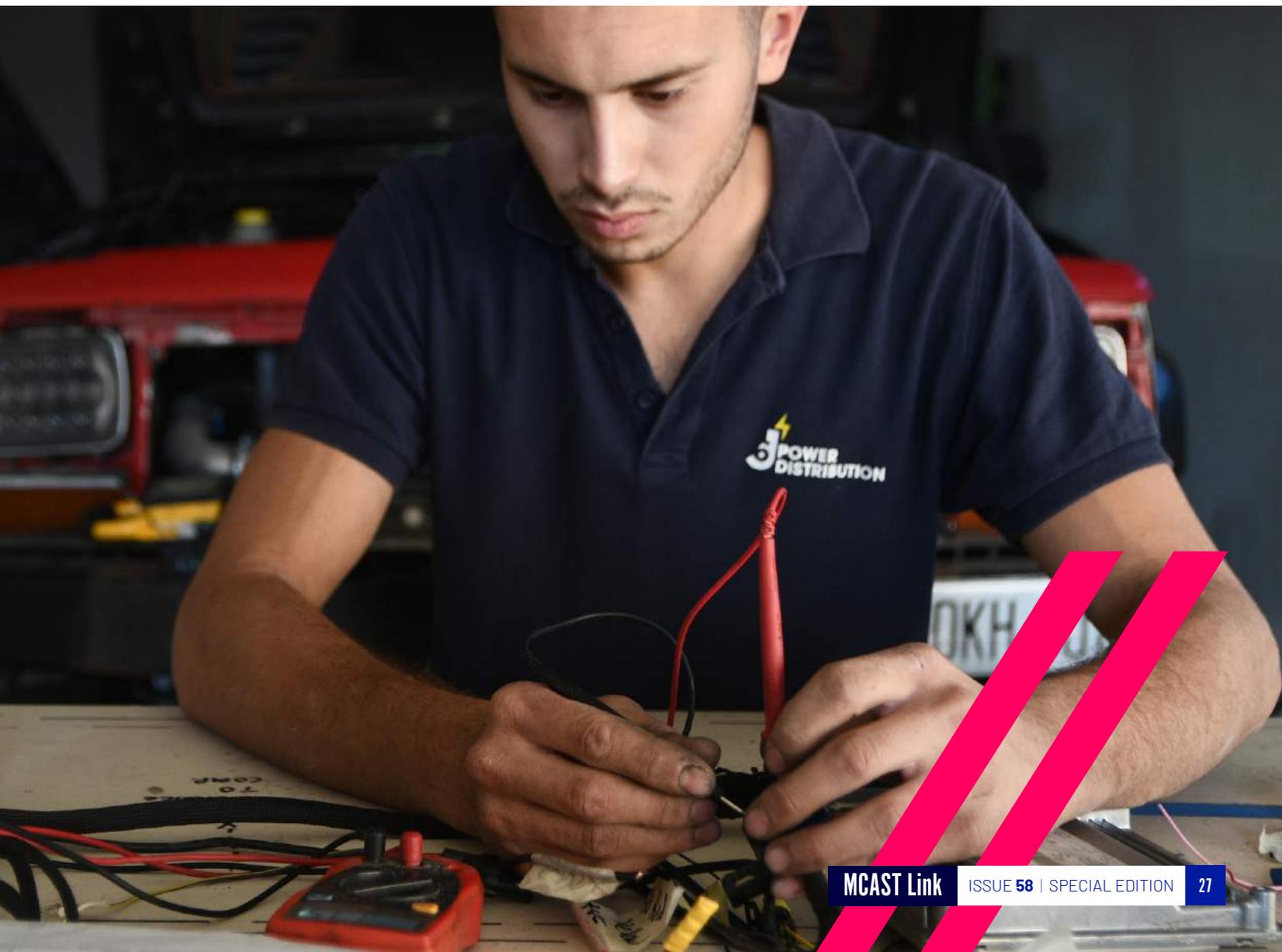
AT A very tender age I used to shadow my grandfather while he worked on several engineering projects. He was employed as a Royal Engineer with the British Services, heading the Land Rover section. His passion and dedication to this work is what attracted me to pursue a career in Electronics Engineering.

While still at Stella Maris College, I decided to choose the subjects that were in line with this career in order to pursue my dream. I was always very determined to join MCAST rather than any other educational establishment in Malta and when the time came I had a look at the yearly Prospectus and immediately decided to follow the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) degree in Electronics Engineering.

My first two years studying at MCAST involved an apprenticeship period. I found this system of alternating school theory days with hands-on work very helpful and this was a great boost to my studies. On-the-job training provided me with a wealth of experience which helps me in my career to this very day. The years I spent studying at MCAST were challenging yet, with determination and a lot of encouragement from my family and MCAST fellow colleagues, I made it.

I was also very lucky to have been chosen for an Erasmus placement which took me to Hull in Germany. Besides gaining loads of experience, the two months I spent away from home helped me in my development and I became more mature.

I have been running my own business as an electrical and electronics engineer since I finished my degree in June 2021. My main focus is fixing electronics in Land Rovers, which I do with great passion as it takes me back to my childhood memories.





MICHAELA PORTELLI

Floral Designer



I HAVE always been intrigued by nature and plants. These passions led me to enrol in the MCAST course in Horticulture. I was at a stage in my life where I needed to embark onto something fruitful and MCAST was the only institution which provided this unique course that I was very interested in.

The course consisted of four different modules – viticulture, floral design, gardening and nursery production, crop production and processing – which included both practical sessions and work experience. The practical hands-on sessions were very important as I gained invaluable practical experience and skills that I now apply in my present career. Apart from the in-house practical sessions we participated in several out-of-class activities which provided us with a better understanding of certain topics. We also had the opportunity to learn new competences using the latest technology. I really appreciated the student feedback

which was continuously taken into consideration by the senior management team and lecturers to further improve our learning experience.

After obtaining the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Horticulture I embarked on a dream of mine which was to start my own business as a floral designer. I am now established in this business and look forward to continue working in this field for many years to come.

MCAST not only provided me with an academic education and hands-on practical experience in horticulture, but also helped me acquire certain soft skills such as business and entrepreneurship skills and other interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which are equally important in my line of business. The College and its supportive staff have guided me and helped me secure and develop my own floral design business successfully.





SHENISE GHIRXI

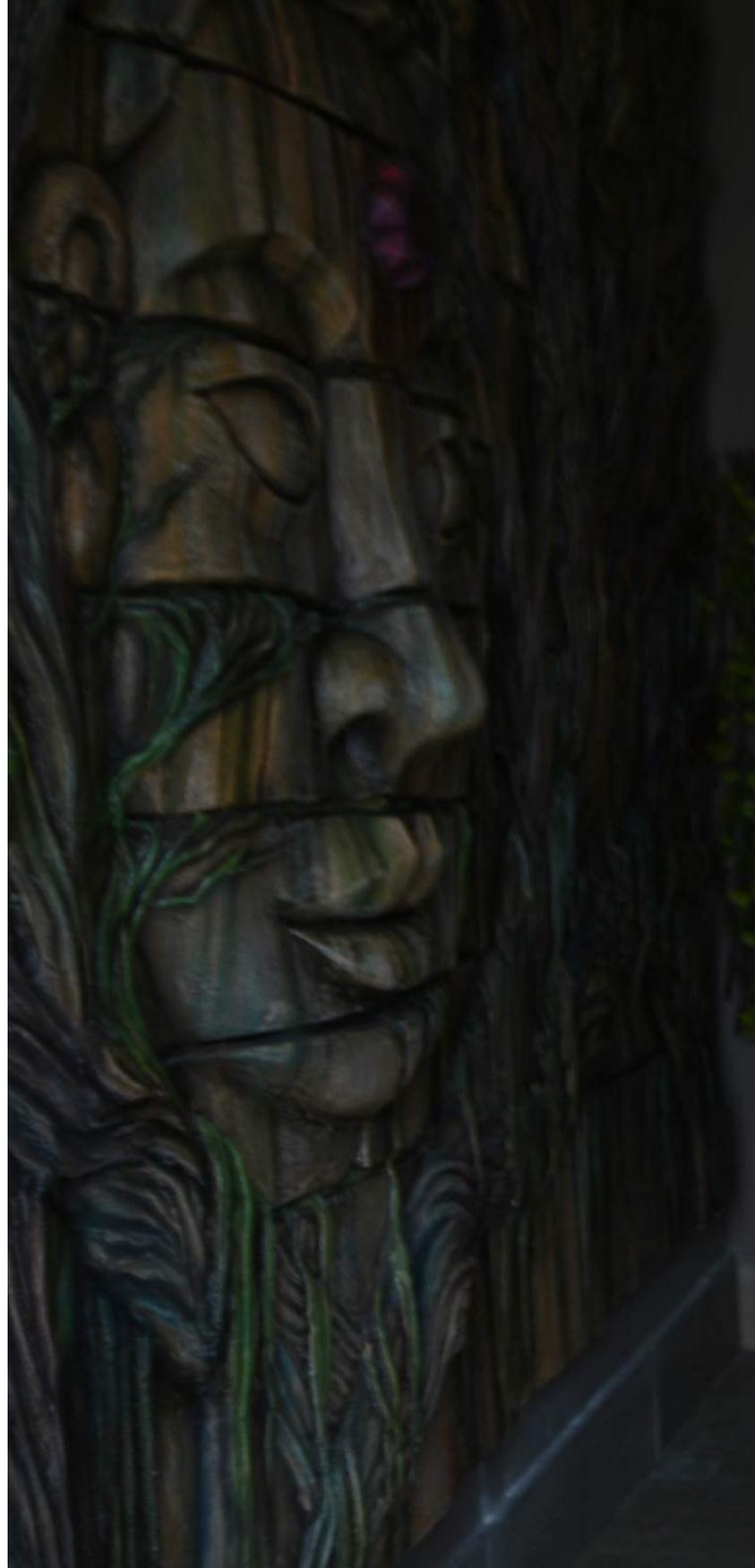
Beauty Therapist

I HAVE always shown a keen interest in anything that was related to beauty and as I grew older I knew that I wanted to work as a beauty therapist. I was interested in MCAST as I knew it offered professional courses in beauty.

I joined MCAST in 2015 and read for the Advanced Diploma in Beauty and Complementary Therapies. MCAST was the best choice I could have made.

During the course we were guided on how to develop and carry out individual treatment plans based on specific requirements of each individual client. Treatments included skin care and make-up services, manicures and pedicures, depilation, nails, eyebrow and eyelash treatments. We also learnt about health and safety practices in the salon as well as business aspects including business plans. I received a lot of support from all my lecturers, both on a professional level and on a personal level.

MCAST provided me with the opportunity to work at both salons and spas during my years as a student. This work experience helped me gain confidence and experience that I needed for my future employment.



I cannot be any happier now as I am a beauty therapist and also proud to say that I am also a salon owner. This experience has taught me that if one



works hard enough for something, it will be achieved. I would like to thank all my lecturers at MCAST who have helped me get to where I am today.



DAVID FARRUGIA

Senior DevOps Engineer at Novibet

EVER SINCE I remember I have always been keen on the technological aspects of everyday life, so it is no wonder that I looked for a career in the biggest technological aspect of the 21st century - computers and IT.

On completing my secondary education way back in 2006, the most attractive place to further my studies was definitely MCAST. Not only did MCAST have a relatively new Gozo Centre, at that time in Xagħra, but it also had the most hands-on, learning-by-doing curriculum available. I spent the next two years of my academic life at the MCAST Gozo Campus reading for a Level 4 Diploma in Software Development, where I got to be around like-minded persons and lecturers who shared a passion for the subjects we studied.

The first year of the diploma was an introduction to the streams of software development and networking. Both of the streams seemed very interesting yet I finally settled on software development. During the second year I learnt what software development really meant and acquired skills which I still use today.

After finishing the Level 4 Diploma, I was encouraged by MCAST staff and family members to further my studies at the

MCAST Paola Main Campus. Being a Gozitan, this was not an easy decision as it meant leaving everything behind. Yet progressing to a Level 5 Diploma proved to be very beneficial. This is where I honed my skills on software development and other ancillary subjects that proved to be invaluable for my profession. Apart from subjects which deeply analyse aspects like databases, algorithms and programming based on Java, C# and PHP, the curriculum consisted of other subjects that instilled a professional approach and attitude in us young adults. After completing my Higher Diploma, I then decided to read for a Bachelor's degree in Software Development. This was a top-up year and added great theoretical aspects to the hands-on practice we had already acquired.

In 2012 I started my career as a Software Developer with Nettarefer. Fast forward a decade and I have held various senior positions in software development, technical operations and engineering within the telecommunications sector and the online gaming industry. Some of these positions were with big players such as Melita, Gamesys Group and Betsson Group. I am currently employed as a Senior DevOps Engineer at Novibet, which is an online gaming operator that has very recently started operations based in Malta.



Nothing of this would have been possible had it not been for the holistic education that MCAST provides to its students. It does take hard work and determination to succeed in industry and the world of employment but where there is a will there is a way.



NICHOLAS BUGELLI

Mechanic at Gordon's Moto dealer

ON COMPLETING my secondary education I ended up at a crossroads, facing the difficult decision of what to do next. I decided to have a look at the MCAST Prospectus for full-time courses and took the decision to embark on an MQF Level 3 Diploma leading to IT.

After the first year, it was evident that the IT field was not the one for me. My inclination towards vehicles, especially their mechanical side, made me change my mind. Before the commencement of the following academic year, I submitted a request to change course. The MCAST administration was very helpful and encouraging. From there on, I read for the Diploma in Automotive Maintenance and Repair. Once I succeeded in obtaining the diploma, I decided to further my studies and read for the Advanced Diploma in Automotive Maintenance and Repair.

During the four years studying at MCAST I learnt the theory and also spent a voluminous amount of time in hands-on experience in the form of apprenticeships. The on-the-job training proved to be very effective and extremely fruitful. This helped me develop many of the skills that an employee must have before his debut into the labour market. Economics, ergonomics, health and safety are some



of the important subjects learned during the apprenticeships. The apprenticeship experience taught me how to apply the theory that I had learnt.

In spite of the COVID-19 situation, MCAST kept providing us students with regular online sessions, and we succeeded in finishing the course as

originally scheduled. I completed the course successfully and now I can say that I am a qualified mechanic.

I will remain forever grateful to MCAST for providing me with the opportunity to study and for providing me with the required skills and the necessary knowledge for employment.





KURT CACHIA

Technical Officer at the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability

I WAS always intrigued by and interested in construction in Malta. This passion led me to MCAST where I read for the Advanced Diploma in Construction Engineering (MQF Level 4).

This diploma comprises both theory and work-based learning. It gives students an in-depth knowledge and experience of the general requirements and specialist areas related to the field of building and construction. Construction, including the planning of buildings, is an important pillar of the Maltese economy and therefore being part of it makes me feel very proud.

During the course and also through my experience I have realised the importance of accessibility in buildings and how important it is that all current and future developments are accessible. My years studying at MCAST were challenging, however with the help of the College administration and the lecturers I completed my diploma successfully.

This course also included work related training and practice and I was lucky to have carried out my work placement at the

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability. During this work placement I learnt about inclusivity in society and how persons with disability can reach their full potential in all aspects of life, enjoying a high-quality of life thanks to equal opportunities.

During my placement I came to realise that there were a lot of different types of disabilities that did not involve wheelchair use. Through this placement I also learnt what struggles and hurdles persons with disabilities encountered on a day-to-day basis.

I am now employed at the CRPD and my role includes the regulation of buildings with regards to accessibility. I go on site with my colleagues to investigate building sites and also take telephone calls and deal directly with architects. I have to admit that it is very rewarding to help persons with different disabilities to have access into public buildings.

I am very grateful to MCAST for the opportunity to study construction and for also providing me with the work placement at the CRPD as it has led me to my current employment.





BENJAMIN GRECH

Operative Helper



I AM Benjamin Grech. I am 29 years old and I have Down syndrome.

From 2008 to 2010, I was a student at MCAST following the Pathway to Independent Living course. Before going to MCAST, I had gone to other schools. First I went to The Old Priory in Mdina, then to St. Benild's in Sliema and to Stella Maris College in Gzira. I had many friends at all my schools and a lot of very nice teachers.

At MCAST, I worked on my Maltese and English language skills, on Maths and Citizenship. I remember making a project on Attard, taking the photos and writing some information. We also had cooking lessons. I learnt how to make a sandwich, tea and coffee, English breakfast as well as ravioli with tomato sauce. There were a lot of other recipes that I learnt to cook.

My classmates and I would make a list of the things that we needed for the cooking lesson, and then, together with our teachers, we would go shopping. We learnt about money and change. I also enjoyed going to the MCAST canteen to buy food, snacks or a drink.

Every day, after my lessons at MCAST were over, I took the bus home. I had learnt to take the bus when I was still in Form 5. I take the bus everywhere.

Every year we had a live-in with MCAST to put our skills into practice. We went to the Mellieħa Holiday Complex. We made plans for each day. Everybody had something to do but we also had a lot of activities. It was always great fun.

In my first year at MCAST, I worked at the Library scanning books and inputting information. Mr. Laurence Zerafa, ex Library and Learning Resource Centre Manager, said this about me:

“Benjamin learned the assigned tasks in a short while and could do this work on his own with minimal supervision. The few occasions when he encountered a problem situation he asked for assistance. He was dependable and punctual in attending to his duties every Friday. He rarely complained about his assigned tasks, and one could see he has a jovial personality.”

In my second year, I worked at Farsons and I have continued to work at Farsons since that time. I work at HR, doing photocopying, scanning and shredding, as well as stocking up the refreshment areas. I love working at Farsons. Just recently I received a Special Recognition Award from Farsons. I was so excited and happy. Antoinette Caruana, Company Secretary and Group HR Manager, said:

“At Farsons, Ben is known to many employees across the group. He brings much more to the Group than we had ever thought possible. He helps the team to be more of a team, not only because of the attention we give him but also because of the attention he gives to us. He is central to this team.”

I have learnt to be an independent young man with the help of my parents, all the schools I attended, the support of Equal Partners Foundation and my wonderful teachers. Thank you to MCAST that helped me find the job with Farsons which I love.



KELLY ANN BUTTIGIEG

Centre Coordinator, Magic Steps Childcare Centre

I HAVE always envisioned myself becoming an early years' educator. The feeling of teaching young children new knowledge and watching them grow and develop always intrigued and interested me. I have always wanted to be a person who helps other individuals achieve their goals.

I looked at the MCAST courses offered at the MCAST Gozo Campus and I instantly knew that this was the perfect institution for me. I started my journey by obtaining my Diploma at Level 3 and finished by obtaining my Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years at Level 5. My time at the MCAST Gozo Campus was not an easy journey, but where there is a will there is a way and I am proud to say that I was successful.

Something that really impressed me about MCAST was the support and guidance I received from the lecturing staff. I have nothing but gratitude towards the educators at the MCAST Gozo Campus as they really go out of their way to help students. Without their ongoing support and encouragement, achieving the Level 5 qualification would not have been possible! Additionally, the educators are highly experienced and very professional.

The completion of the Higher Diploma led me to my career as a Child Care Centre

Coordinator at Magic Steps Child Care Centre. During my time at MCAST Gozo Campus, I gained a better understanding of how children grow and develop. Besides, I also improved my personal qualities and attitudes that are vital in the early years' sector. MCAST taught me leadership skills that are very useful in my current managerial position.

Another benefit of this course was that it provided me with hands-on learning. Through my placement practice in various childcare centres and kindergarten classes, I gained a better understanding of the job. These hands-on experiences helped me grow as a student and as an educator since they provide exposure to different situations and experiences.

Working as a Child Care Centre Coordinator would not have been possible without successfully completing my Higher Diploma at MCAST. Starting my journey at the MCAST Gozo Campus was a very important step in my life as I gained the necessary skills and abilities needed for my employment. I am very grateful that I chose this educational institution.

I highly recommend this course to any individual who wishes to pursue a career in the early years' sector.





JONATHAN PISANI

Restorer and Owner at Pisani Restoration Limited



I WAS always very passionate about stonework and this is what led me to follow various courses in this area at MCAST. Throughout my years of study I successfully completed the Stone Masons Part 1 and Part 2 programmes, the Dry Stone Wall Restoration course, the Wood Conservation and Restoration Awareness course and the Advanced Diploma in Masonry Heritage Skills. I also hold the Mason's Licence.

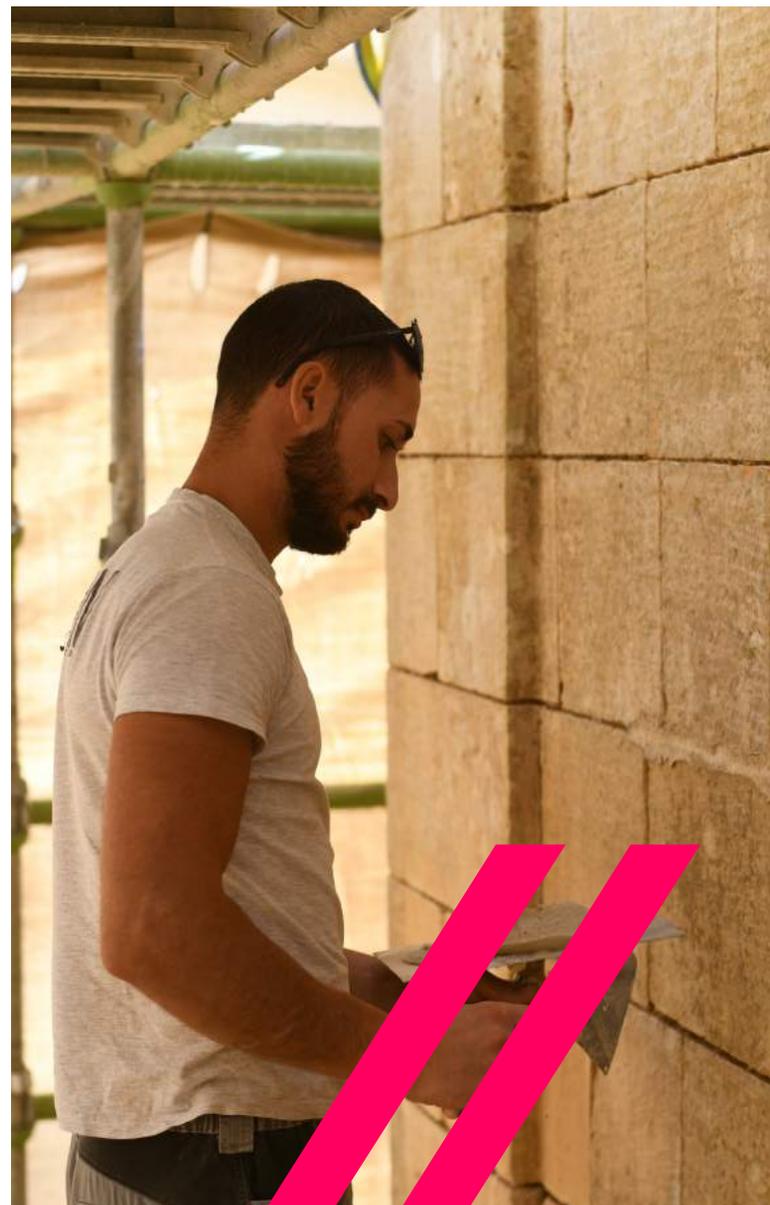
In 2017 I met Mr Ray Vella at the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre (MEC) at KBIC in Corradino. I am proud to say that with the help and support of Mr Vella and of the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre, I have established my own company. I am the sole shareholder, director and ultimate beneficiary owner of the locally registered company called Pisani Restoration Limited.

The company's trading activities incorporate restoration works on stone and wood. The projects entrusted to the company include the restoration of residential facades, interiors and exteriors of palaces, chapels and niches among others. These require cladding and moulding of soft and hard stones. These processes are carried out in a garage specifically set up for such purposes.

The company also specialises in wood restoration. The projects include restoration of balconies, outdoor and indoor apertures and beams. The company also provides alteration services, ranging from changing disintegrating beams to extending existing doors and windows, and removing of walls

in order to introduce beams. The company plans to start manufacturing soft stone and hard stone products which complement the restoration services provided.

I plan to continue to sustain and increase the restoration works as well as diversify into the construction industry through the incorporation of another company.





MARGHERITA CAMILLERI

Hairdresser and Owner at
Luscious Locks Hair Salon

FOR AS long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a hairdresser. I had always admired the end results of dedicated hairdressers and the way they listened attentively to their clients' demands.

So it did not come as a surprise to my parents when, after successfully obtaining my 'O' Levels, I opted for the Hairdressing course offered at the MCAST Gozo Campus. Before embarking on the course I had worked at a hairdressing salon during the summer months and so I was very sure that this was the career for me.

The hairdressing course at MCAST delved into many areas and was much more comprehensive than I had ever expected. It opened my eyes to good practices and to health and safety procedures which I had never thought about. It explained the working practices that I had been observing in the actual salon without understanding the reasons behind them. It also gave me the skills to learn on my own and further pursue my interests in this industry.

During the course, we had weekly monitored placements which also helped me gain confidence in what I was learning. However, the best practice I got was when on Fridays we used to open the College salon for the public.



Following this course at the MCAST Gozo Campus, I continued to work on a part-time basis in the same salon where I had been on placement. I was also given the opportunity to provide hairdressing services at two different elderly homes in Malta. I also went to Italy to pursue further courses.

In 2020 I was unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. My unemployment led me to take a bold decision and open my own hairdressing salon once the restrictions were lifted by the health authorities. Today, I am the owner of Luscious Locks, with a small but regular clientele, and am looking forward to a better future doing what I like doing most.





REBECCA SALIBA

Scientific Officer at the Bluefin Tuna Regulatory Unit (Fisheries Control)

MY PASSION is the sea. Since I was a child, I have always been fascinated by it. Then, when I started scuba diving, I felt an even stronger attraction to the great underwater world.

I knew I wanted to study marine biology or anything related to the sea. I came across the MCAST Prospectus and was struck by the Fish Management course offered at Level 4. Even though I had the entry requirements to follow a course at the University of Malta, I opted for MCAST. I then furthered my studies and read for a three-year degree course in Fish Management.

The blend of learning experiences at MCAST is unique. Students are provided with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Both courses included a lot of hands-on experience. Most units were graded upon practical work such as lab work, work in the fish room and various site visits along the course. I had the opportunity to carry out several work placements and apprenticeships. MCAST lecturers make sure that each student's individual strengths

are nurtured in order to complete the course successfully and be well prepared for future employment. I also felt a very strong sense of belonging within the College community.

The Fish Management degree course offered me the opportunity to carry out a work placement at the Aquaculture Centre in Marsaxlokk where I got the chance to mature as a student.

I am proud to be employed as a Scientific Officer on a full-time basis at the Aquaculture Centre in the Bluefin Tuna Regulatory Unit (Fisheries Control).

I was also approached by the Institute to deliver a unit at Level 3 (Diploma in Fish Husbandry) to students as a part-time lecturer. This was challenging at first, however my training and previous experience greatly aided me to deliver the unit effectively.

I recommend this course to anyone who is looking for an exciting learning adventure and fulfilling employment within the aquatics sector.





MARIE GAUCI

Relationship Officer at BNF Bank



I VIVIDLY remember the day when I decided to join the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Financial Services at the MCAST Gozo Campus. The course description in the MCAST Prospectus immediately convinced me that this would be the right choice for me. My first impression of MCAST was very positive and I was delighted by the way I was welcomed by the lecturers from the very first day.

The course was very well structured, with study units appropriately distributed over two years. As part of my programme of studies I started a two-year apprenticeship with BNF Bank. This work-based learning experience was key to my eventual career since it gave me the opportunity to further enhance my studies by practising the theory learnt at the College in a real financial services industry setting. The apprenticeship effectively proved to be a stepping stone to what is now my full-time employment.

Today, five years down the line, I am still working at the same commercial bank that I joined as an apprentice when I was an MCAST student.

The hands-on approach adopted by MCAST together with the work-based learning experiences that are an integral part of its courses, represent a major strength of this College in comparison with other institutions. MCAST is the ideal option for students who wish to pursue a

training programme that bridges theory with practice and that blends classroom learning with on-the-job training. Choosing MCAST was definitely the best choice I could have made for my future.

My time at MCAST was a truly enriching experience through which I developed personally and professionally. I cherish the time I spent studying at MCAST and I will be forever thankful and grateful to its staff for helping me shape my career.

My journey at MCAST was a marvellous one and I encourage all students and workers who wish to pursue a career or are seeking to enhance their abilities by opening up to new horizons, to consider joining MCAST, as this educational institution offers a sound learning platform and the necessary tools for employment.



KYLE MIFSUD

Chief Officer

I GRADUATED from MCAST in 2021. I am a Chief Officer on board a Maltese registered vessel.

I remember the day when I was accepted by MCAST's Maritime Institute after I enrolled in the Officer of the Watch (OOW) course back in 2013. MCAST gave me the first opportunity to make my childhood dream come true. It was the Maritime Institute that helped me become more passionate about the sea but more importantly, it helped me form the best relationships with other students who shared the same passion with me.

MCAST gave me the opportunity to experience sea time for the very first time. This prepared me for the real world. For the first time I experienced life at sea, and from then onwards my passion for the sea became even stronger. MCAST not only prepared me academically, but was the stepping stone in my career that helped me discover skills I never knew I had.

During my experiences at sea, whereby I worked on board different types of sea-trading worldwide vessels including Ro-Ro vessels, High-Speed crafts, Tankers, Passenger vessels, Pilot boats and Conveyance boats, I learnt the meaning of teamwork and how important it is to put your studies into practice.

MCAST gave me the necessary opportunities to experience life on different vessels which together provided me the opportunity to meet people from all around the world. I must say, this was not easy at first. Being away from my family for more than



six months was not an easy task, however it helped me become more independent. Sea time is the best life lesson I experienced, and still experience every day.

Being on board gives me the chance to meet new people. The beauty of meeting new people exposes me to new knowledge. The more people I meet, the more I increase my knowledge on a variety of subjects, including subjects that are unrelated to the maritime field. This helps me understand better why it is important to be open to different perspectives. After all, it is not the stripes and the uniform that make you a professional, but



the way you approach people.

After obtaining the OOW certificate, my next step was to enrol for the Chief Officer (Unlimited) course. This course boosted my confidence even more as I obtained further knowledge about safety, ships, responsibility and confidence.

To this very day, in my professional career I still use skills and knowledge that I learned at MCAST. My ambition now is to enrol in the Master (Unlimited) Course since I aspire to work as a Captain and, in future, as a Harbour Pilot.



SARA ACKHDR

Statistician at the National Statistics Office (NSO)

I STARTED studying at MCAST straight after secondary school in 2015. I enrolled in the Diploma in Business and gradually progressed from one course to another until I obtained a degree in Financial Services Management with a first class rating.

I chose this study path as I have a passion for numbers. During the five-year study period at MCAST, I had the opportunity to participate in two Erasmus+ programmes. I carried out one programme in The Netherlands and another one in Spain. In addition to these unique and fulfilling experiences, I also had the chance to participate in a work placement with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA), where I still work on a part-time basis. The apprenticeship placement programme helped me gain more knowledge and was critical in my progression to my full-time employment, providing me with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skill sets that I gained during my years studying at MCAST.

I am honoured to say that the years spent studying at the MCAST Institute of Business Management and Commerce were not easy, nonetheless they were very satisfying, inspirational and rewarding. The years at MCAST have led me to fulfil my career aspirations.

I am currently employed as a statistician at the National Statistics Office (NSO). As an MCAST graduate I think that the vocational aspect was crucial in my career development. With huge confidence I recommend studying at MCAST in order to pursue a career with an excellent vocational skill set.





ZACK RITCHIE

Graphic Designer

MY CREATIVE journey began by doodling on napkins while waiting for my food at restaurants. I have always aspired and had a flair for working in the creative industry.

The MCAST Institute for the Creative Arts was a pillar in the formation of my career in design. The College taught me how to nurture and cultivate my ideas and transform them into projects.

I developed my creative confidence through the various course assignments which allowed me to push myself out of my comfort zone. I remember approaching assignments with a win-win attitude. I would try to satisfy the brief while trying to make the project more exciting. The benefit of this approach was that I left MCAST with a varied portfolio of works that I was proud of. Later on, presenting and pitching the task never seemed overwhelming as the projects were carried out with great enthusiasm and flair.

I started my design journey in fine arts. But, as I progressed in my studies, I discovered that I enjoyed graphic design and knew that this was the area in which I wanted to develop further. Graphic design was my passion. Through graphic design I create visual content to communicate effective messages.

Today, my full-time work focuses on developing brands and coming up with creative ideas and design visuals to capture unique experiences through commercial illustrations. I have enjoyed collaborating and working with brands that include Cellmark, Iniala, Campari, Martini Royale, Martini Bellini, Red Bull, Gagliardi and Delicata Winemakers.

Besides my commercial work, I also enjoy dedicating time to explore curiosities and transform them into personal projects. One of my ongoing personal projects aims to promote Maltese culture through satirical cartoons. The project had started as a public solo exhibition entitled “Malta’s Got Some Character”.







JOANN SPITERI

Services Officer at the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability



I AM Gozitan but I live and study in Malta due to accessibility reasons. It is easier to connect with the deaf community here in Malta and also to make use of the sign language interpreting courses.

I have been studying at MCAST for the last six years. I studied different courses and subjects. I initially started my studies at Foundation Level and gradually progressed and obtained my Diploma in Hairdressing. After my first diploma I felt the need to further my studies and seek new opportunities, so I read for the Diploma in Business. Later on I also read for the Advanced Diploma in Accounting.

The past year has been particularly busy but also exciting since it also included an apprenticeship work placement which has also led me to my current employment. I can proudly say that my MCAST story is a successful one which has led me to this career.

As you might appreciate, my life has not always been plain sailing as I faced

numerous challenges particularly because I am a deaf person. Nevertheless, at MCAST I have always found the required support to overcome these challenges and each little success led to my final destination.

I will forever treasure my student years at MCAST because I value what I have learnt, the happy memories, my new friends and the lecturers who encouraged me, accepted me and respected me unconditionally.

May I suggest not to ever give up on your dreams and to keep on striving to achieve your goals no matter how hard the challenges you face are. You are never too old to dream again, try again and win again!



KARL FARRUGIA

Credit Operations Officer at APS Bank





I STILL remember the day I was awarded the Matriculation Certificate, and the excitement that I was able to apply for a course at the University of Malta. I had high expectations for that new experience, and when the much awaited day arrived and lectures started, I soon realised that that journey was not for me. I remember feeling that my passions and goals were destroyed and just after two months I dropped out. I immediately started looking for different jobs as I did not want to continue my studies due to my bad experience.

An MCAST advertisement promoting degree courses caught my eye. I looked into the Prospectus and discovered that the College offered a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in Business Enterprise. I enrolled on this course and started my three-year journey at MCAST. At the College I met very dedicated lecturers who went out of their way and also participated in hands-on work experiences. MCAST helped me find a part-time job related to my studies.

After three years of hard work and enriching experiences, I graduated with first class honours. I specialised in Digital Economics. Shortly after receiving the results, I found a job in the banking and finance sector, as a credit operations officer with APS Bank. To this day, I still use all the different techniques learnt at MCAST in my day-to-day activities. This enables me to perform better at the place of work.

I highly recommend MCAST as the institution for pursuing your studies and developing professionally.



LEANNE MAGRO

Fundraising and Projects Administrator

GROWING UP, I have always aspired to pursue a career in which I will have the opportunity to help others. Once I completed my compulsory education, I decided to further my studies and, as part of my post-secondary education, I chose MCAST to continue developing my academic knowledge and skills.

In July 2021 I finished reading for a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Health and Social Care Management (Level 6) after completing my Advanced Diploma for Pharmacy Technicians in 2019 (Level 4). The Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Health and Social Care Management course within the Institute of Community Services equipped me with both theory and practice on various topics like good governance, social policy, project management, finance, entrepreneurship and quality assurance in Health and Social Care, among many others. In addition, I also had the opportunity to attend at least three block placements within the sector with hands-on practice which helped me implement what I learned in class while further developing my professional skills and networking. As part of the course I conducted hours of voluntary work within a local non-governmental organisation that helped me to develop my intra personal and interpersonal skills. Moreover, the

administration, especially the Director, the Deputy Director and the lecturers were of constant support and guided me to attend other training courses which were offered by other independent organisations and were financed by Erasmus+. I would like to thank them all for the countless opportunities they provided me with and the support they gave me to learn and progress.

During my time at MCAST, the College instilled in me values of commitment, perseverance, time management and, above all, a positive can-do attitude. MCAST also shaped my personality, knowledge, work abilities and way of thinking and supported me to develop the social skills and competences which with hindsight are equally important to fulfill the challenging demands of the industry.

Through my own determination, and with the assistance of all the loved ones who supported me, and of the MCAST Institute for Community Services and the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences, I have managed to complete my advanced diploma and my degree successfully and move into employment. MCAST has surely contributed to my personal and professional development. I have become a huge advocate for vocational education and with



genuineness I recommend studying at MCAST to all my friends and family.

MCAST supported me to grow personally, academically and professionally, and to expand my horizons. It helped me achieve a great start in my career and find an employment which I really love.



ANCY KURIAN

Nurse at St Thomas Hospital



I AM a graduated nurse from India, with ten years working experience in various levels of nursing. My dream has always been to become a registered nurse within the European Union. Even though I am a graduated nurse, it is very difficult to become a registered nurse in European countries due to many reasons including language barriers, cultural backgrounds and differences in the course syllabuses.

As with all medical professions, the most important task is to understand the patients which we need to serve. So I discovered the way to my dream was through MCAST by studying the Undergraduate Certificate in Nursing Studies (Bridging Programme). The fact that English is spoken in Malta was the main reason that I chose Malta.

My journey with MCAST was a successful one. Even though I was studying during

the Covid-19 pandemic, I still successfully completed my course thanks to the dedication of the highly talented lecturers and the use of online classes. Moreover, the lecturers also provided me the practical sessions to boost my self-esteem, knowledge and technical skills. As a foreign student, this institution gave me the chance to learn the importance of health care settings in Malta as well as the cultural and social values of the Maltese people. The MCAST International Office also provided me with support and advice to adjust to my studies at the College as well as to life in Malta.

I am now one of the graduated nurses in the European Union. I am truly grateful to MCAST for this opportunity to make my dream come true as a nurse within the European community. I am now employed at St Thomas Hospital and look forward to continue serving my patients and their families with my knowledge and skills.



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