



**MCAST**

**MQF/EQF Level 7**

**AS7-09-22**

**Master of Science in Advanced Clinical Practice**

**Course Specification**

## **Course Description**

The Master of Science in Advanced Clinical Practice is intended for those qualified nurses who want to improve their skills across the four pillars of advanced clinical practice. The programme will equip prospective candidates with the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours (values and attitudes) to work at an advanced clinical level, exercise autonomy and decision-making in the context of complexity, uncertainty and varying levels of risk, and hold accountability for the decisions that they are required to make.

Prospective students for the Advanced Clinical Practice course are envisaged to come from a range of clinical nursing areas and are working in a variety of specialties, settings or sectors. They will have the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to extend their scope of practice to better meet the needs of the patients under their care. Developing advanced clinical practice skills is considered an important component of contemporary workforce planning.

## **Programme Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the programme the students are able to;

- 1. Develop a systematic and critical knowledge and understanding of own specialist field of practice.*
- 2. Use logic and reasoning to identify solutions that can contribute to evidence at the forefront of practice.*
- 3. Develop a critical awareness of current problems and gain new insights at the forefront of own area of practice that will enable further personal development planning in areas related to personal and professional practice.*
- 4. Inform, enhance and develop own competency within own field of practice.*
- 5. Demonstrate advanced scholarship in own subject area through the planning and execution of MQF level 7 enquiry.*

## **Entry Requirements**

A first degree (MQF Level 6) in Nursing and in possession of a valid registration.

Candidates who are not in possession of a valid warrant, will be able to start off the programme, but will not be in a position to complete the full Master programme until they achieve such.

## Key Information

Awarding Body - MCAST

Accreditation Status - Accredited via MCAST's Self Accreditation Process (MCAST holds Self-Accrediting Status as per 1st schedule of Legal Notice 296/2012)

Type of Programme: Qualification

MQF Level	Examples of Qualifications	'Qualification' Minimum Credits Required	'Award' Credits Required
Level 8	Doctoral Degree Third Cycle Bologna Process	NA	NA
Level 7	Masters Second Cycle Bologna Process	90-120	Less than 30
	Post-Graduate Diploma	60	
	Post-Graduate Certificate	30	
Level 6	Bachelor <sup>23</sup> /Bachelor (Hons.) <sup>24</sup> First Cycle Bologna Process	180-240	Less than 180
Level 5	Short Cycle Qualification	120	Less than 60
	Undergraduate Higher Diploma	90	
	Undergraduate Diploma	60	
	Undergraduate Certificate	30	
	VET Level 5 Programme <sup>25</sup>	60-120	
Level 4	Pre-Tertiary Certificate	30	Less than 120
	VET Level 4 Programme <sup>26</sup>	120	
	MATSEC Certificate	NA	
Level 3	VET Level 3 Programme <sup>27</sup>	60	Less than 60
	General and Subject Certificate	NA	
Level 2	VET Level 2 Programme <sup>28</sup>	60	Less than 60
	General and Subject Certificate	NA	
Level 1	VET Level 1 Programme <sup>29</sup>	40	Less than 40
	General and Subject Certificate	NA	
Introductory Level A	Preparatory Programme	30	Less than 30
Introductory Level B	Pre-entry Basic Skills Course	30	Less than 30

**Table 1: Minimum number of credits for 'Qualifications' and parameters for 'Awards'**

Fig.1: p56, Ministry for Education and Employment & National Commission for Further and Higher Education Malta (2016). *Referencing Report, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. NCFHE.

Total number of Hours: 2250

Mode of attendance: Part Time

Duration: 2 Years

Target audience for MCAST full-time courses is 16 to 65+

The official language of instruction at MCAST is English. All notes and textbooks are in English (except for language courses which will be in the respective language being instructed). International candidates will be requested to meet English language certification requirements for access to the course.

This course will be offered at

MCAST has four campuses as follows:

**MCAST Main Campus**

Triq Kordin, Paola, Malta

All courses except for the Institute for the Creative Arts, Centre of Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences are offered here.

**Institute for the Creative Arts**

Mosta Campus

Misraħ Ġhonoq Targa Gap,

Mosta

**Institute of Applied Sciences,  
Centre of Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences,  
Luqa Road, Qormi**

**Gozo Campus**

J.F. De Chambray Street

MCAST, Ġhajnsielem

Gozo

**Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The programmes offered are vocational in nature and entail both theoretical lectures delivered in classes as well as practical elements that are delivered in laboratories, workshops, salons, simulators as the module requirements dictate.

Each module or unit entails a number of in person and/or online contact learning hours that are delivered by the lecturer or tutor directly (See also section 'Total Learning Hours').

Access to all resources is provided to all registered students. These include study resources in paper or electronic format through the Library and Resource Centre as well as tools, software, equipment and machinery that are provided by the respective institutes depending on the requirements of the course or module.

Students may however be required to provide consumable material for use during practical sessions and projects unless these are explicitly provided by the College.

All Units of study are assessed throughout the academic year through continuous assessment using a variety of assessment tools. Coursework tasks are exclusively based on the Learning Outcomes and Grading Criteria as prescribed in the course specification. The Learning Outcomes and Grading Criteria are communicated to the Student via the coursework documentation.

The method of assessment shall reflect the Level, credit points (ECTS) and the schedule of time-tabled/non-timetabled hours of learning of each study unit. A variety of assessment instruments, not solely Time Constrained Assignments/Exams, are used to gather and interpret evidence of Student competence toward pre-established grading criteria that are aligned to the learning outcomes of each unit of the programme of study.

Grading criteria are assessed through a number of tasks, each task being assigned a number of marks. The number of grading criteria is included in the respective Programme Specification.

The distribution of marks and assessment mode depends on the nature and objectives of the unit in question.

Coursework shall normally be completed during the semester in which the Unit is delivered.

Time-constrained assignments may be held between 8 am and 8 pm during the delivery period of a Unit, or at the end of the semester in which the Unit is completed. The dates are notified and published on the Institute notice boards or through other means of communication.

Certain circumstances (such as but not limited to the Covid 19 pandemic) may lead Institutes and Centres to hold teaching and assessment remotely (online) as per MCAST QA Policy and Standard for Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Doc 020) available via link <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/college-documents/>

The Programme Regulations referenced below apply. (DOC016 available at: link <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/college-documents/>)

### Total Learning Hours

The total learning hours required for each unit or module are determined as follows:

Credits (ECTS)	Indicative contact hours	Total Student workload (hrs)	Self-Learning and Assessment Hours
1	5 - 10 hrs	25 hrs	20-15 hrs*
2	10 - 20 hrs	50 hrs	40-30 hrs*
3	15 - 30 hrs	75 hrs	60-45 hrs*
4	20 - 40 hrs	100 hrs	80-60 hrs*
6	30 - 60 hrs	150 Hrs	120-90 hrs*
9	45 - 90 hrs	225 hrs	180-135 hrs*
12	60 - 120 hrs	300 hrs	240-180 hrs*

\* The 'Self-Learning and Assessment Hours' amount to the difference between the contact hours and total student workload.

### Grading system

All MCAST programmes adopt a learner centred approach through the focus on Learning Outcomes. The assessment of MCAST programmes is criterion-referenced and thus assessors are required to assess learners' evidence against a pre-determined set of Learning Outcomes and assessment criteria.

For a student to be deemed to have successfully passed a unit, a minimum of 50% (grade D) must be achieved. In case of part time programmes, the student must achieve a minimum of 45% to successfully pass the unit.

All units are individually graded as follows:

A\* (90-100)

A (80-89)

B (70-79)

C (60-69)

D (50-59)

Unsatisfactory work is graded as 'U'.

Work-based learning units are graded on a Pass/Fail basis only.

Detailed information regarding the grading system may be found in the following document: DOC 016 available at: link <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/college-documents/>

### Intake Dates

- MCAST opens calls for application once a year between July and August of each year for prospective applicants residing in MALTA.
- Applications to full-time courses from international students not residing in MALTA are accepted between April and Mid-August.
- For exact dates re calls for applications please follow this link <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/online-applications-2/>

### Course Fees

MCAST course are free for Maltese and EU candidates. International candidates coming from outside the EU need to pay fees for the respective course. Course fees are set on a per-level and course duration basis. For access to course fee structure and payment methods please visit <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/fee-payments-for-non-eu-candidates/>.

### Method of Application

Applications to full-time courses are received online via the College Management Information System. Candidates can log in using Maltese Electronic ID (eID) or European eIDAS (electronic identification and trust services) to access the system directly and create an account as the identity is verified electronically via these secure services.

Non-EU candidates need to request account creation through an online form by providing proof of identification and basic data. Once the identity is verified and the account is

created the candidate may proceed with the online application according to the same instructions applicable to all other candidates.

Non-EU candidates require a study visa in order to travel to Malta and joint the course applied for. For further information re study-visa please access <https://www.identitymalta.com/unit/central-visa-unit/>.

For access to instructions on how to apply online please visit <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/online-applications-2/>

**Academic qualification leading to a Regulated Profession**

Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine  
St. Luke's Hospital,  
Ex-OPD (Level 1), St. Luke's Square,  
Gwardamangia PTA 1010

**Contact details for requesting further information about future learning opportunities:**

**MCAST Career Guidance**

Tel: 2398 7135/6

Email: [career.guidance@mcast.edu.mt](mailto:career.guidance@mcast.edu.mt)



## Current Approved Programme Structure

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECTS	Year	Semester
ASCLP-705-2201	Research Methods 1	5	1	A
ASCLP-705-2202	Contemporary Global Health Issues	5	1	A
ASCLP-705-2203	Clinical Leadership and Management	5	1	A
ASCLP-705-2204	Quality outcomes in Healthcare	5	1	B
ASCLP-705-2205	Clinical Decision Making	5	1	B
ASCLP-705-2206	Research Methods 2	5	1	B
ASCLP-710-2207	Education in Clinical Practice	10	2	A
ASCLP-705-2208	Advancing Practice	5	2	A
Elective Unit*		5	2	B
ASCLP-710-2214	Placement	10	2	B
ASDIS-730-2201	Dissertation	30	3	YEAR
<b>Total ECTS</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>/</b>

\*Learners are to choose 1 of the below Elective Units for Year 2:

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECTS	Year
ASCLP-705-2209	Ethics in Healthcare Practice	5	2
ASCLP-705-2210	Sociology of Health and Illness	5	2
ASCLP-705-2211	Diversity in Health Care	5	2
ASCLP-705-2212	Information and Communication Technology in Healthcare	5	2
ASCLP-705-2213	Complementary and Alternative Therapies	5	2

*N.B. The semester/year assigned to the modules may change according to the exigencies of the Institute or due to unforeseen circumstances. Students will be informed beforehand of any necessary changes.*

## ASCLP-705-2201: Research Methods

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7

Credits: 5

Delivery Mode: Face to Face

Total Learning Hours: 125

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### Unit Description

This unit shall provide learners core insights to conceptualise and critically appraise research methods. Being that this unit is extensive in nature, learners will be guided through directed and independent study to investigate the following areas. This will commence by directing learners to understand the application of research within the health practice field whereby learners appreciate the philosophical underpinnings of research methodologies and methods. This will be followed by gathering evidence to compile a literature review. The learners will end of this module by proposing a method to collect the data. A main component of this stage will be that learners improve their knowledge regarding research methods.

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Recognise the application of research and evidence-based practice in the healthcare practice.*
2. *Consolidate and synthesize literature to summarise the main body of works addressing the research area.*
3. *Analyse critically the philosophical underpinnings of research paradigms.*
4. *Illustrate a research method best suitable to answer the research question.*

## **ASCLP-705-2202: Contemporary Global Health Issues**

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7

Credits: 5

Delivery Mode: Face to Face

Total Learning Hours: 125

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### **Unit Description**

This module will aim to develop learners' knowledge of contemporary global health issues. The module will focus on various concepts related to diversity, public health, and epidemiology in the global context, as well as human rights, and socio-economic perspectives. Learners will have the opportunity to explore global health policies and frameworks as well as current topics such as inequalities, genomics, climate change, social injustice, and the impact of disease on populations from a local and international perspective. In addition, learners will develop important skills, such as self-awareness, critical reflection, decision-making, policy writing, leadership and change management and advocacy.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- 1. Analyse factors influencing health and well-being.*
- 2. Discuss critically contemporary global health topics.*
- 3. Evaluate the impact that contemporary global health can have on clinical practice.*
- 4. Introduce new strategies to contribute to global health awareness.*

## **ASCLP-705-2203: Clinical Leadership and Health Management**

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7  
Credits: 5  
Delivery Mode: Face to Face  
Total Learning Hours: 125

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### **Unit Description**

Contemporary health care is delivered in a dynamic and transformative environment within which leading and managing are essential skills for all health care professionals. The development of management and leadership skills and knowledge can influence better outcomes for patients/clients/service users and create more positive working environments. With this in mind, this Unit is aimed at health professionals who are either actively involved, or hold an interest in, leading and transforming health care services.

The Unit will review key leadership, management and organisational theories and their application within healthcare settings. However, leading and managing are essentially practical disciplines, so whilst this Unit addresses the theory of health services leadership and management, it is also committed to encouraging learners to apply this knowledge and to develop practical leadership and managerial skills within their own work environment. This will enable clinical leaders to develop the necessary skills to set and maintain high standards of patient-focused care, to lead by example and to inspire, motivate and empower their teams.

The Unit utilises a blended learning approach, being delivered by a blend of face to face and online sessions. There is an emphasis on self-directed, autonomous learning whereby learners apply Unit content and learning outcomes to their own practice which is evidenced through Unit assessments.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- 1. Review critically healthcare leadership and management theories, approaches and practices for effectively leading and managing others.*

2. *Identify personal leadership characteristics alongside strategies for development of clinical leadership abilities, in order to lead and manage individuals and groups within a healthcare context.*
3. *Explore the principles of organisational and change management theories, their relationship to leading people and services and improving patient-care across healthcare systems and environments.*
4. *Apply leadership and management theories by initiating change within healthcare organisations.*

## ASCLP-705-2204: Quality Outcomes in Healthcare

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7

Credits: 5

Delivery Mode: Face to Face

Total Learning Hours: 125

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### Unit Description

One of the central aims of contemporary health care is that of ending preventable harm, and improving patient outcomes and experiences in healthcare. This unit addresses the quality of care provided by health care professionals in their practice by raising awareness and commitment to give patient safety its rightful place at the forefront of the local healthcare system.

This unit will provide learners tools to improve their expertise, commitment, coordination, and strategies to boost safety and embrace quality in healthcare. Thus, enabling a higher level of care, where, patients experience reliable, high quality, and safe care. This theoretical knowledge motivates them into becoming leaders in identifying areas for further development and designing interventions for change. Changes that have the possibility of decreasing preventable patient harm, improving patient experience and generating a sustainable positive working environment.

Through a blended learning approach, delivery will be via both face to face and online sessions. The application of the unit content and learning outcomes to the learners own clinical practice is essential through self-directed and autonomous learning and is reflected in the unit's assessment.

### Learning Outcomes

**On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- 1. Enhance the quality of care delivery by outlining the important key elements to improve clinical performance.*
- 2. Identify problematic areas in care quality whilst recognising their extension into patient safety in clinical care.*
- 3. Evaluate strategies to assure and improve the quality of patient care.*
- 4. Explore incident investigation and disclosure through the articulation of ethical and legal implications related to quality care and patient safety.*

## ASCLP-705-2205: Clinical Decision Making

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7

Credits: 5

Delivery Mode: Face to Face

Total Learning Hours: 125

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### Unit Description

Clinical decision making is a core competency that is critical to enable healthcare professionals to make sound clinical judgments in response to complex patient problems. This unit sets out to support healthcare professionals in gaining a better understanding of the complexities within the decision-making process and the benefits that shared decision-making can have on organisational and patient outcomes.

The unit will focus on the key aspects of clinical reasoning in making decisions and judgments that promote patient safety and person-centred care. Theoretical perspectives to decision making will be critically discussed and synthesised to provide learners with practical, professional, and ethical approaches to clinical decision-making. Emphasis will be made on the significance of evidence-based practice, research and policies that support clinical decision making. The impact of the influencing factors on the individual and their families is also emphasised throughout. Moreover, healthcare professionals face a number of challenges when engaging in clinical decisions, due to the complexity and uncertainty in which these decisions are made. It is imperative that healthcare professionals are aware of these challenges and the biases that may be involved in the decision-making process. Evaluating clinical decisions and appraising outcomes will help learners to develop their ability to apply critical thinking that underpins clinical decision-making.

### Learning Outcomes

**On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- 1. Identify the key concepts in clinical decision making that promote safe and effective practice within healthcare settings.*
- 2. Examine the factors influencing clinical decision making in healthcare settings.*
- 3. Assess the impact of theoretical approaches to clinical decision making.*
- 4. Determine the impact of shared decision making on patient outcomes.*

## ASCLP-705-2206: Research Methods 2

Unit level (MQF/EQF): 7  
Credits: 5  
Delivery Mode: Face to Face  
Total Learning Hours: 125

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### Unit Description

This unit allows learners to build upon the unit 'Research Methods 1 (Healthcare)' where learners further their knowledge of the research process. The module will commence by addressing the sample population which includes the necessary techniques to gather their data. This will then be followed by developing an in-depth understanding of adhering to ethical principles to ensure safe governance within research practices. Central to any research is ensuring the robustness of the selected method, thus learners will focus on ensuring rigour through validity, reliability and/or trustworthiness. This unit will conclude by learners developing an understanding of interpretation of data.

At the end of this unit, the learners should be able to consolidate their knowledge in addressing aspects of a research proposal which they can employ when submitting the approvals to pursue their dissertation for this course.

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Identify the best sampling technique to collate data based on the selected research method.*
2. *Design research that adheres to ethical principles and sound governance.*
3. *Evaluate rigour and integrity in research by addressing validity and reliability and/or trustworthiness of research method.*
4. *Evaluate and interpret data to be able to address the focus of the study.*

For further information, please contact us on [information@mcast.edu.mt](mailto:information@mcast.edu.mt)