



MCAST

**MG2i**  
MCAST Gateway to Industry



# **MCAST**

## **Professional Research Doctorate (DRes) on the Competitive Behaviour of Small Organizations**

MQF/EQF Level 8 Doctoral Programme  
MFHEA Licence Number: 2021-007  
Category: Higher Education Institution  
Accredited at MQF Level 8

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## Professional Research Doctorate

The MCAST Professional Research Doctorate (DRes) on the Competitive Behaviour of Small Organizations is a research-driven EQF/MQF Level 8 doctoral qualification that takes on the remit to understand and build applied and usable theories of small organization competitive behaviour within small island states such as Malta. This is done using the Grounded Theory method of enquiry and adopting qualitative and mixed methods techniques.

The building of applied, substantive models of small organizational actions and behaviours, as these organizations seek to utilize resources more effectively and to remain sustainable within their environments, allows for a vital mapping of best practices and behavioural theories that can then be applied to other small entities.



### Benefit from the GET QUALIFIED

Tax rebate scheme for DRes candidates commencing up to end 2023. Pending possible extensions to this scheme.





Full licence to use  
**MAXQDA** Qualitative  
Data Analysis software

[www.maxqda.com](http://www.maxqda.com)



Have a look at the full  
**MCAST DRes regulations**

## Potential Research Themes

Small organizations include micro entities with 0-9 full-time staff, and small entities with 10 to 49 full-time staff. They also include both business organizations and non-profit and societal entities.

There are very many research themes that are possible to take up, with some present examples including business innovation, female entrepreneurship, quality assurance practices, accounting behaviours, motivation within healthcare, mindfulness practices, and the circular economy.

## Grounded Theory Method

There are two complimentary reasons for identifying a single research method that will condition the very research taking place in this specific programme. Firstly, grounded theory is ideally suited for building useful, substantive theories that explain how small organizations function, and that allow researchers and practitioners to discover 'best practices' in the decision-making and collaborative behaviours of these small organizations. Secondly, grounded theory is already a key method of enquiry within use at MCAST, supported by the MCAST Grounded Theory Research Hub and a strong team of doctoral experts.

## Guided to build expertise in Grounded Theory (GT) and in MAXQDA

- You will join an ever-growing group of MCAST Grounded Theory researchers
- You will learn how to get the most out of our MAXQDA qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis software
- You will be carefully guided into building a strong expertise into the Grounded Theory research methodology



MCAST Grounded Theory  
Research Hub,  
**View extensive research**  
in this area of study.





View **MCAST Annual Qualitative Research Conference**



Read into our **MCAST Journal of Applied Research & Practice**

You will be invited to:

- Contribute, and to gain important insights from the annual **MCAST Qualitative Research Conference**, and will be guided to present and to publish internationally
- Apply your research to some of over 50,000 small entities in Malta, often assisted through our partners; the **Chamber of SME's** and **Richmond Foundation**
- **Publish your evolving research** in the peer-reviewed MCAST Journal of Applied Research & Practice and become part of a dynamic research community

## Programme Design & Implementation Timeline

Candidates shall complete the following deliverables that very much run in sequence, over an expected 5-year part-time period:

- A flexible course in Research Methods delivered over the first year, that skills the candidate in Grounded Theory and in MAXQDA, as well as in the generic expectations of quality research. Candidates will also pilot their early research work at this stage.
- A sequence of three publications of increasing academic rigour, generally submitted in the second, third and fourth year sequentially, demonstrating the candidate's build-up towards doctoral academic standing.
- A full research endeavour at PhD level, examined at the end of the final year through submission of dissertation manuscript and viva, with annual evaluations to establish progress and any issues of concern.





The fee for the DRes consists of annually paid fees that include all costs and bench fees. Candidates are normally expected to complete the DRes over 5 years on part-time basis, but may extend their studies to a maximum of 8 years.

For financial support, candidates are encouraged to look into Government scholarship schemes such as the Tertiary Education Scholarship Scheme (TESS) and the Get Qualified tax rebate scheme.

## Fee Structure

Year	Annual Fee
Year 1	€3500
Year 2	€3500
Year 3	€4000
Year 4	€4000
Year 5	€5000
Year 6	€5000
Year 7	€5500
Year 8	€5500

Note 1: The normally expected duration of the programme is at 5 years.  
 Note 2: Fees may be revised in subsequent annual intakes.

## The Significance of the Small Entity

In 2021, registered units within the statistical business register amounted to 133,156 (NSO, 2022). Most of the business units (97.4 per cent) employed 0-9 persons (micro). The population of small (10-49) and medium (50-249) businesses accounted for 2,766 (2.1 per cent) and 549 (0.4 per cent) units respectively.

Small & medium sized entities (SMEs) in the business economy sector were the main drivers of growth in Malta. In 2016 the value added of the business economy sector in Malta totalled €5.5 billion, up from €3.2 billion in 2010 (Central Bank of Malta, 2019). Micro enterprises accounted for 34.5% of the total value added of the business economy sector, as against 25.3% for small firms, 19.3% for medium-sized firms and 20.9% for large shifting firms. Micro firms comprise a third of all employment in the business economy sector, while small and medium enterprises amount to nearly a quarter each.



## At the Core of our Doctoral Team



**Dr Ing Alex Rizzo**

Doctorate in Business Administration  
Grounded Theory Researcher  
Specializing in Mixed Methods  
DRes Programme Coordinator



**Dr Rose Falzon**

Doctorate in Education  
Doctorate in Gestalt Psychotherapy  
Grounded Theory Researcher  
Specializing in Narrative,  
Case Study and Thematic Methods



**Dr Ronald Aquilina**

Doctorate in Business Administration  
Grounded Theory Researcher  
Specializing in Qualitative and  
Participant Observation Data



**Dr Jean-Pierre Brincat**

Doctor of Philosophy  
Quantitative Researcher Specializing in  
Multivariate Analytic Techniques



**Dr Peter Packer**

Doctor of Philosophy  
Grounded Theory Practitioner  
Specializing in Qualitative Data



## Some of our Doctoral Students



### **Ms Carmelina Frendo**

I am researching the alignment of the Circular Economy Business Model with the business strategies in small and micro enterprises operating in Malta



### **Mr Gerard Said Pullicino**

My research aims at understanding the programme selection behaviour of vocational students and how this interacts with the resourcing needs of small businesses in Malta



### **Ms Nadia Cauchi**

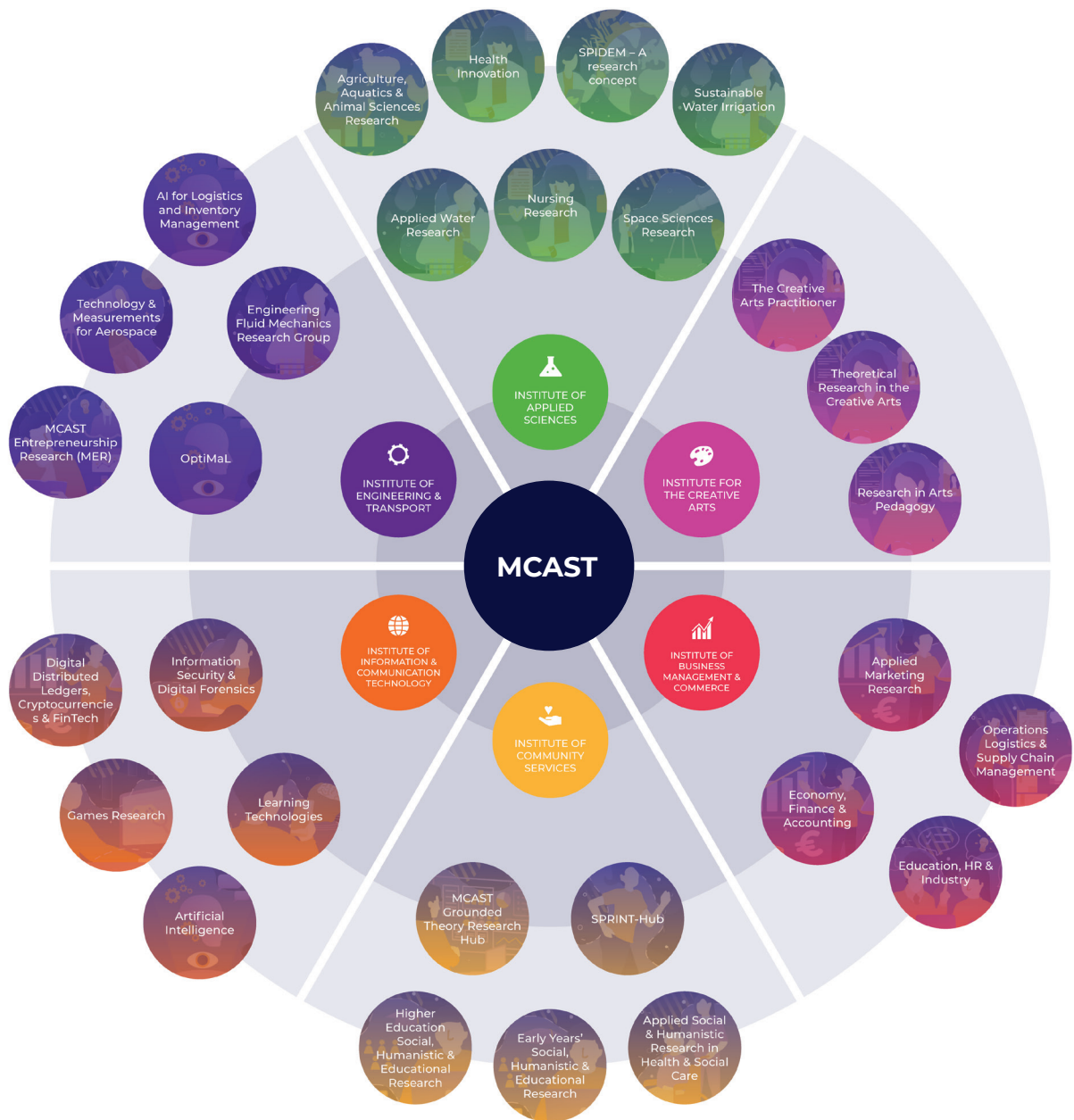
My research interest is to evaluate the applicability and effectiveness of mindfulness practices within small local beauty salons and spas in Malta



### **Mr Edwin Zammit**

My research interest is in the innovative behaviours and practices of small higher education organizations in Malta

# MCAST Research Thematic Areas



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