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| Document Title | MCAST Students' Grievance Policy and Procedures | | | Page 1 of 4 |
| Document Number | 035 | Document Revision | B | Date Issued |
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Continuous Improvement

Procedures are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be followed, implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice, it needs to be updated! Contact your Document Controller on Ext 7121 **today** !

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) is an inclusive, community College which **seeks to promote and respect the principles of diversity, inclusion and respect for the dignity of all its members**. This policy informs the parties concerned of their roles and obligations and, where appropriate, their rights under this policy. This document defines the Students' Grievance Policy and Procedure which all MCAST students and academic staff are encouraged to follow in case they feel that they are being treated unfairly.

MCAST expects all students and academic staff to work in an environment in which they feel comfortable. MCAST considers the following acts of a very serious nature:

- a. All kinds of bullying.
- b. Victimization.
- c. Harassment.
- d. Unfair discrimination based on gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, race and disability.
- e. Aggression, including physical and psychological.

2. GRIEVANCES

2.1 Informal procedure

Some grievances may result from misunderstandings, while some others are genuine cases of unfair treatment or misconduct.

Before MCAST students resort to the formal Students' Grievance Procedure as laid out in Clause 2.2 below, they must first seek to resolve matters informally. In many cases, a fair dialogue between parties may lead to an amicable solution, without the need to go any further in settling issues. MCAST acknowledges the fact that some students may wish to resolve their grievance informally, thus achieving a fair solution without the need of going for the formal procedure.

In case a student feels dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal handling of the grievance procedure, then s/he is free to make use of the formal procedure as regulated below.

All grievances shall be dealt with in the strictest confidence, and they should be reported to the Director of Information and Student Support Services. The reporting framework is included in Clause 2.2.

If the complaint raised by the individual/group is valid and in line with the guidelines offered in this procedure, then the formal procedure in Clause 2.2 shall be invoked to take appropriate action.

2.2 Formal Grievance Procedure

2.2.1 The student should describe in detail his/her grievance with any supporting evidence (including, if possible, dates) within five working days of the grievance occurring. The Director of Information and Student Support Services shall acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt.

2.2.2 In the absence of the Director of Information and Student Support Services, the Deputy Principal shall be responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

Grievances raised against the Unit of Information and Support Services, shall be addressed by the Deputy Principal.

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3. FORMAL HEARING

3.1 Procedure

The following procedure shall be followed for formal hearings:

- a. The Director of Information and Student Support Services shall acknowledge receipt of students' grievances within 5 working days.
- b. The Director of Information and Student Support Services shall communicate with the Institute Director where the alleged grievance has occurred.
- c. The Institute Director shall reply to the Director of Information and Student Support Services with details of the case within 5 working days.
- d. A formal hearing will be arranged by the Director of Information and Student Support Services between all parties within ten working days from the response of the Institute Director's communication.

In cases where the Director of the information and Student Support Services feels that the student's return to the Institute may further jeopardize the student's situation, the Director of Information and Student Support Services is entitled to take the necessary remedial action as an interim step prior to the completion of the full procedures listed in 'a' to 'd' above.

At each stage of the formal grievance procedure, students are entitled to be accompanied by a person of their own choice. It is the duty of the student to arrange for his/her companion/representative to attend the meeting. The student using the facility of a companion/representative is obliged to inform the person chairing the grievance meeting/s of the name of any accompanying person five days in advance of the hearing. The accompanying person may be required to present an Identity Card.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities

- a. The secretary to the Board shall keep written records of the hearing. The Director of Information and Student Services will be the Chairman of the Board. The two other persons serving on the Board shall be appointed by the Deputy Principal, normally from among the Institute Directors or their Deputies.
- b. Only extenuating circumstances shall be considered for a reschedule of a hearing session. The Chairperson may decide to deal with the grievance in the unjustified absence of the complainant.
- c. Prior to the start of the first formal grievance hearing, the Chairman shall invite the student for a preliminary meeting to clarify the basis of her/his grievance. The Chairman shall also ask the student to provide within five working days all documents and / or a list of witnesses required to prove one's grievance.

4. APPEALS

Grounds for appeal would normally fall into two key areas:

- A. The process and procedures followed as part of the original meeting were incorrect
- B. The decision reached was incorrect and new evidence can be brought forward in substantiation

Students may appeal in writing to the Deputy Principal against the decision of the grievance

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hearing within five consecutive working days.

The Appeals Board for Student Grievances will be chaired by the Principal or his delegate.

The two other Board members shall be appointed by the Principal.

Student's responsibility regarding provision of data

All students who make use of this Grievance Policy and Procedure are advised that MCAST shall take disciplinary procedures against those who present false evidence and / or make false declarations throughout any stage of this procedure.