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GENERAL INFORMATION				
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1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE

- 1.1 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.**
- 1.2 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 students are encouraged to follow in case they feel that they are being treated unfairly, discriminated upon, and experienced any other occurrence of non-academic misconduct.
- 1.3 The College expects all students and academic staff to work in an environment in which they feel safe. The College MCAST considers the following acts of a very serious nature:
- All kinds of bullying
 - Victimization
 - Harassment; physical, verbal or non-verbal
 - Unfair discrimination based on gender, religion or belief, political belief, marital or civil status, sexual orientation, age, race and disability.
 - Aggression, including physical and psychological

This above list may not be an exhaustive list and should not be considered as such.

- 1.4 This policy is communicated to students via the Student Handbook and is also uploaded on the College website.
- 1.5 **All grievances whether following an informal or formal procedure shall be dealt within the strictest confidence by all concerned.**

2. GRIEVANCES

2.1 Informal procedure

- 2.1.1 Some grievances may result from misunderstandings, while some others are genuine cases of unfair treatment or misconduct.
- 2.1.2 Before MCAST students resort to the formal students' grievance procedure as laid out in clause 2.2 below, they may first seek to resolve matters informally themselves or with the help of a trusted official.

In many cases, a mediatory dialogue between parties may lead to an amicable solution in settling issues, without the need to go any further. The trusted official/s shall meet with the complainant/s and listen carefully, supportively and non-judgementally to the account provided.

- 2.1.3 Consequent to the above meetings, students may wish to resolve their grievance informally, thus achieving a fair solution without the need of going for the formal procedure. The trusted official/s involved in the mediatory dialogue/s, are to encourage those concerned to seek counselling assistance from a referral to Student Support Services if this is considered to be appropriate.

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2.1.4 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.

2.2 Formal Grievance Procedure

2.2.1 The students who allegedly experience such grievances as listed above (paragraph 1.3) are encouraged to inform any MCAST official of their trust.

2.2.2 The official entrusted with this information will seek to obtain consent from the alleged victim in order to report this incident to MCAST higher authorities. If the student gives consent, the official will communicate the information to either his next in line who will in turn inform the Principal & CEO, or the Principal & CEO directly. If the official communicates this information to his next in line, the latter needs to inform the Principal & CEO.

2.2.3 If the student does not give consent to the official, the latter needs to ask for guidance from the Director Student Support Services.

2.2.4 The Principal & CEO upon being informed may ask for a written report from the officials concerned.

3. FORMAL HEARING

3.1 Procedure

3.1.1 The following procedure shall be followed for formal hearings:

- a. Based on the information the Principal & CEO obtains and following the necessary consultations with the parties involved, the Principal & CEO will determine the most appropriate way forward to conduct a formal procedure. Particular considerations need to be taken to inform the guardians/ parents if the student is under-age.
- b. The Principal & CEO may decide to appoint a board so as to proceed to arrange a formal hearing.

3.1.2 In cases where the Principal & CEO and/or board establish that the student's return to the Institute may further jeopardize the student's situation, the former is entitled to take the necessary remedial action as an interim step prior to the completion of the full procedures listed 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/s involved in the procedure hearings to arrange for the companion/representative to attend the meeting with them. If the student/s is/are under-age, the Principal and/or board need to inform the guardians/parents. The student using the facility of a companion/representative is obliged to inform the Board of the name of any accompanying person 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.



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- b. Only extenuating circumstances shall be considered for a reschedule of a hearing session.
- c. Prior to the start of the first formal grievance hearing, the Principal & CEO or an official representing the Principal & CEO may invite the student/s for a preliminary meeting to clarify the basis of her/his grievance and the consequent procedures.
- d. After the board hearings, the board is required to issue their conclusions, rationale to their conclusions and recommendations within 10 days of completion of the board hearings.
- e. Further action, including possible disciplinary action, may be determined by the Principal as per relevant MCAST procedures.
- f. The Principal & CEO may also discuss with the Director of Student Support Services any follow up action to support the student/s therapeutically.

4. APPEALS

4.1. 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 Principal & CEO against the decision of the grievance hearing within ten consecutive working days.

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

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

5. STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING PROVISION OF DATA

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