



MCAST

ANNUAL REPORT

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2020



MCAST

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2020-2023



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Prof Joachim James Calleja



Message from the

Hon Dr JUSTYNE CARUANA

Minister for Education

The disruption caused by the pandemic has strengthened my resolve and that of Government to work harder and move faster to normality. With an entire education sector inoculated, we can look at resuming business in a safer physical proximity environment. As I have been assigned the education portfolio late in 2020, I must acknowledge and thank my colleague Dr Owen Bonnici for his work at this College. We both have vocational and professional education and training at heart. This sector of education has developed rapidly and has had many successful milestones over these last few years.

The Annual Report 2020 is one of these positive attestations. The College has responded in a timely and effective manner to the unexpected challenges imposed by COVID-19. The successful closure of the academic year 2019-2020 and the reopening of the new academic year bear witness to all staff members of the College's hard work. Switching to remote learning was at first a perplexing task, but the positive results shown in this report illustrate that our workforce possesses the skills and the competences necessary to rise to the occasion and deliver the desired outputs.

Education and health have been at the forefront during the pandemic. Children and young people had to switch to uncharted new modes of learning. Teachers and lecturing staff had to abandon their physical classrooms and lecture rooms and from their homes deliver their lessons in a regular and systematic manner. We all recognise that this has been a herculean effort. Education (together with aviation) is perhaps one of the major sectors that has been disrupted so aggressively by the pandemic. Physical proximity in education goes beyond formal teaching and learning. Education also means a higher level of socialisation, interaction and enhancement of our quality of life. Looking at empty schools and educational institutions is heart breaking. However, as this report reveals, MCAST has moved on during this heavy distraction and provided students with their entitlement.

It is now time to reconstruct and reshape the future of education and training. As we move into the post COVID-19 period, we will need to address the added value and some pitfalls of remote learning and working. As education went into remote learning, many teachers and parents, particularly of young children and students with special needs, noted a loss in effectiveness. Disengagement has also been an issue with several young people. And therefore, while we move into the so-called 'new' normal, we ought to bear in mind that education is primarily the physical meeting of human beings who yearn for each other's interaction. In particular, I shall spare no effort to ensure that students at MCAST will regain their experiences in places of work. Work-based learning is what makes this College so unique.

MCAST is an upward positive experience in

our education system. My frequent interaction with the College has forged a rapport that I am eager to develop, to give our current and next generations an education to be proud of and take them into a successful career and profession. I also look upon MCAST as the place that gives students and workers a second chance, by retraining, reskilling and upskilling. My Government will continue to increase its support to the College; it is enacting a new law giving the College more autonomy and self-governance and increased resources for sustainability.

I congratulate all at the College, spearheaded by Professor Calleja, for their unfailing commitment. Our challenge now is to move back into normal life with a forward-looking frame of mind driven by our commitment to provide quality learning and bright prospects of employment, and a better quality of life for our citizens.



Foreword by the President of the Board of Governors

Prof IAN REFALO

The Governing Board of this College has had an eventful year, particularly when our country was hit by the coronavirus pandemic. We needed to support this organisation's management in every possible way to provide our students' education and training. Completing the year 2019-2020 has not been easy. Nor has it been business as usual when the new academic year started. One of the key challenges has been to organise all practical sessions and to close off those who completed their studies. Yet, I am pleased to report that all challenges have been met with a strong commitment from all. MCAST was a safe institution for staff and students. Protocols signed with the health authorities and in collaboration with the Union were timely and effective. Measures were respected throughout the campuses, and during the summer

months, a considerable amount of work was commenced to provide all practical sessions for students and ensure that measures agreed with the health authorities were in place.

We have worked well with both Ministers for Education, Dr Owen Bonnici and Dr Justyne Caruana. In both, we found continuous support to enable the College to move on with its provision of courses. All members of the Governing Board regularly attended the meetings I called to support management. Tough decisions were taken throughout the year to ensure that MCAST meets its strategic targets set in 2018. The work on the new buildings continued and we are aiming to inaugurate the new Resource Centre in June this year. The building of the

Institute of Information and Communication Technology is also advancing, and unless we face extraordinary circumstances we expect completion of construction this coming autumn.

The College is multiplying in numbers and the quality of its operations. The pledges acquired last winter of employers to take on our students as apprentices have been impressive. We increased our usual numbers by over 600 in times of challenges for all workplaces due to COVID-19. The research community at the College has also seen a rapid increase. Over 100 lecturers have committed to hours of research besides their teaching commitment. A virtual conference organised last December showed that the College is moving towards blended learning fast and that its IT infrastructure is carefully planned and we will shortly see dividends. This augurs well for MCAST because the education sector, like most others, faces unprecedented challenges that must be met but require investment, knowledge and foresight.

Work has already started on the new strategic objectives 2022-2027. As Governing Board, we would like to move our strategy in line with the European Union's financial cycle. This is because we will derive most of our funding from ERDF and ESF projects that the College has submitted to its line Ministry. The Government has also been generous with national funding. During 2020 we have seen a commitment of over €4 million in capital and an increase of 5% in recurrent expenditure. The College requires more funding than this, and therefore we are strengthening our international arm - MG2i (MCAST Gateway to Industry) - to attract business to the College and continue building our international vocation. With over 72 nationalities at the College, MCAST is

becoming a hub for international education.

I am also pleased to learn that at long last, the Engineering Profession Board has opened its doors for MCAST students to be admitted to the warranting process. A Tracer Study revealed that over 90% of our students find jobs relevant to their qualifications. This is how important it is to link education and training to standards set by the regulatory authorities. Lately, I was also informed that the new MVEAR has also been accepted as a Master's programme that leads to a teaching warrant by the Council for the Teaching Profession.

These are developments that augur well for the College as we look forward to moving towards a post COVID-19 period in which automation, blended learning and a closer relationship with industry and the surrounding community will steer our efforts to make MCAST a natural choice for students in post-secondary education.



Introduction by the Principal/CEO

Prof JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

The year under review has been an extraordinary year for all of us. We have learnt more lessons than usual. We have been subjected to decisions that we had to take overnight to ensure business continuity. We worked relentlessly to provide students with education and training of the highest quality. Our lecturing staff spared no efforts to engage themselves and the students in hours of online learning. This has not been an easy task at all. It has certainly been an experience like no other. Flicking through this report, I am proud to see that the College has met the challenges posed by COVID-19. We have kept the campuses safe at all times; we supported students that needed hardware and software to enable them to continue their studies from home and we increased our efforts to ensure that the management of the College remains at the highest levels possible.

As Principal, I wish to show my gratitude to all staff members, many of whom walk that extra mile on a daily basis. Particular appreciation goes to our support staff and those who could not work from home. They have reported to work on a daily basis and have supported management in every way possible. Thanks to our IT infrastructure we could reach our student community at a regular and fast rate. Our student services continued and increased as necessary. We closed the year 2019-2020 in as much a normal way as possible. Likewise, the inauguration of the new year 2020-2021

took a different approach but was equally poignant in the context of COVID-19. The interfaith prayer at the end of the ceremony was as moving as it was fitting at a time when the whole world was hit by a pandemic.

Moving away from the scares of this pandemic we will assess first and foremost the outputs of the blended and online learning that took place. This report illustrates that at face value, all learning activities took place on a regular basis; practical sessions were held in a timely manner, and assessments were administered and achieved the desired results. It is time to scratch beyond the surface to see the exact impact of the pandemic on students and staff members. Certainly, we are witnessing increasing numbers of staff members and students who are seeking support from the Well-being Hub. We are also witnessing an increasing number of students who require IT support at home. With an almost empty campus, we cannot really test the mood and psychology of our student and staff community. But communication with an even stronger and more active and organised MCAST Student Council has increased. Similarly, we have had regular meetings with the Malta Union of Teachers and relations with the Union have been constructive and forward-looking. 2020 has been more than challenging in this sector of education. The dwindling posts for apprentices has hurt one and all. Vocational and professional education

and training is about work-based learning. It is about moving into places of work, engaging in real time employment and coming back to the College with fresh ideas and work practices that require fine-tuning and reflection.

In a situation in which physical proximity has been next to impossible, the College embarked on a more aggressive approach to set its IT structure at the level of excellence. It has been the information technology and automation that have kept the College (and many other sectors) going in 2020 and we will spare no efforts to continue investing in our project EdTECH to enable our students to become as independent learners as possible. It is also encouraging to register so many lecturers who have embarked on research projects in one year. It has been my objective to strengthen research at the College with the aim of feeding into the higher levels of our qualifications as well as building the infrastructure to support industry in its projects.

At the heart of this pandemic, the Institutes have shown their true value. The six Institutes at the College are the soul of this educational institution. It is there where the real vocational and professional education takes place. The management teams within the Institutes have given invaluable support to staff and students during the disruption caused by COVID-19. I am indebted to the College's Deputy Principals and management of the Institutes who kept a regular account of proceedings during 2020 and in the new academic year. Shifting lectures, organising practical sessions, placements, workshops, laboratory work, tutorials and lessons for the lower levels has been an unnerving task throughout the year under review. Yet, as can be seen from the report, results illustrate that students received their entitlement. Only time will tell how such events can be met with greater efficiency and effectiveness. But my assessment for the lack of the physical dimension in teaching and learning is, in these circumstances, positive. Certainly, we are eager to go back to the normality that we were used to and to see

the campus buzzing again with the noise of students, staff and the activities that they generate together.

One aspect that has kept its targets almost in place has been the construction of the two new buildings which we are hoping to inaugurate one in the summer of 2021 and the other in spring 2022. These two buildings together with the remaining plans to complete the campus will steer our efforts towards the framework of a community college. This will be reflected in the next cycle of the strategic objectives covering the years 2022-2027. As we derive our resources from the community, we want to make these resources available to the community beyond staff and learners. This is our ambition. This is our vision for MCAST leading to 2030. With a new legislation for the College, a new corporate image that aims at giving the College higher dignity and prestige, by 2030 the College should attract larger numbers of post-secondary education students. My Journey offers alternative learning experiences in secondary education which will make MCAST the natural home for inclusion, excellence and equity.

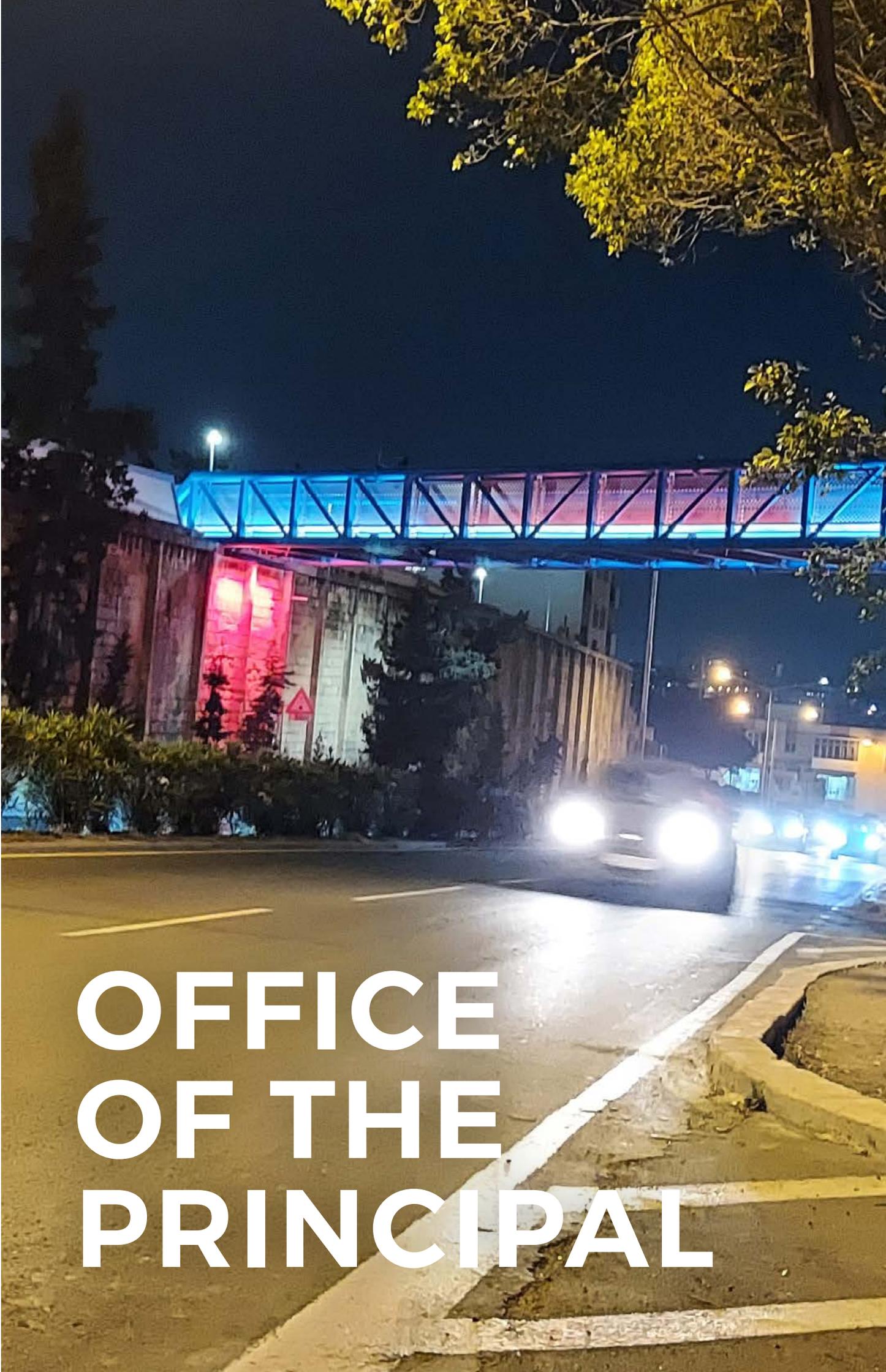
COVID-19 has caught everyone by surprise. As a College we have adjusted to this new reality tapping all possible resources and increasing our commitment, efficiency and effectiveness. Collectively we have made a difference. The support management receives from the Governing Board and in particular from its President is notable. Similarly, the cooperation with the line Ministry has never been stronger. MCAST belongs to the public sector and to the people of this nation. We will continue to strive to give our country a College that prepares a solid and flexible workforce for economic growth and prosperity. MCAST's DNA is inclusivity. Its doors are open to all learners and workers. Reskilling, upskilling, lifelong learning and the job skills of the 21st century are high on our agenda.

It is time to appreciate all the good work done in 2020 and to invigorate our efforts with a clear vision for 2021 and beyond.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL





Strategy Implementation Office
Gateway to Industry
Capital Projects Office
EU Projects Office
Legal Office
Policy Analysis Office
Grievance Office

Strategy Implementation Office

In September 2018, MCAST launched an extensive consultation process which extended until March 2019. During these six months, the College opened a dialogue on its strategic direction with its key stakeholders. MCAST met with more than 90 employers and more than 55 stakeholders. The College reviewed its strengths, addressed its challenges and prepared the vision for the College to interact with a dynamic economy and changing employment markets. After evaluating all the feedback received and reviewing the draft plan, the MCAST Board of Governors agreed on the parameters for the strategic direction of the College.

The MCAST Strategic Plan was launched by the then Prime Minister of Malta, Hon Dr Joseph Muscat in May 2019. The plan spans 7 strategic directions, 18 initiatives and 86 measures. The document outlines the priorities for the College and highlights the importance of a dynamic evolution to reflect the changes in Malta's socio-economic fabric.

The plan envisages seven strategic objectives, each with a number of initiatives and measures:

1

INVEST IN MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS FIT FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE STAFF AND STUDENTS.

- Ongoing construction works on IICT and MRC blocks.
- Aviation workshops upgraded.
- Maritime simulator installed.
- Designs for theatre, sports facilities and childcare were presented to the BOG.
- Video conferencing facilities installed at the MCAST Gozo Campus.
- Upgraded bandwidth and preparations for additional WI-FI access on campus.
- Launched, rolled out and maintained the CMIS database and trained staff accordingly.
- Launched the MCAST Intranet with regular updates.

STRENGTHEN QUALITY AND RELEVANCE TO ENHANCE THE STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

2

- Drafted and launched the Online Learning Policy.
- Online/Blended learning options to be mainstreamed at MQF Level 4 upwards.
- Intra/Interpersonal skills introduced across all MQF Level 4 and Level 6 programmes.
- 20 CPD sessions were delivered, with over 420 participants.
- Developed 17 KPIs to monitor the College performance annually.
- B.VET launched to train future VET teaching professionals.

POSITION QUALITY WORK-BASED LEARNING AT THE HEART OF ALL PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY MCAST.

3

- Preparations are underway to widen the spread of courses that include a work-based learning component.

REINFORCE THE IMAGE AND BUILD THE ESTEEM OF VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

4

- Concluded the alumni tracer study and published results.
- With limited events options, MCAST representatives participated in webinars, STEM expo, Science in the City, TV and radio programmes.
- Alumni association launched with registrations feeding into a central database.
- Entered into 12 MoUs and Agreements and various Erasmus+ agreements.
- Executed promotional campaign during the summer months with the launch of the MCAST Prospectus.
- Presented multiple social media posts related to student achievements and issued MCASTLink Success Stories booklet.
- MCAST student nominated as VET Ambassador.

5

BROADEN THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MCAST PARTNER NETWORK.

- Ongoing liaison and collaboration with international universities and related entities including EURASHE, EfVET, and DGVT.
- Outreach with feeder schools and other further education entities included talks in schools, career fairs, open days, webinars and visits in satellite Institutes.
- Widened the provision of CSR options for students and increased the take up.
- Collaborated with NCFHE on the annual data submissions in a project re Migrants' Tracking and the new Qualifications Database and the national RPL policy.
- Drafted and launched the MCAST Globalisation Strategy.

6

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND REINFORCE THE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES.

- Carried out Audits, Reviews and Investigations re individual courses, stipends, the childcare centre, risk assessments, spot checks on petty cash, health and safety in workshops.
- Restructured HR Office, redistributed roles and engaged additional officers, as necessary.
- Hosted a number of events for social partners and facilitated the use of the MCAST Campus for multiple types of events.

7

INCENTIVISE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION ACROSS THE COLLEGE.

- Set up ARIC, internal structures, internal audit and risk reporting structures and engaged Senior Research Officers.
- Close to 100 researchers are interacting with industry and social partners.
- Continued offering post-graduate courses in Research Methods.
- MCAST website featured an updated list of industry-academia research.
- Research Expo held in December 2020 and MCAST Research Journal published biannually.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on the MCAST Strategic Plan. By the end of 2020 MCAST had achieved nearly 80% of all the intended targets.



During a site visit at MCAST. From left, Prof Refalo, President of the Board of Governors. Hon Dr Bonnici, Minister for Research, Innovation and the Coordination of Post COVID-19 Strategy, Hon Dr Caruana, Minister for Education and Prof Calleja, MCAST Principal and CEO.

MCAST Gateway to Industry

MCAST Gateway to Industry Ltd. (MG2i) was set up in 2008 and conceived as the commercial arm of MCAST with the aim of supporting, enhancing and complementing the College's commercial operations.

MCAST works closely with local industries to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competences within its curricula are appropriate and relevant to a dynamic and forward-looking economy. This relationship stimulates the College's success, as it strives to ensure that its programmes are flexible, relevant and responsive to the needs of industries, which are constantly evolving to meet the challenges of a changing global economy.

The company adapted well and carried out the necessary changes as it cruised into uncharted waters. MG2i carried out the necessary changes and offered 280 MCAST part-time courses through a mixture of on-campus in-class teaching and online learning. The company responded well to the changes which were brought about by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Revenues were resilient thanks to the robust online sales and varied training provision.

During 2020, MG2i offered 5 new hobby and 19 MQF level-rated courses. These included 19 degrees and 12 Master's programmes too. MG2i marketed these courses through both a digital and a printed Prospectus, which was distributed in every household across the Maltese islands. The Prospectus featured around 280 different courses.

The core business of MG2i consisted of training provision to a broad target audience, including the general public, as well as the local industry. Such training

was offered both on a part-time schedule as well as through five bespoke courses that were custom-designed upon request and through negotiations with industry.

In 2020, the majority of the business generated by MG2i was through its part-time courses. However, during the past three years, MG2i registered an exponential increase in the number of bespoke courses offered to international students. MG2i responded well to this by embarking on an intensive international students' recruitment strategy.

In the year 2020, MG2i continued offering training off-shore. It ventured through training provision in Kazakhstan, where MCAST offered training to 30 students in Atyrau. MCAST lecturers were given the opportunity to travel to Atyrau to deliver on-site training. MG2i is presently exploring similar off-shore training in India and in China. Three MoUs were signed during 2020 between MCAST and international Technical Universities and professional training institutions. These agreements will be rekindled as soon as the travel restrictions are lifted.

The company has registered considerable growth during the past year. It is now geared towards taking the next steps to increase its operations through a three-year business plan, which was approved by the MCAST Board of Governors and the MG2i Board of Directors.

New commercial avenues will be explored and will position MCAST as a leader in vocational training provision. The company will be exploring new local and international markets and developing new methods to sustain its business and continue offering the best service to its customers during 2021.

Capital Projects Office

During 2020, the main objective of the Capital Projects Office was the further development and execution of the MCAST Campus Master Plan. Activity continued on two fronts, mainly the construction project management and the design development.

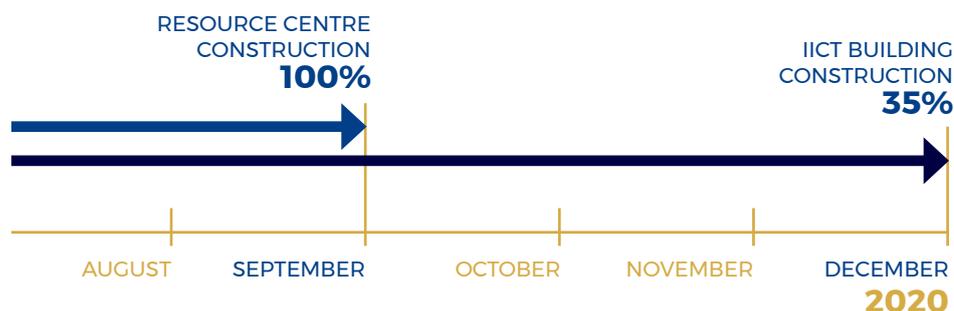
The project managers and engineers focused on two sizeable construction projects which included the construction and finishing, including the installation of infrastructural services, of the MCAST Resource Centre (MRC) and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT).

The civil works and the construction of the MCAST Resource Centre were completed in September 2020. Works on the mechanical and electrical installations had started concurrently with the civil works to improve on timing. Works on internal finishes and facade finishes started immediately after the completion of construction in October 2020. The civil works and the construction of the IICT building continued to progress throughout 2020. By the end of 2020, around 35% of the gross floor area of the IICT was constructed.

The Capital Projects Office directed the creation of conceptual architectural designs for subsequent phases of the implementation of the Campus Master Plan, including the design of new buildings, the refurbishing of other buildings and the Campus-wide landscaping and infrastructural design.

Apart from the inherent difficulties presented by projects of such magnitude and complexity, the operational scenario in 2020 was completely distorted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the construction and building services industry was not put under an official lockdown, the industry was still negatively impacted due to the shortage of human resources, logistical problems and the implementation of social distancing measures. A high level of coordination was required between trades and across sites considering the magnitude of the projects with a projected cost of €30.7 million and a gross floor area of 31,000 sqm.

The Capital Projects team worked closely with the various contractors to mitigate the effects of such issues on the programme of works. This was done by continuously monitoring the situation and coordinating iterative changes to the workflow.



EU Projects Office

During the year 2020, the EU Projects Office was responsible for the implementation of three major projects which are being co-funded through the European Structural Funds 2014-2020. Two projects are being part financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the third project is co-financed by the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF). Under this programming period, up to end 2020, MCAST has benefitted from €26.7 million in EU funding.

ESF 02.058

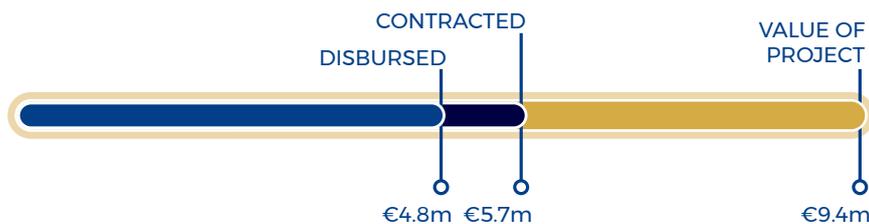
Adding Value - Nurturing Learning Journeys at the MCAST Foundation College

The main objective of ESF 02.058 was to set up state-of-the-art support structures for students with learning difficulties and individuals pertaining to vulnerable groups. During 2020, the main activities of this project included research, mentoring and development of software. The overarching aim was to create long-term structures that will provide support to MCAST students with different needs following courses at Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3.

Extensive research has been carried out to identify the following: the typical barriers to training which are encountered by socially excluded individuals; challenges encountered by students during their educational journey; skills gaps; methods

on how gamification can help students with their studies; and the effectiveness of student mentoring. In parallel, student mentors have provided academic support, motivation, emotional support and guidance to students pertaining to disadvantaged groups, with the objective of making their learning journey more effective.

During this period, substantial progress has also been registered on the development of the Operational Tools and Information Systems (OTIS) Platform. Once completed the system shall facilitate and support MCAST's students in a didactic and methodical way, and assist in the development of students' individualised pedagogical portfolio.



ESF 03.003

Development of Training Programmes at MQF Level 7

Through project ESF 03.003, MCAST consolidated the College's tertiary offers. Eight vocational programmes at MQF Level 7 in a wide range of subject areas have been designed and were delivered during 2020. During this year two hundred students benefitted from this project.







During a site visit at MCAST.

ERDF 09.036

MCAST Campus Master Plan: Phase 2

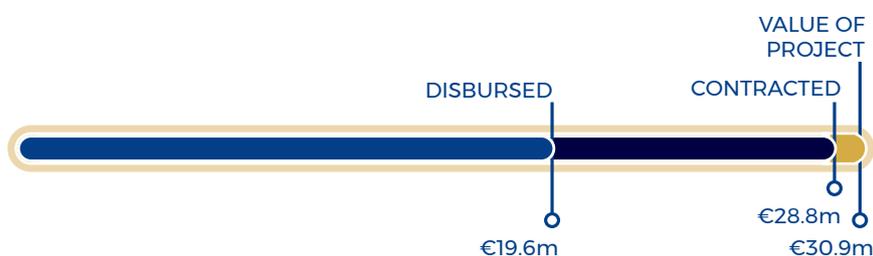
During 2020, the main activities of ERDF 09.036 focused primarily on the infrastructure development of two major buildings at the MCAST Main Campus in Corradino: the MCAST Resource Centre (MRC) and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT).

Building works at the MCAST Resource Centre were completed in October 2020. The three contracts related to the installation of the electrical and mechanical services, internal finishes and the external facades, were implemented during this period. Additionally, seven supplies contracts for the procurement of furniture and equipment for the MCAST Resource Centre have been awarded for the total sum of €683,000. Building works on the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) were also underway. The tender for the procurement of furniture and

equipment for the IICT, estimated at €1.4 million, was launched. Fifty-seven offers were received.

As part of its deliverables, this project also included the construction of the Building and Construction facilities within the Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) and the College Management Information System (CMIS). These two deliverables have contributed to the achievement of the mandatory indicators stipulated by the ERDF 9.036 Grant Agreement. The total capacity indicator achieved by end 2020 was 5,900 students.

During the last quarter of 2020, ERDF 9.036 was extensively audited by the Internal Audit and Investigations Department (IAID). Audit findings have shown conformity to the audit criteria, specifically conformity to the standards set out in the Grant Agreement and the Maltese and EU related regulations.



Legal Office

More awareness was raised among MCAST employees as to the establishment of this Office during the second year of the MCAST Legal Office operations.

Throughout 2020 the MCAST Legal Office offered guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic to members of staff on both Legal Notices that were issued by the Health Authorities and Government Directives.

Substantial work was carried out on the proposed MCAST Act. A workshop was organised for the Executive Management Team in order to discuss new ways of operating with a modernised act. By the end of 2020, work on the Act was complete and the proposed document was formally presented to the Ministry for Education.

Intensive compliance exercises were carried out particularly with the Education Act (Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta) and the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (Chapter 576 of the Laws of Malta) so as to ensure that MCAST is continuously honouring its legal obligations. The compliance exercise included an overhaul of all Work-Based Learning Training Agreements which were approved for launching in the academic year 2021-2022.

Towards the end of 2020, all work related to the Office of the Ombudsman and the Commissioner of Education was passed on to the MCAST Legal Office. The MCAST Legal Office also supported the MCAST Grievance Office to ensure legality of proceedings.

To date MCAST still retains a low number of lawsuits, mostly filed before the Industrial Tribunal. It is MCAST's ethos to try and resolve matters amicably and not let them accumulate to litigation. During 2020 a total of three lawsuits were commenced against MCAST, one of which was settled out of court within a few months.

In December 2020, MCAST Legal Office aided the Engineering Profession Board in a warrant of prohibitory injunction filed by the Malta Association of Professional Engineers (MAPE) whereby it was alleged that MCAST had run Engineering Courses which were not up to standard. The said injunction was subsequently denied by the Courts of Justice.

Policy Analysis Office

During 2020, the Policy Office provided immediate and consistent support to the Principal's daily agenda, with up-to-date policy information on an EU or national level. This facilitated discussions and a high level of preparedness when meeting with other MCAST representatives, external key stakeholders and other strategic commitments.

Some of the recent key contributions during this reporting year included the designing and drafting of a framework for the reopening of schools for use by the Ministry for Education; forming part of the initial rebranding team of MCAST's new logo, and also providing concrete policy updates on the progress of MCAST to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP).

This Office was regularly involved in various consultations with entities falling within the Ministry for Education's remit. Some of the significant contributions in relation to the Ministry's requests were providing support concerning the ET 2020 developments in higher education and vocational professional education and training and providing feedback for the Eurydice web portal. Additionally, during this reporting year, this Office was involved in the drafting of essential VET documents, namely the recommendations on vocational education and training for sustainable

competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, as well as the 'Osnabrück Declaration 2020 on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies'. This Office also responded to the Office of the Permanent Secretary's urgent requests in relation to the National Reform Programme and contributed to discussions in relation to financial instruments supporting VET policy.

Another key contribution and a challenging factor within the Policy Office was the response to the sudden COVID-19 related issues and queries. This Office was primarily in charge of drafting the COVID-19 protocol based on global resources and any associated updates that followed. The Policy Office also served as an essential contact point for any COVID-19 related queries from the Ministry, including responding to both national and international surveys from the EU Presidency, the Commission and local entities. With such drastic changes happening, it was challenging to keep up with an overload of queries from different national and international entities caused by the pandemic's sudden pressures.

An important priority of this Office was to ensure that professional relations were kept with all stakeholders that partnered with the College.

Grievance Office

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant challenges for the MCAST Grievance Office. Yet, considering that MCAST students and employees were away from Campus due to the shift to online learning, the Office received a total of 108 contacts done by students, staff and others as shown in Table 1 below.

	STAFF All Categories		STUDENTS Part & Full-Time		OTHERS Non-MCAST		TOTAL	
Formal / Informal Grievances	22	51%	20	47%	1	2%	43	100%
Personal Advice	9	14%	32	49%	24	37%	65	100%
	31		52		25		108	

A more detailed analysis of the above data reveals that 34/43 of the submitted grievances (79%) were closed after their due investigation was completed; three grievances (7%) were discontinued by the complainants concerned; while six grievances (14%) are still pending, mainly because their outcome depends on decisions that need to be taken by other competent bodies, such as disciplinary boards.

Most student grievances concerning issues related to the assessment and delivery of their chosen programmes of study, entitlement to stipends and certification of their acquired qualifications. Other issues generally focused on seeking advice on various matters, requests for more timely communication of results, timetable issues and part-time courses.

Staff grievances dealt mainly with salaries, progression and work conditions, while their non-grievances revolved around issues that were associated with general enquiries for clarification purposes or to intervene for faster implementation of what they considered being their contractual entitlements.

Around mid-2020, Ms Sandra Cortis joined the MCAST Grievance Office to assist Mr Anthony Saliba, who was until then responsible for the

running of this Office. In November 2020, when MCAST assigned the latter to a new role, Ms Cortis became the Senior Grievance Officer in charge of this Office.

During the year under review the MCAST Grievance Office felt the need to embark on an awareness campaign targeting both students and staff members, a priority that aligns itself with the MCAST Strategic Plan 2019–2021. Besides ensuring that the Office was accessible to all, work also included reviewing its mechanisms and documentation. Apart from her contribution to conclude the pending and incoming caseload, Ms Cortis spearheaded these two important initiatives: the translation into Maltese of all the Grievance Office documents and templates, as well as leading a plan to create short video clips to promote and increase the awareness of the Grievance Office among all the MCAST students and staff.

Since its inception in June 2018, the Grievance Office has handled a total of 584 grievances out of a total of 674 contacts. 571 grievances (99%) were closed. Its overarching goal is to assist and support the entire community according to its established policy and this has yielded many positive results for the well-being of the MCAST community.

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and a woman. The man is smiling broadly, looking towards the woman. He is wearing a patterned shirt. The woman is partially visible on the right side of the frame, wearing a dark blue shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**ACADEMIC
MANAGEMENT
OF STUDENTS
& WORKBASED
LEARNING**



Ronald Curmi - Deputy Principal

Office of the Registrar

IT Support Services
Department

Apprenticeship and Work-
Based Learning Department

Data Analysis Unit

Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for several functions, including Local and International Student Admissions and Records, Examinations, Certification and Stipends.

The academic year 2019-2020 marked the recruitment of Ms Maria Pace as the new MCAST Registrar.

Admissions

During the academic year 2019-2020 the Admissions Office received the second annual intake through the new CMIS. A total of 8,712 applications were received, of which 5,010 were from new candidates while 1,168 were from students progressing to a higher level course. 2,006 applications were received from students continuing the second or subsequent year of their studies, while 528 were repeating a unit/s of the course in order to conclude their qualification. 199 candidates were admitted as mature students. 937 foreign students from 76 different countries were studying at the College.

	TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	TOTAL APPLICATIONS REGISTERED
New Applicants (of whom 4,307 registered)	5,010	4,057
Progressing to higher level course	1,168	1,097
Continuing subsequent year of course	2,006	1,971
Repeating unit/s	528	485
	8,712	7610

Table 1 Applications Received

Records

This Office is responsible for the issuing and filing of all records related to the academic performance of students as well as letters of reference, transcripts of achievement and other academic references. It also keeps records of all Council of Institutes, Boards of Studies, Review Boards, Admissions Board, Corporate Disciplinary Board meetings and Corporate Appeals Board meetings amongst others.

//10

Council of Institutes meetings

Council meeting no. 168 to Council meeting no. 176

//16

Degree Ratification Board meetings

//26

Admissions Board meetings

//7

Corporate Disciplinary Board meetings

//23

Board of Studies meetings

Table 2 Meetings Held

Another important function includes the maintenance and publication of statistics that are continuously required internally and externally to the organisation.

/51

Re-print of Certificates

/23

Letters of Reference issued

/4

MQF Level-rating Letters issued

/1404

Europass Certificate Supplements issued

/906

Europass Diploma Supplements issued

Table 3 Records Issued

Courses

The Office of the Registrar is also responsible for the publication of the annual Prospectus. In 2019-2020, the College offered 188 Full-time/Blended courses distributed across all Institutes and the Gozo Campus. 137 courses were reviewed and revised to new industry requirements as follows:

INSTITUTE/DEPARTMENT	COURSES	COURSES REVIEWED
Gozo Campus	24	21
Institute for the Creative Arts	23	17
Institute of Applied Sciences	13	9
Institute of Applied Sciences - Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences	12	9
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	17	11
Institute of Community Services	18	15
Institute of Engineering and Transport - Aviation Maintenance Centre	6	5
Institute of Engineering and Transport - Building and Construction Engineering	22	21
Institute of Engineering and Transport - Centre for Maritime Studies	3	2
Institute of Engineering and Transport - Electrical and Electronics Engineering	7	5
Institute of Engineering and Transport - Mechanical Engineering	13	11
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	11	9
Learning Support Unit	3	1
Generic Degree programmes	5	-
Master's programmes (Blended)	11	1
	188	137

Table 4 Courses by Institute & Courses Reviewed

Levels A&B 1	Level 1 11	Level 2 14	Level 3 32	Level 4 41
Level 5 3	Level 6 29	Level 7 1	IMO Courses 2	EASA Courses 3

Table 5 Courses reviewed based on MQF level

Registrations

During the whole academic year, students were registered across the different MQF/EQF levels as follows:

INSTITUTE/DEPARTMENT	A&B	1	2	3	4	5	6	6/7	7	EASA/IMO	GRAND TOTAL
Cross-Curricular		68				144					212
Gozo Campus	5		37	59	105	16	5	5			232
Institute for the Creative Arts		4	51	121	358		421				955
Institute of Applied Sciences			48	67	190	52	285				642
Institute of Business Management and Commerce		13	59	137	487	100	279	34	15		1124
Institute of Community Services		1	159	391	465	432	335				1783
Institute of Engineering and Transport		5	122	194	391	7	282			162	1163
Institute of Information and Communication Technology			114	135	440	4	432				1125
Master's and Post-Graduate Programmes									374		374
Total	5	91	590	1104	2436	755	2039	39	389	162	7610

Table 6 Registered Students per Institute and MQF Level

Examinations

The Examinations Office processes all registrations, handles fees, and manages examinations and the results of all the students according to the regulations stipulated by the respective awarding body. The number of examination sessions offered to students with foreign awarding bodies was as follows:

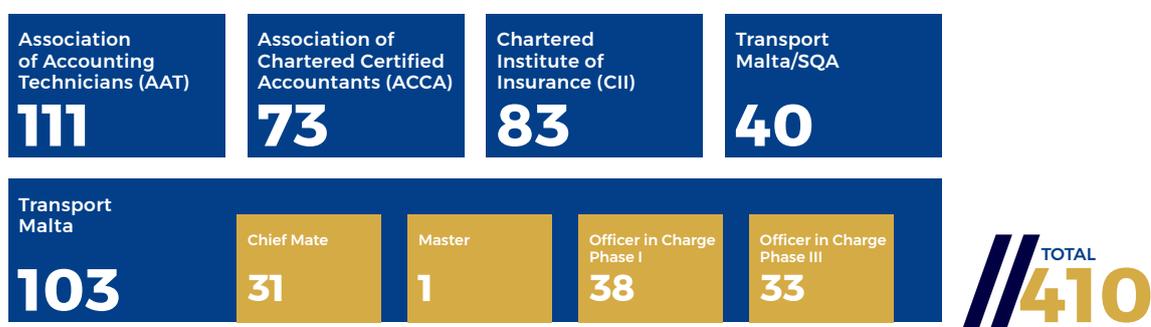


Table 7 Examination Sessions

Due to COVID-19 the Department introduced an online application and payment system.

Certification

2,320 students successfully completed their programme of study and graduated during the graduations held between December 2019 and March 2020. These ceremonies were all held on MCAST premises in Malta and Gozo.

A breakdown by level can be found hereunder:

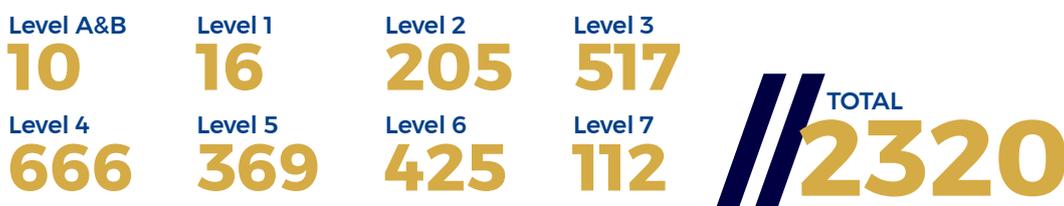


Table 8 Certificates Issued per Level

Diploma and Certificate supplements were issued to all candidates who successfully completed an MCAST accredited full-time/part-time programme of study.

Candidates receiving MQF level-rated certificates were also issued BlockCerts digital certificates on the blockchain. This service enables candidates to easily and efficiently have their certificates level-rated and verified when applying for employment or higher level studies in Malta and internationally. These certificates can be verified on any BlockCerts verification portal apart from that offered by MCAST. This is a project financed by the Ministry for Education.

Apart from processing the 2,320 certificates issued to these graduates, the Office has also issued 2,046 certificates to students who have successfully completed an evening course and a further 184 candidates were certified for part-time Maritime courses.

MCAST has also certified another 653 students across different short programmes as follows:

Part-time evening courses	2,046
Maritime Completion letters	15
Maritime Certificates	79
Maritime Examination Eligibility letters	90
Skills Kits	156
EASA Part 66 Category A module Certificates	3
Aviation Training Course – EASA Part 66 & Part 147 (Non Form 148)	16
I-Belong Programme	168
Pastoral Care Certificates	191
FLEEK Certification	18
Reprinted Certificates	51
Total	2,833

Table 9 Other Certifications Issued

	PT Certificates issued
Institute of Applied Sciences	798
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	147
Institute for the Creative Arts	141
Institute of Community Services	702
Institute of Information and Communications Technology	82
Institute of Engineering and Transport	176
Grand Total	2046

Table 10 **PT Certificates Issued**

Stipends Office

The Stipends Office is responsible for receiving and vetting each online application in liaison with the Students' Maintenance Grants Board (SMGB) to determine eligibility according to SMGB guidelines. During 2019-2020, 5,513 online applications for a maintenance grant were submitted and vetted. 4,606 students were issued with a stipend at any one time and a total of €4,822,631.78 was disbursed through the SMGB.

Out of the 4,606 students, 324 also applied for and received a supplementary allowance, while single parents received an extra grant.

470 apprentices received Top up¹ and Summer Special stipend payments at any one time during the academic year. A total of €544,959.59 was paid as Top up stipend

to registered students on an apprenticeship contract during 2019-2020. Furthermore, the total of €348,823.06 was paid from July to September 2020 as Summer Special stipend to full-time apprentices and students on work placements.

During 2019-2020, 625 requests for refund were issued to students who had to refund maintenance grants according to stipulated regulations. These amounted to €174,820.09, out of which €48,281.68 were repaid. Thus 28% of the funds were recovered up to the date of publication of this report.

¹ Top-up stipend rates cover the difference between the normal stipend (paid every four weeks) in aggregate between the employer and the Students' Maintenance Grants Board, and the National Minimum Wage rate per hour.

Programme Funding

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for registering programmes for funding under the Get Qualified Scheme. Thirteen new programmes were approved in 2019-2020, with 598 candidates benefitting from tax rebates under the approved programmes.



IT Support Services Department

Further to the testing process started in 2018-2019, the academic year 2019-2020 marked the launch of the new College Management Information System. The MCAST Cluster CMIS is a cloud-based Student Management Information System that was procured through an open tendering process issued internationally in 2017.

This entailed a further substantial effort on the part of Senior Management, the Office of the Registrar, the IT Support Services Department, the Institutes, their administration and lecturing staff. All this collective effort enabled the data for the full academic year to be recorded on the new MIS. This was the first major milestone set for 2019-2020 and was accomplished successfully. Following the initial training phase delivered by the software supplier, several training sessions and meetings were held by MCAST in order to enable the launch and implementation of the system. Meetings held were as follows:



Table 10 Training Sessions Carried Out

One of the metrics demonstrating the amount of effort put in by all members of staff for this phase of implementation of the CMIS was the number of assignments administered through the system. A total of 13,320 assignments were managed through the CMIS. This included all the

quality assurance audit trail, exchange of information between assessors and verifiers, as well as associated attendance records and publication of marks and feedback to students. The number of assignments processed by each Institute was as follows:

Institute/Department	No. of Assignments
Cross Curriculum	62
Gozo Campus	945
Institute for the Creative Arts	2,245
Institute of Applied Sciences	1,320
Institute of Business Management and Commerce	1,429
Institute of Community Services	2,515
Institute of Engineering and Transport	2,864
Institute of Information and Communication Technology	1,940
Grand Total	13,320

Table 11 Assignments Issued During Academic Year per Institute

The academic year 2019-2020 was also a busy year for the IT Support Services Department especially due to COVID-19 and the immediate shift to online learning due to the lockdown in the second semester.

One major upgrade was the stepping up of the use of Microsoft Teams as an online video communications platform which, in conjunction with the MCAST Moodle VLE and Claster CMIS, enabled the tracking of all lectures, assignments, marking and quality assurance processes to take place remotely.

The Department continued the upgrading of connectivity on campus with an upgrade in the internet fibre connection infrastructure, additional access points to improve WI-FI coverage and increased bandwidth limits per user, while providing MCAST staff with separate SSIDs within the respective Institutes. The Department also installed and configured Video Conferencing equipment on the Gozo and Paola campuses.

COVID-19 required a higher level of student

support whereby MCAST dismantled three of its labs and configured them for use in domestic settings. Over one hundred personal computers were packaged and delivered, while providing installation guides for each user as well as WI-FI dongles for internet connectivity. This new environment also required the adaptation of several dedicated software packages for home use rather than using on-campus access.

MCAST administrative staff also required adjustments to enable remote working. This required the extension of the virtual private networking services and additional servers to cater for increased remote working, as well as the introduction of a new support platform to enable remote assistance to all users.

MCAST supported MFED with a temporary allocation of some lecture rooms in order to cater for the social distancing required during the pandemic. This entailed the installation of a separate WI-FI network and access points as well as the setting up and configuration of a separate WI-FI server.



Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning Department

The MCAST Apprenticeship Scheme offers a fantastic combination of both College-based learning and industry-based training in preparation for career choices, giving students the opportunity to develop their technical competences through real work experience. There are presently over 1,600 students enrolled in courses which incorporate apprenticeship.



Launch of the Apprenticeship Scheme

Apprentices have the opportunity to experience learning within the local and/or international industry market, providing students with the opportunity to develop their creativity and acquire problem-solving skills. MCAST offers over 50 courses at MQF Level 3, MQF Level 4 and also MQF Level 6 on apprenticeship across different sectors, including: aviation, heating, ventilation and airconditioning, joinery and furniture making, masonry, welding and fabrication, electrical and electronics, automotive, hairdressing, applied science, food technology, information technology, business administration and secretarial, finance and insurance, accounting, marketing, fashion and retail, cultural heritage skills, plumbing and liquid petroleum gas systems, polymer process technicians, manufacturing, marine engineering, operations and maintenance, and biomedical engineering – with an extensive selection of over 1,700 industries and employers registered with MCAST as industry partners.

An apprenticeship allows for vital authentic industry-based training within an authentic workplace environment. It allows students to engage with employers and become part of the active labour force while developing their

competences. In addition, apprentices earn while learning and develop the required skills to become professionals in the career of their choice.

MCAST is currently working at extending its base of Industry Partners in order to provide high quality apprenticeship opportunities. Businesses know that MCAST apprentices are serious about their chosen career and are enthusiastic and eager to learn and work. Through MCAST's partnership with industry, apprenticeships facilitate the transition into the labour market and give apprentices the opportunity to acquire competences that are better acquired through a work environment.

MCAST apprenticeships typically take between one to three years to complete, depending on the framework. The apprenticeship consists of both on-the-job and off-the-job training for a specific period of time. The programmes begin at one of the MCAST Institutes, where the apprentice acquires the underpinning knowledge needed in the chosen occupation. This will then be followed by the actual on-the-job training at an employer's establishment for the acquisition of hands-on practice, skills and competences.

Data Analysis Unit

In October 2020, MCAST set up the Data Analysis Unit in order to be able to standardise and provide accurate and timely data to stakeholders for statistical and research purposes.

The Unit is now also responsible for all data requests being received by MCAST. The main responsibilities of this Unit are:

- // General data management of the Registrar's Office in full compliance of GDPR and Data Protection legislation
- // Maintenance of the data catalogue
- // Data normalisation
- // Report creation and analysis
- // Archives management
- // Digitalisation of processes
- // Implementation of new data
- // Updating of procedures with regards to data and its analysis
- // Processing of data
- // Drafting of answers to Parliamentary Questions and Ministerial requests
- // Providing data to NSO and NCFHE
- // Processing of data for internal/external stakeholders
- // Data filtering for research purposes
- // Liaison with researchers for provision and safeguarding of data
- // General academic statistics.







OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**EDUCATION
& TRAINING
PROGRAMMES
AND STUDENT
AFFAIRS**



Anthony Saliba - Deputy Principal

Quality Assurance
Department

Education and Training
Programmes Office

Learning Support Unit

Inclusive Education Unit

MCAST Entrepreneurship
Centre

Outreach Services and
Student Affairs

MCAST Student Council

Quality Assurance Department (QAD)

The Malta College of Arts, Science, and Technology (MCAST) has in place a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) built on internal and external customer focus, robust systems, processes and procedures. The QAF follows standards, guidelines, indicators and criteria established by EQAVET, the National Quality Assurance Framework issued by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) and best practices as mandated by international quality management system standards.

Documentation

Over the years, the MCAST has developed an Integrated Quality Management System that is supported by a comprehensive set of academic policies, regulations and procedures as well as a detailed Manual of Administrative policies and procedures. The QA Department ensures that these documents are regularly reviewed and updated. A total of ninety-six (96) new/ revised documents were discussed, approved and released during the period.

Lead Internal Verification (LIV)

The findings from various LIV initiatives of assessment tools and decisions carried out by the QAD have indicated that a number of quality practices were predominant, in that several observations showcased good practice of the internal verification process underpinning its credibility and validity in assuring the quality of programmes. LIV was conducted on samples taken from all the six Institutes.

Internal Audits

The main objective of such audits is to identify good practices and opportunities for improvement within the educational and operational processes within and across MCAST and the way in which these processes impact the quality of the service delivered to MCAST clients, the students. A corresponding and equally important goal of this exercise is to delve into areas that present risks to the smooth running of the processes and, hence, would need improvement, in turn, necessitating the delineation of possible corrective and preventive actions. A total of four quality reviews of key processes have been conducted during the period that follow the 'plan', 'do', 'check' and 'act' continuous improvement cycle.

External Peer Reviews

were hosted by MCAST as part of the external peer review programme of MCAST qualifications. The External Reviewer's reports are integral to the management review process, and key learning points from these reviews are regularly communicated to both academic staff and students. A total of 11 (foreign) External Reviewers were invited to the College during the period to conduct peer review.

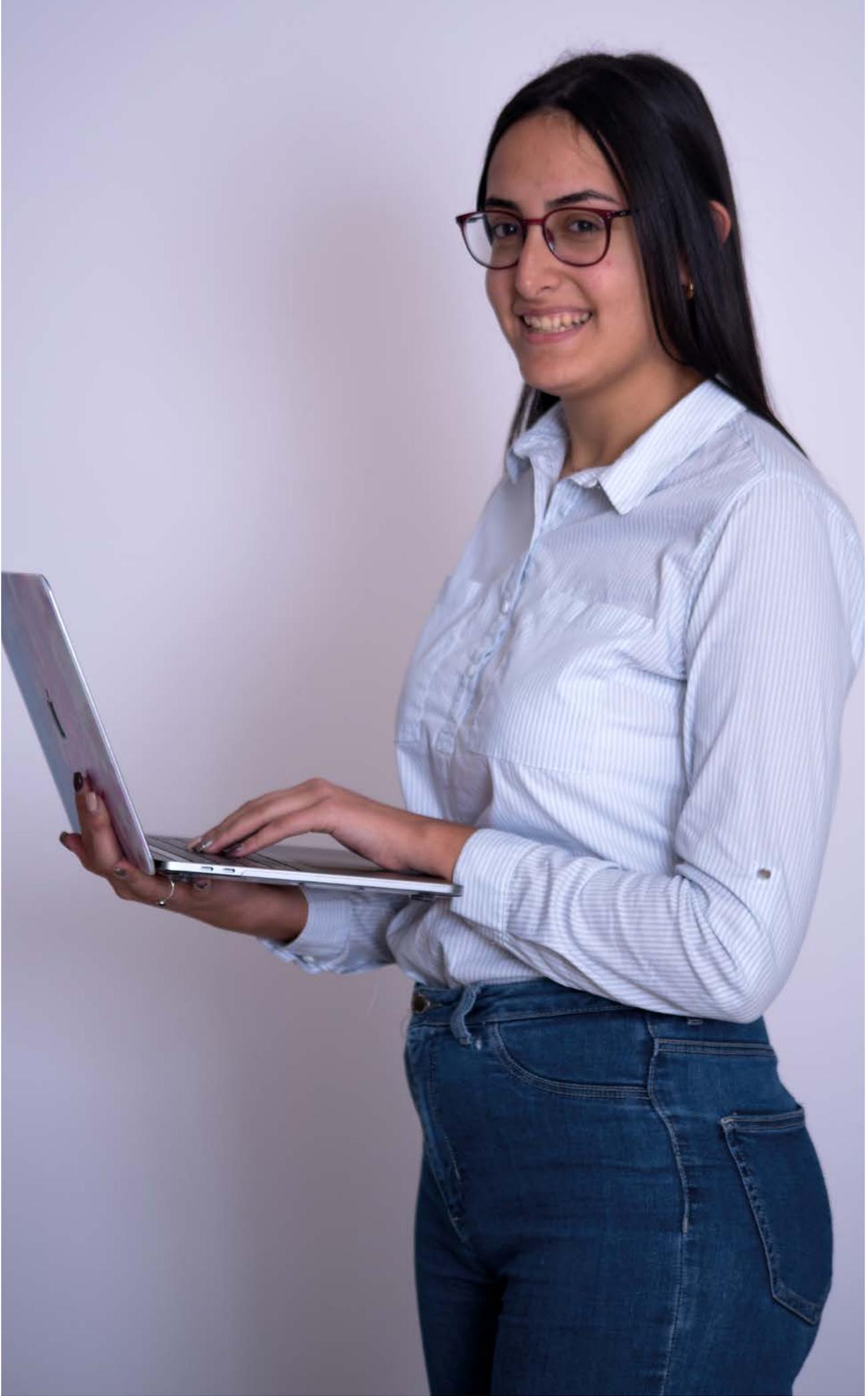
MCAST is committed to maintaining and upgrading the dynamic nature of the quality assurance (QA) measures described above and the supporting documentation emphasising the constant current relevance of its processes and procedures. The scope of such internal and external QA measures is to reinforce the strengths of the legacy accumulated over the past 20 years, since MCAST's inception, identify the opportunities, anticipate the threats and address the weaknesses through an open and transparent encounter with personnel, an overview of related documentation and the observation of the interactions of those involved.

Appraisal

A lecturer teaching appraisal exercise of teaching, learning and assessment is integral to the system. MCAST's QAF serves to propel quality in relation to all matters affecting the educational and operational aspects of student-centred learning and programme delivery, ensuring the validity and transferability of MCAST qualifications. The QAF acts as a catalyst, encouraging staff and students to inspire and aspire to an innate quality culture. A total of 24 appraisals were conducted during the period.

QA of New and Cyclical Review of Programmes

Internal cyclical review of programmes is conducted at the end of the first programme cycle, at a frequency of at least once every three years, or as the need arises, taking into account feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The process of new and cyclical review of programmes is quality assured through structured methods that are measured, monitored and reported. A total of thirty-five programmes underwent review during the period.



Education and Training Programmes Office

In 2020 this Office was renamed to better reflect the College's direction and work in vocational education and training (VET). New management and other team members were also appointed to further strengthen the Office and the service that it provides to all MCAST Institutes.

During 2020 the Education and Training Programmes Office embarked on another programme cyclical review process. Guided by the National Quality Standards entities, it implemented the Quality Cycle by monitoring and periodically reviewing programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. This process saw the Office working hand in hand with Institute directors, deputy directors, institute vocational coordinators and lecturers to review 30 programmes and 150 individual units. The team also worked on nine new programmes that were introduced in the MCAST 2020-2021 full-time programmes Prospectus together with other various awards and short courses for industry.

The Office also updated policies and procedures of programmes which resulted in improved processes for the approval of new programmes. Procedures and documentation for non-accredited programmes were also revisited. These processes were

complemented by new templates and guidelines to further ensure harmonisation between different programmes. A new reporting system was also introduced so that the Office and its team can track and monitor the status of each programme even at unit level.

Towards the end of 2020 the Erasmus+ project GIVE (Governance for Inclusive Vocational Excellence) was initiated. This is a Key Action 3 project involving partners from Italy, Finland, Spain, Malta, Romania and Belgium. The project aims at designing and developing a European Platform of Centres of Excellence devoted to innovate the VET sector for the social inclusion of individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups.

Work also continued on the Erasmus+ TReP project whereby MCAST worked with partners from Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland and Tenerife to develop an accredited online course on restorative practices.

Learning Support Unit

The Learning Support Unit (LSU) delivered various units to students following MQF Level 1 to MQF Level 3 programmes. This also included the provision and management of Maltese as a Foreign Language to all foreign learners who have Maltese as a unit in their programme. Further work was also carried out with subject coordinators to ensure that Key Skills units offered within MCAST programmes remain relevant. Provision of additional one-to-one support was provided to approximately 110 MCAST students, the most requested being Mathematics and English. The number of students was slightly lower than usual due to COVID-19 which affected usual operations.

A number of new lecturers have been recruited with the Unit and have delivered higher level units including Entrepreneurship and Inter/Intrapersonal Skills. Moreover the LSU has been delivering a Pastoral Care programme for Foundation students for the past two academic years. This is a non-academic unit that aims to support students in developing their self-awareness and self-esteem through the practice of self-empowerment.

The LSU once again offered French, German, Italian and Spanish as foreign language courses on a voluntary basis. Twenty-one students from staff, students and the general public successfully completed a course in one of the languages offered.

The formerly known 'Ibqa' Attiv Maghna' course was rebranded to 'Community for the Third Age' with the aim of offering more courses to senior citizens. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic face-to-face learning was limited and this also affected the number of participants attending.



Erasmus+

The Learning Support Unit is currently involved in two new projects which will improve the students' learning experience. The OPENSEL project is currently in its second year. MCAST is working with partners from Hungary and The Netherlands on the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in presentation skills, teamwork and stress management. Work on this project is currently focused on recording the MOOCs with a number of staff members involved.

MCAST partnered with Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal on the STE(A)M4SEN project. The aim of this project is to reach students with learning difficulties in science and arts subjects. This project is also currently in its second year. So far an educational toolkit with STEAM tasks has been developed by the partnership. A sample of these tasks will be piloted by the individual partners for the second Intellectual Output which is currently being implemented.



Inclusive Education Unit

The Inclusive Education Unit (IEU) is responsible for the support provided to students with particular needs and/or disabilities following courses across all MQF levels and Institutes at the College. Support is provided in complete liaison with the students and the respective stakeholders (parents, lecturers, LSEs, student mentors, support services coordinators, management, external professionals and entities) in order to achieve long-term sustainability of the learning acquired. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic implications, the IEU adopted various measures to ensure no disruption in services. The IEU engaged in the following principal activities along with various ancillary initiatives:

New IEU Registrations

Students with particular needs and/or disabilities are registered with the IEU through an individual meeting in order to determine the students' needs and the support required.



Access Arrangements Requests

Requests for access arrangements in Time Constrained Assignments were duly satisfied. These included provision of readers, scribes and individual arrangements according to the students' needs. Although a decrease in requests was experienced due to alternative assessment modes adopted because of the pandemic, such support continued throughout the switch to online TCAs.



Active IEU Students

IEU students enrolled in and progressed to courses across all Institutes and MQF levels. IEU support was provided accordingly.



Transport

Students with mobility impairments were provided free transport to access lectures on Campus as well as apprenticeships in industry.



Personal Assistants

Students with mobility impairments also benefitted from a personal assistant, thereby ensuring their effective engagement in daily activities on Campus and a meaningful learning experience at the College.



Individual Support Sessions

Throughout the year extra support sessions in Mathematics, Maltese, English and General Support were provided to all applicants requiring support in such areas. Such sessions were delivered on an individual basis and scheduled weekly for a duration of one hour or more depending on the student's support needs. An average of 110 sessions per week were offered both on Campus and online.

MAP Sessions

Various meetings were held to discuss student challenges, collect lecturers' feedback and devise a support way forward. Such meetings involved students, parents, student mentors, support services coordinators, LSEs, lecturers, management staff and other stakeholders. Benefitting students followed courses across all MQF levels. Further liaison with respective professionals was carried out where necessary.

In-Class Support Sessions

Class groups in MQF Levels Intro A, Intro B, 1 and 2 which required additional support during lectures were identified at the beginning of each academic year and an LSE was assigned to support the whole class in Mathematics, Maltese, English and other subjects as required. Support was provided on Campus and online.

Reasonable Accommodation

Students requiring unconventional support due to certain disabilities were supported through reasonable arrangements in liaison with the respective stakeholders. Care was taken to respect all assessment criteria, thus driving students to exploit their potential and achieve complete qualifications.

E-Processes and Automation

The IEU has embarked on an internal project aiming at a complete digitisation of IEU application forms complemented with an automation of the processes currently in place. This initiative will lead to better application form accessibility as well as an increased efficiency in data monitoring and processing, thereby augmenting the quality and effectiveness of the IEU services.





Artwork entitled 'Flowers' by artist Bernard Montebello, based at the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre

MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre

The MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre (MEC) occupies six spaces at the Kordin Business Incubation Centre (KBIC). Throughout this difficult year the MEC has continued offering its services to the existing companies owned by MCAST students and alumni who have shown interest in starting up their own business. During 2020 a total of 41 meetings were held with these tenants.

Currently, six companies are making use of the facilities at the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre. These companies hail from various sectors such as fashion, marine product design, personalised real leather accessories, digital art, handmade candle/wax accessories, studio photography, electronic lockers and engineering and automation.

Other service-oriented companies such as those involved in construction, restoration works and architectural services form part of the MEC umbrella. These companies do not occupy a space at KBIC but can still benefit from services offered by MEC such as mentoring, participation in national fairs, etc. Three new proposals are to be judged in 2021. Moreover, five

new prospective tenants are in the advanced phase of mentoring while three new proposals are in the early phase of mentoring.

During 2020 the MEC has been made more approachable to all MCAST students. In order to enhance the learning experience Mr Ray Vella, MEC coordinator, delivered around 30 one-hour sessions to various Level 4 groups taking the Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills unit. These sessions aimed at introducing MEC to students through a structured session enhanced by real-life start-up examples.

Discussions were also started with different entities such as ERA and the Chamber of Commerce so that tenants can benefit from various opportunities.



Outreach Services and Student Affairs

The Outreach Services and Student Affairs Department, through the Wellbeing Hub, the Career Guidance Centre, the Integration Unit and the Student Liaison Office, provides students with the required support and assistance during their educational journey at MCAST.



The well-being of students is of utmost importance. Students experience several life challenges including academic and/or social difficulties, anxiety, solitude and depressive thoughts.

Through activities and timely interventions, team members take every step necessary to help students build their life skills and resilience to cope with pressures. At the same time, they intervene with vulnerable students as early as possible to assist and support them through their ever increasing challenges. In order to introduce the different services, in October 2020, staff members participated in online induction sessions for students within the different Institutes. The weekly visits of the Mental Health Services (MHS) psychiatrist on campus to see students by appointment and to provide supervision and support to

Wellbeing Hub staff, were invaluable and very much appreciated. Other services provided by the Wellbeing Hub included Nutritional Advice, Tobacco Cessation Support, Sexual Health Services, Addiction Related Issues and Therapy Services.

2020 remains characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic which affected people in different ways. The aim of the practitioners at the Wellbeing Hub was to reconnect with their present and past clients to see how they can be of any service. The team also reached out to all students via weekly messages that aimed to give concise yet practical information on how to handle anxiety, fears, idleness, loneliness and study skills. The team ensured that good quality communication channels were maintained, from face-to-face sessions only (pre pandemic) to online sessions, as well as supporting clients via phone, emails and chats.



A new support project for all the Student Mentors and Student Support Services Coordinators was initiated. The aim of this project was to enhance the collaboration between the mentioned professionals in all the Institutes and to help them tackle challenging situations which they might encounter in a more supported manner. This helped in providing better services and improved well-being for staff members and students alike. During 2020, 360 clients have been followed through counselling/ psychotherapy services. Seven of these were members of staff.

The Career Guidance team assisted individuals in their vocational journey to develop, make and implement mature and informed educational and occupational choices. During 2020 the Career Guidance team carried out 742 individual guidance sessions, most of which were online, held 57 outreach online events with prospective students and their parents, participated in 78 different meetings and contributed to 25 projects.

In July 2020 an online information session on a national level was carried out for all guidance practitioners, detailing information on MCAST courses and application procedures. Due to COVID-19, email and phone communication increased drastically. It is estimated that over 2,530 enquiries related to career guidance were made during 2020.

A tracer study was carried out among 555 different MCAST graduates. Individual phone interviews were held to explore how many were in employment and if the employment was related to their studies. Results were very encouraging, with an average, among the six different Institutes, of 90% of their graduates stating that they were in employment related to their studies.

A new service that was introduced in 2020 was the Educational Psychology Services. The psychologist carries out psycho-educational assessments, therapeutic interventions, training for staff, and supports LSEs and LSU



staff amongst others. Furthermore, the service incorporates learning interventions, group interventions, as well as creating awareness on related topics.

The Student Liaison Manager supports students during their educational journey with assistance and guidance on all services provided by the College as well as by other institutions and NGOs. During 2020 students contacted the Office with diverse motives, the majority of which to seek IT assistance and even financial support. As a result of the change to online mode of teaching, through this Office, students signed 209 personal computer or laptop loan agreements. Making use of the 'Help Me Succeed Fund', students with financial difficulties were provided with hairdressing kits, protective clothing for workshops and textbooks. Other students were financially assisted by loans, thesis binding and food vouchers through the MCAST canteen.

At MCAST, international students including migrants are welcomed,

respected, supported and valued to fully participate in life at the College. The Integration Unit is committed to see that personal and social circumstances do not create an obstacle to achieving educational success. During 2020, 794 international students hailing from 75 different countries were registered for full-time courses. Additionally, over 1,600 international students applied through MG2i to follow courses at MCAST. As part of the I Belong programme, 1,588 Skills Kits in Maltese, English and Culture at Level 1 were provided to non-Maltese citizens residing in Malta. To facilitate the transition of international students from secondary to post-secondary education, several meetings with prospective students and their parents were held at the Migrant Induction Hub, Maria Regina College. Furthermore, the Unit worked in close collaboration with national agencies, NGOs and other migrants' organisations. CPD on Multiculturalism for staff was held to raise awareness of the benefits of diversity and the internationalisation of MCAST.



Student Debate KSM

MCAST Student Council

2020 was a record year for the MCAST Student Council - Kunsill Studenti MCAST (KSM). Even though the Council encountered several obstacles due to the global pandemic, the KSM still managed to grow stronger and pledged to be the backbone of all students.

The KSM signed three new sponsors, thus ending 2020 with a total of five main sponsors, namely: MITA, Busy Bee, Free Hour, Audio Malta and Klikk. The mentioned sponsors provided KSM with financial assistance, exclusive discounts to both KSM and MCAST students, free advertising, loans and donations of equipment for use by students.

During 2020 the KSM also managed to obtain exclusive discounts for students from several outlets and collaborated with a record number of organisations and companies to offer the best possible service and opportunities to MCAST students.

Working in difficult circumstances, the KSM still managed to organise several activities including the KSM Graduation Ball, the Valentine's Day event, the Down Syndrome



Debate-MCAST-Students-on-Campus

Awareness Day, the Racism Awareness activity, the Pink October Awareness activity and the Cyber Bullying Awareness Day amongst others.

The MCAST Student Council also managed to obtain two achievements: one was that of receiving a record number of nominations for the role of a Student Liaison Officer to be part of the Council, and also its nomination on the programme 'Everyday Heroes' organised by newsbook.com.mt.

A photograph of a laboratory setting where several students in white lab coats are using microscopes. The focus is on a student in the foreground on the right, looking through the eyepiece of a white and black microscope. Other students are visible in the background, also working with microscopes. The scene is brightly lit, and the background is slightly blurred.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**TECHNOLOGY
AND APPLIED
SCIENCES
- VPET**



Dr Mario Cardona - Deputy Principal

Institute of Applied Sciences

Centre for Agriculture,
Aquatics and Animal
Sciences

Institute of Engineering and
Transport

Institute of Information and
Communication Technology

MCAST Gozo Campus

The Office of the Deputy Principal for Technology and Applied Sciences incorporates the Institute of Applied Sciences, the Institute of Engineering and Transport, the Institute of Information and Communication Technology and the Gozo Campus.

During 2020 the Institutes worked on a number of new programmes in order to be able to better respond to industry's needs. The aviation maintenance courses received a huge setback during 2020 given that the aircraft maintenance industry was almost at a standstill, with more aircraft being grounded or written off. The College took the opportunity to start working on a Master degree related to aeronautics. Industry qualifications in aviation maintenance and maritime operations were also translated into academic qualifications.

The BSc Nursing degree was direly needed to provide the necessary paramedics across the public health sector, a need that was brought more to the fore by the present exceptional circumstances. This programme was consolidated by developing it into a double-badged degree, with shared responsibility between MCAST and

the University of Northumbria.

The College also provided an excellent opportunity to the Public Service as it upskilled the IT technicians working in different Government departments through ad hoc courses. It also continued to invest in new equipment at the Gozo Campus in a drive to attract more students.

In 2020 Institute of Applied Science student, Nicole Scerri was appointed as the Maltese ambassador for the European Vocational Education and Training.

As MCAST and its Institutes grow stronger, the College keeps reaching out to industry and the community at large to ensure that its programmes are relevant and useful. MCAST keeps investing in and supporting its dedicated administrative and lecturing staff.



Institute of Applied Sciences students during lab work

Institute of Applied Sciences

During the year under review, the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) delivered thirteen different courses ranging from MQF Level 2 to MQF Level 6.

Two Master's courses were also being delivered, namely a Master's degree in Water Resources Management and a Master's degree in Environmental Engineering.

The Advanced Diploma in Environmental Sustainability was once again opened after a two-year closure due to lack of applicants. Both the Advanced Diploma in Food Technology and the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Health were offered for the second year running, after the former had not been

offered in the previous two years due to lack of applicants while the latter was launched last year.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all the student placements and apprenticeships especially those in the health sector, resulting in delays in the closure of the academic year and the spilling over in the summer months. Student dissertations with a high load of practical component were also affected, resulting in delays. However, despite these obstacles, the Institute is proud to declare that all placement visits and apprenticeships were concluded and all students submitted their dissertations. The Institute proudly announced that the success rate of the students was comparable to that of previous years and



Northumbria University Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing Studies students

all challenges were overcome.

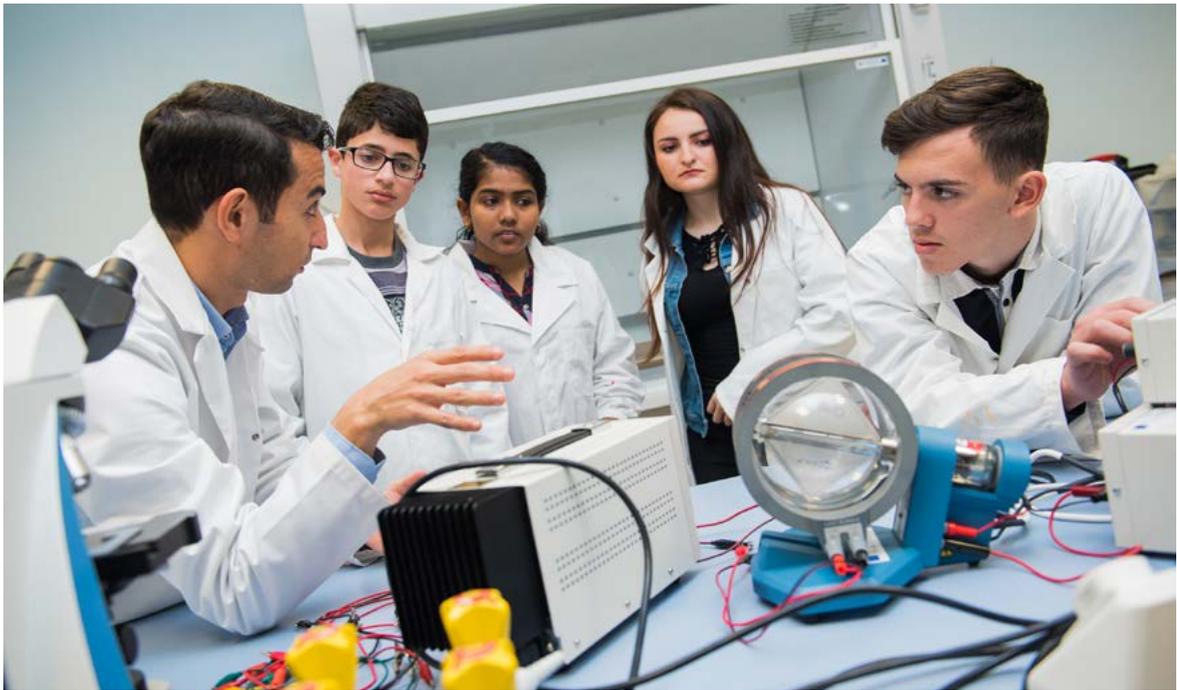
In the year 2020, the Institute's first group of graduates from the Northumbria University Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing Studies received their certificates. The graduates were very successful in securing employment immediately after, especially since several of these students ranked highly after interviews held within the Public Sector.

Apart from the wide range of full-time courses run at the Institute, the IAS ran several bespoke part-time courses, such as the Level 5 Certificate in Health Practice and the Waste Management course. The Undergraduate Certificate in Nursing Studies or, as it is more commonly known, the Bridging course, was run even though the COVID-19 situation made this challenging due to placement components that the students were expected to attend.

During the past year the Institute of Applied Sciences strengthened both its human and its physical resources.

There was a considerable increase in the number of full-time lecturers as well as an increase in the number of administrative, technical and management staff. Two researchers were also employed. Various tenders were issued for the procurement of various items of a capital nature like high-end equipment for the nursing and health sciences programmes. Maintenance on the existing building was performed and several areas were refurbished.

The Institute of Applied Sciences also saw many changes due to COVID-19 restrictions and hence the resources had to be shifted and adapted to the needs of students and lecturers. Online systems became more essential for lecturing and administrative use. Classrooms were reorganised to produce a safe environment for both lecturers and students in this pandemic. New staffrooms were created for the newly recruited staff; whilst ensuring that the other staffrooms were up to code with the Health Authority's COVID-19 recommendations.



Research within the Institute of Applied Sciences

The Institute of Applied Sciences has seen an increase in research activity, from 3 lecturers with 24 approved research hours during semester 1 of the academic year 2019-2020, to 19 lecturers who embarked on research by the end of 2020 with a total of 82 approved research hours.

In 2020, three new research themes for the Institute of Applied Sciences were approved during the Board of Studies: 'Nursing Research', 'Space Sciences Research' and 'Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences Research'. Some examples of key project areas evolving from these three themes relate to hydration practices in the Maltese residential homes for the elderly, intercultural nursing, nursing education, cosmology and astrophysics, horticulture, animal husbandry and production, as well as fisheries and aquaculture.

During 2020 seven new projects

from the Institute of Applied Sciences were submitted for external funding under different calls, including PRIMA, PARADISE, the Research Excellence programme, COVID-19 R&D Fund, and Erasmus+ programme. By the end of 2020, two new projects were awarded external funding. The IMPACT proposal is supported under the PARADISE call for Start-up Actions 2020 by the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST). The Institute of Applied Sciences is also partner in the establishment of a national agriculture, research and innovation hub, which is led by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Welfare. This was awarded the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which is part financed by EU, with a co-financing rate of: 75% European Union and 25% Government of Malta. The MED-WET project was awarded the first stage of the PRIMA call and, by the end of 2020, was awaiting results of the second phase of the proposal.



Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences (CAAAS)

The Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences delivered twelve different full-time courses in the three major areas of study, namely horticulture, animal management and fish management. The Centre also offered 26 part-time courses to the general public.

Having successfully applied for a project funded through the EU's Rural Development Programme for Malta, the Centre offered six different courses to farmers on various subjects, including tree care, business development, bee-keeping, pest management and more. More than 200 farmers were trained and certified. This project is still ongoing.

The Centre also offered courses to young farmers after successfully applying to obtain an EU-funded start-up fund. These courses covered various subjects which are important for the sound operation and management of an agri-enterprise.

Furthermore, a number of farmers applied to sit for various units that were offered as part of an initiative between MCAST and the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA) to have farmers join full-time MCAST students in training in a range of subjects.

Various bespoke courses were also organized for various entities, including courses on animal welfare for the Animal Welfare Department and urban tree pruning courses for the Environmental Landscapes Consortium (ELC) and Ambient Malta.

Following consultation with various stakeholders and the collating of the needs

of industrial partners, MCAST designed a number of new courses. These included four animal husbandry part-time courses which were requested by the Planning Authority. Together with the public abattoir, the Centre also designed a new course on butchery to further train present and future butchers in the science of butchery.

Research at the Centre has been emboldened through the assignment of research hours to more than 50% of the full-time lecturers. The research lines being pursued include the breeding of the black Maltese chicken, the studying of the correlation between sheep feed and milk quality, the effect of cetaceans on the fishing industry, the in-depth study of the Maltese wild rabbit and the use of simple technology to assist farmers in making irrigation decisions. These research areas should come up with results that are important for the respective industries and applicable to various stakeholders.

Together with the MAFA, the Centre is also undertaking research as part of an EU-funded project - AgriHub - through which MCAST researchers are investigating how to improve the quality of fodder production in Malta.

The Centre was also invited to participate in the MAFA's Agrifair - a national event to promote the agricultural industry in Malta. The Centre also liaised with MCAST's R&I Office and the Institute of Information and Communication Technology to use virtual and augmented reality on the stand that MCAST was assigned. All videos and preparations were finalized, however the national event had to be postponed due to current COVID-19 restrictions.

Institute of Engineering and Transport

The pandemic affected the Institute of Engineering and Transport due to the fact that most of the programmes offered by the Institute are predominantly delivered with a strong hands-on component and could not therefore be simply transferred to online delivery methods.

Notwithstanding this, the Institute not only managed to fully deliver all its programmes but also persisted in its ambitious expansion programme to design and offer even more programmes in innovative and essential areas that are crucial for the country.

Work on the approval of the Pre-Warrant Qualification Course continued in earnest in conjunction with the Engineering Profession Board. The aim of this programme was to finally set up a tangible route through which alumni from the Bachelor of Engineering can be eligible to apply for the Engineering Warrant.



Donation from Medelec

Electrical and Electronics Department

The year 2020 saw the first cohort of students start to follow the new Advanced Diploma in Robotics, Drone Technology, Automation and Artificial Intelligence. This multidisciplinary exciting programme endeavours to expose students to emerging technology in the three fields of Robotics, Drone Technology and AI. These three fields are all highly important contributors to the industrial needs of today and the future.

The Department also proudly received a donation of a custom made 11kV switchgear from Medelec Switchgear Ltd. This switchgear enables students following

specialized diploma and degree programmes to learn about the operations of high voltage switchgear, including protection systems in a hands-on but safe way. It also enables the students to gain important hands-on knowledge of essential components of the electrical power system. Such knowledge is essential to ensure that MCAST students are capable to hit the ground running as soon as they join their prospective employers.

The electrical power labs were successfully transferred from their old facilities into new purposely built workshops in the new purposely built Engineering Block.

Mechanical Engineering Department

Work on the upgrade of the Bachelor of Engineering programme in conjunction with the Engineering Board was sustained both in the area of syllabi and also in the area of equipment.

An upskilling programme at Level 3 for Playmobil employees was designed and

launched to complement other bespoke programmes currently being delivered in conjunction with the Electronics Department. These courses are being delivered to the biggest industrial players on the island including ST, Methode, WSC and other key players in the Maltese industry.

Maritime Department

The major task of the Maritime Department for 2020 was the transfer of the Department from Kalkara to Paola. This transfer, which included all the facilities, library, equipment and documentation, was conducted seamlessly with absolutely no effect on the students who continued their courses as scheduled.

In parallel with the transfer of facilities, the Department also inaugurated the

state-of-the-art Bridge and GMDSS simulation equipment. The amalgamation of the Deck and Marine Engineering sections continued to achieve one dynamic Department focusing on maritime courses.

A new seamanship room was established and the setup of the Marine Engineering Workshop was also bolstered through the donation of outboard engines by the Armed Forces of Malta.

Aviation Department

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the aviation industry especially hard, however the Aviation Department continued in its dynamic drive to launch new and innovative courses apart from successfully delivering ongoing courses. Work was undertaken to prepare two new Advanced Diplomas focusing on aircraft maintenance, one of which specialised in avionics. This meant that, for the first time in Malta, the EASA Part 66 Category B1 and Category B2 courses were twinned to Level 4 academic qualifications through which students could achieve dual certification from Transport Malta and from MCAST. All preparations

were conducted to ensure that the courses were ready to start in 2020-2021.

Preparations were also undertaken to design and write the first full Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Transportation and Logistics Management launched by MCAST which started in October 2020.

The Department received a donation of a Bulldog aircraft from the Armed Forces of Malta which was set up in a new Aviation Maintenance Workshop in the Engineering Block.



The inauguration of the state-of-the-art Bridge and GMDSS simulation equipment at the Maritime Institute



Donation of aircraft by the Armed Forces of Malta





Agreement with the AC Importers Association (ACIA)



KIA Motors Malta donated a KIA Optima to MCAST



Building Services Section

An important milestone in this Section's work was the conclusion of an MoU with the AC Importers Association (ACIA). Through this agreement the Association set up a state-of-the-art HVAC

laboratory at MCAST complete with the latest technology where students could work on the latest generation of equipment. Students were also awarded higher sponsorship stipends and job guarantees after graduation.

Automotive Department

The Automotive Department's main focus was to move towards courses focusing on Electric Vehicles and sustainable means of transportation. Design of an MQF Level 5 programme focusing on electric vehicles and auto electrics was undertaken with the aim of being able to start the delivery of

the programme in 2021.

In October 2020 KIA Motor Malta donated a KIA Optima to MCAST which will be used for the training of MCAST students in mechanics and operations participating in courses at the Institute of Engineering and Transport.

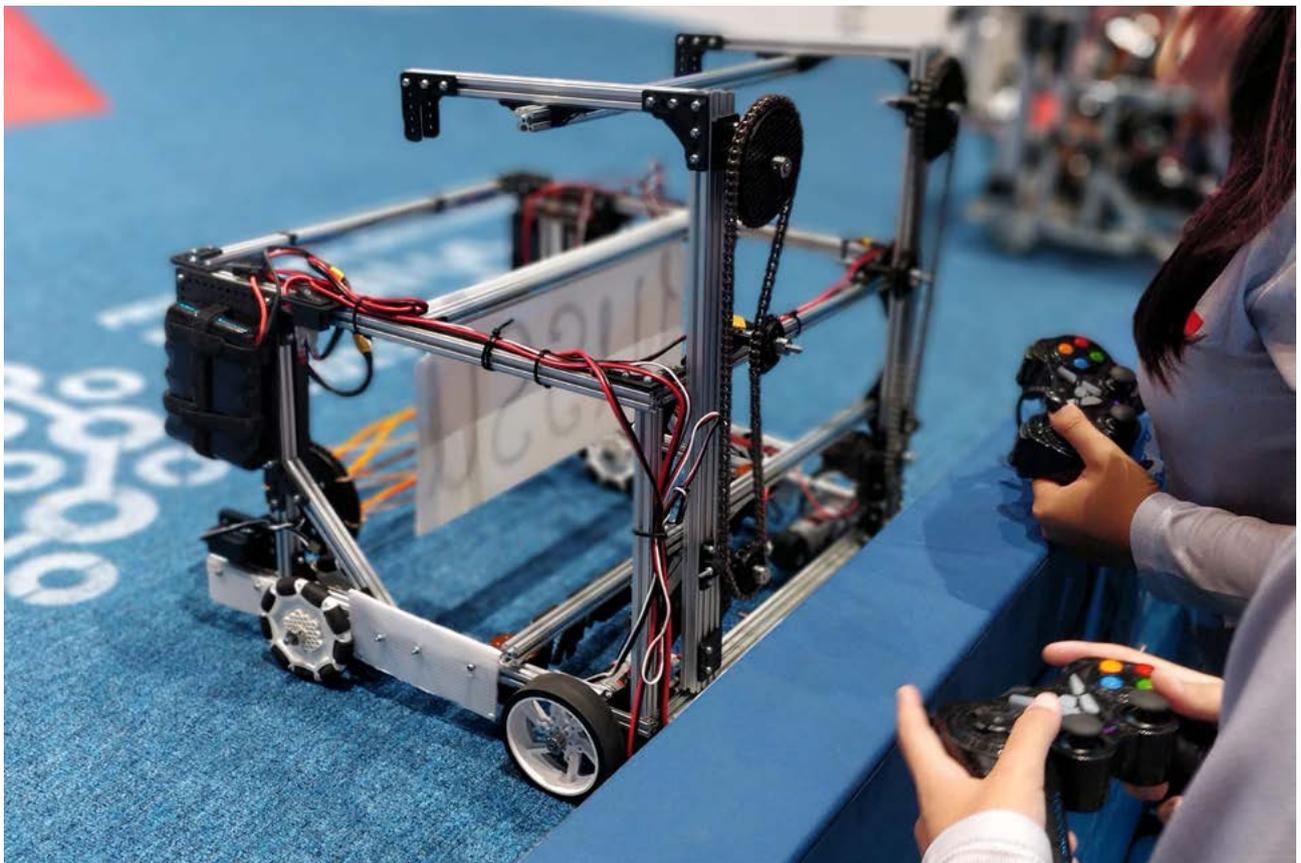
Construction Department

The Construction Department continued to focus on developments ongoing in the construction industry which had reached a stage in which there was widespread realisation that all workers operating in the sector needed to be formally trained. This was especially relevant for those operating in the construction and demolition sectors in which health and safety issues were of significant relevance.

Apart from construction related courses, this Department also provided training in the restoration of cultural heritage, specialising in the area of stone. Heritage restoration projects at various sites of historical relevance on the island have been undertaken by the students as an integral part of the student learning programmes.



ICT students in the First Global Robotics Competition in Dubai



Institute of Information and Communication Technology

Since the Institute of Information and Communication Technology had been using Moodle as the main learning management system since 2005, the transition to online learning during the pandemic was seamless. The Institute also provided computers to students who did not have access to a computer at home to help them continue with their studies.

Code Week is an annual event organised by the EU Commission in collaboration with eSkills Malta Foundation. The Institute organised a two-week programme to provide introductory short courses on emerging technologies to the general public for free. All fourteen sessions were fully booked and Malta has once again placed first in Europe on the number of initiatives organised per capita.

A team of five female students had the opportunity to participate in the First Global Robotics competition in Dubai. The students built a robot from a limited number of parts and developed the software required to compete amongst another 170 countries with the aim of increasing female students to choose STEAM careers.

The Institute for Public Services has reached out to the Institute to organise 42 ICT related short courses as a form of CPD to public service employees. The courses ranged from Cloud Computing to Databases, Network Technologies, Sharepoint, Computer Technician, System Administration, Change Management, System Testing and GDPR law. Around 400 employees attended these courses.



ICT students that participated in the First Global Robotics Competition in Dubai

MCAST Gozo Campus

The MCAST Gozo Campus managed to ensure a continuity of service provision despite the extraordinary circumstances. The College is expanding the VET provision on the island of Gozo through the delivery of a wide spectrum of courses, both in terms of vocational areas as well as MQF levels.

The full-time course provision at the Gozo Campus was further extended by two new programmes, the Level 5 Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years and the ACCA qualification. In total, MCAST Gozo Campus offered 23 full-time courses.

The closure of educational institutions in March 2020 brought about a new reality for staff and students. The switch to online teaching and learning involved a learning curve for all but after an initial period of adaptation, the Gozo Campus adjusted to this new reality quite smoothly. The already existing use of online platforms such as Moodle and Unicheck as well as the substantial progress achieved by the Gozo Campus in the changeover to the new MIS system actually facilitated a smooth transition to online delivery and assessment. The Gozo Campus started the move towards a paperless approach at a much faster rate than originally envisaged. Assignments were developed, verified and issued to students

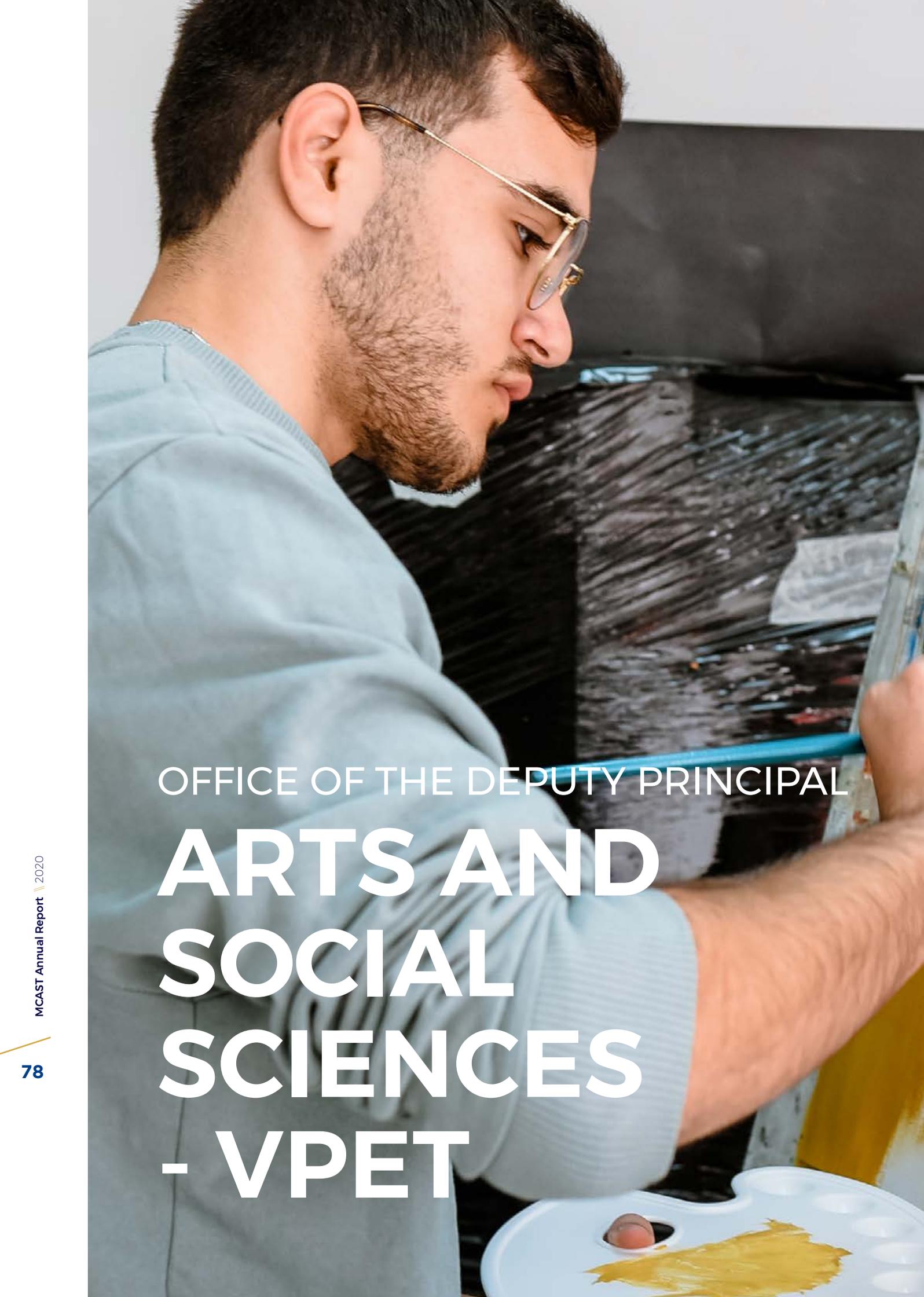
electronically. Students submitted their work online and assessors corrected their work digitally. In this manner, the MCAST Gozo Campus ensured continuity of its programmes' delivery, whilst maintaining the quality standards.

The majority of programmes were closed off according to the pre-set schedule and results were issued in July 2020. Furthermore, for programmes that could not be finalised due to practical assessments, a schedule of practical sessions and assessments was devised and this plan was executed smoothly, closing off the remaining programmes by mid-September 2020. All programmes were closed off whilst maintaining standards throughout.

At the request of the Hon Dr Justyne Caruana, the Gozo Campus Director, Ing Godwin Grech, gave a detailed presentation on the impact of COVID-19 on the MCAST Gozo Campus operations and plans for the way forward, to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Gozo Affairs.

During the summer months, a considerable amount of work was carried out in preparation for the re-opening of the Gozo Campus in October, in conformity with health protocols.





OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES - VPET



Dr Tatjana Chircop - Deputy Principal

Institute for the Creative Arts

Institute of Community Services

Institute of Business Management and Commerce

MCAST Centre for Professional Development

During 2020, the Office of the Deputy Principal for Arts and Social Sciences, incorporating the Institute of Business Management and Commerce, the Institute of Community Services, the Institute for the Creative Arts and the Centre for Professional Development (which falls under the joint remit of the Deputy Principals VPET) worked on various fronts including course reviews, online learning and, inevitably, on mitigating the COVID-19 impact on our students' learning experience.

A number of study programmes were reviewed during 2020 to ensure high standards of quality and relevance to the needs of industry. There were close collaborations with a number of stakeholders both on full-time course content as well as part-time courses. A number of MoUs have been signed with interested stakeholders. In close collaboration with industry, a number of new study programmes were launched, including the study programme focusing on Real Estate and the MCAST Advanced Diploma in Retail.

Particular highlights of this year were initiatives and projects such as the collaboration with Infrastructure Malta whereby works of art from the Institute for the Creative Arts were integrated with the green wall concept and exhibited on one of Malta's major roads. The MCAST 2020-2021 Prospectus for full-time courses was once again designed by the students from

the Institute for the Creative Arts. Final year students at the Institute of Business Management and Commerce, once again had the opportunity to present their research to industry partners with the best research being awarded by industry.

Student mentors in each of MCAST Institutes closely followed all students following programmes up to Level 3, supporting them in settling into the College system, motivating them to engage in their learning journey and explore further learning opportunities, while also tackling issues that might not be conducive to learning. Student mentors were at the core of supporting students to shift suddenly to online learning due to COVID-19 measures. The student mentors helped students in this transition while transitioning to online methods of support themselves, in order to ensure that all students up to Level 3 were able to continue with their



studies. Activities such as the annual Debate Tournament in collaboration with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh were held. This involved students being trained in debating skills and debating topics of current interest.

A number of MQF Level 1 Skills Kits were developed, targeting online learning and online platforms. These were developed with the sudden shift to online learning and online communication in mind and the aim of these Skills Kits was to help candidates familiarize themselves with particular platforms which could be used for learning and communicating.

Within this project, research in a number of areas has also been ongoing. Challenges and barriers that students find in their learning journeys were researched, as well as skills gaps in the industry which could be targeted at basic levels and research on the gamification of the curriculum at MQF levels up to Level 3.

During this year, work on an online platform for students was also continued in order to provide students with the possibility of enjoying an attractive and user-friendly online environment and an application through which learning and communication could take place.

Institute for the Creative Arts

The year under review was quite a different academic year for the Institute for the Creative Arts (ICA).

While numerous live cases both internal to MCAST and external to the institution with significant private and public stakeholders were still conducted, practical activity had to be adapted to the new reality caused by COVID-19. Certain projects were reconsidered while others were kept in abeyance until September/October 2020 when they could be completed on site. Meanwhile, a creative, proactive and supportive approach to online learning was fostered.

Regretfully, the flagship MCAST ICA Festival could not be held in 2020. While all was in place for it to again be hosted at Spazju Kreattiv, this had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 measures. However, visibility of students' work was still ensured through a digital catalogue which was produced for the occasion.

In order to promote its various programmes, ICA initially hosted visits from numerous prospective students. Moreover, ICA staff participated in various career guidance activities organized in collaboration with numerous stakeholders in the field of education. Those conducted by MCAST were largely held online and proved successful in maintaining student admission numbers on a similar level to those noted in previous years.

A number of programmes of study were revised following feedback from industry stakeholders, lecturers and students. Significant updates were made to the Advanced Diploma in Photography and the Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design and Interactive Media. Furthermore, preparations for the new intake were undertaken so that:

1. the latter will morph into an Advanced Diploma in Digital Design to provide opportunities for preparatory technical training in graphic design, interactive media and game design;
2. there will be the launch of a completely new Advanced Diploma in Graphical Printing; and
3. the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts will be significantly updated.

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion was launched as the ICA's first apprenticeship degree programme. It attracted an interesting cohort of students to follow their first year in 2019-2020. Also at degree level, practice as research was integrated into the Institute's dissertation approaches using the performing arts dissertations as a pilot study.

Moreover, ICA facilitated and supported one-fifth of MCAST's research endeavours with several staff members from each department engaged in research activity. It is interesting to note that a number of such projects were not limited to ICA but allowed for the cross-fertilization of ideas across MCAST Institutes, Departments and beyond.

Recruitment built on the aggressive campaign of the previous year with a view to ensuring that the human resource capacity better approached requirements and, in certain areas, specialist lecturers were attracted. Furthermore, several works were carried out to improve the functionality and presentation of the premises, with a significant amount being related to the required COVID-19 measures to ensure a safe working and learning environment.



Institute of Community Services

Courses offered at the Institute of Community Services reflect current procedures adopted by industry. This is achieved by devising components in each programme with industry specific experiences. Throughout 2020 the Institute provided various learning opportunities that culminated in bringing together learning and practice in collaboration with professionals hailing from industry. This was further reinforced by providing work experience during practice placement.

Health and Social Care students were given various experiences at every level, commencing with visits organised for the Foundation Level 2 students to St Vincent de Paul, Richmond Foundation and day centres for the elderly to start acquainting themselves with the settings. Students enrolled in the BA (Honours) Health and Social Care Management visited Mount Carmel Hospital in an effort to create awareness on mental health and current services, over and above the yearly placement.

A seminar held in March 2020 in collaboration with the Social Care Standards Authority proved to be a memorable experience for around 55 students enrolled in the degree programme as it discussed the importance of regulation in the field and upholding standards throughout. To consolidate this close collaboration, MCAST signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Social Care Standards Authority to continue ensuring that Social Care students achieved the necessary skills to assist service users in a professional manner.

The past year has been a fruitful one for our sports staff and students. Students who successfully complete the BSc in Sports, Exercise and Health can now choose a teaching profession by selecting to enrol in a part-time course with the Institute for Education or in a full-time course with the University of Malta. Eligibility for these programmes of study have become possible after extensive discussions

and reviews carried out by MCAST Sports lecturers.

Another achievement was the collaboration with the Department of Active Ageing. First year degree students were given the opportunity of working with the elderly in care homes to plan and implement physical movement programmes. This was the year during which the Exercise for Health on Campus was launched. Thirty-three MCAST employees benefitted from this individual health and fitness programme. This message culminated during the MCAST sports days organised by the Institute of Community Services sports team for the MCAST community.

The MCAST Fitness Centre reopened its doors in November 2020 following an extensive refurbishing process. An average of 50 people made use of the fitness centre daily. Following COVID-19, all mitigation measures were implemented and adhered to.

The Hairdressing and Beauty team benefitted from workshops to create awareness on energy consumption and the drive towards minimising environmental impact through greener practice within salons. Lecturers and students garnered knowledge on how every decision impacts the environment.

The Diploma in Security, Enforcement and Protection, launched in recent years, is bearing fruit. Alumni have successfully completed the recruitment course and have joined the Malta Police Force. This strengthens the Institute's ties with the disciplined forces in providing preparatory training for their recruitment needs.

The above initiatives solidify the Institute's commitment to providing students with experiences that help attain industry specific skills leading to their excelling within their chosen professional role.





Institute of Business Management and Commerce

The pandemic caused disruptions, yet the Institute of Business Management and Commerce was fast to respond and within a matter of days all tuition was shifted online.

During 2020 the Institute launched three new courses, namely the BA (Honours) in Procurement and Finance, the MCAST Advanced Diploma in Retail and the Real Estate Programme. These courses were the outcome of a number of consultation meetings with local industry stakeholders.

Throughout the year, a number of short evening programmes were held. These included short programmes in Management, Operations Management, Human Resources Management, Business and Industrial Administration, Finance for non-Finance Managers and English for Business. These courses were regularly sought after and attracted participants who were already active in industry but wished

to improve their knowledge of specific business areas.

Speakers from industry were invited to participate in co-lecturing sessions and this provided students with a more real experience of business topics rather than just exposure to theory. Speakers at these sessions shared their practices with students who in turn had the opportunity to delve deeper into the specific management topics under presentation and discussion.

The MCAST Advanced Diploma in Financial Services and the MCAST Advanced Diploma in Insurance were amalgamated into one programme, with students choosing to follow either the Finance or the Insurance stream in the second year of the programme. This amalgamation provided more efficient use of internal resources whilst giving the students increased exposure to both Financial Services and Insurance irrespective of which area they chose to specialize in during the second year of the programme.

MCAST Centre for Professional Development

In 2020, the Centre for Professional Development focused on two qualifications apart from delivering a number of internal CPD sessions.

MVEAR 4.0 & BVET 4.0

The 2020 saw the Master in Vocational Education Applied Research 4.0 (MVEAR 4.0) in its second year with 32 participants enrolling at PG Cert. level and another 16 participants progressing to the second year of studies at PG Dip. level. This is a part-time course which is very popular both internally and externally especially for those aspiring to specialize in vocational education and research. Moreover, the Bachelor of Vocational Education and Training 4.0 (Honours) (BVET 4.0) was launched with the first cohort starting in October 2020. This full-time course has been recognized by the Council for the Teaching Profession as a possible route to apply for a permanent teacher's warrant.

Internal CPD

The Centre for Professional Development also organized, at regular intervals, CPD sessions which were open to all MCAST staff. Besides these, particular ad hoc sessions were organized when the need arose. A total of 20 different sessions were held, with the participation of 420 members of staff.

The areas of study included Unit Development, Pedagogy and Assessment for Learning, Integrating Transversal Skills, Group Projects as a Learning and Assessment Tool, Alleviating Poverty through Education - our role as Educators and AI in Education.

As expected, at the start of COVID-19 restrictions, the most popular sessions were the ones focusing on Using Moodle for Learning, Using Teams for Learning and Using Classter for Learning Management.

The Centre for Professional Development was also responsible for the coordination of the induction training days for new MCAST staff.

Hh Dr Caruana, Minister for Education and Prof Calleja, MCAST Principal and CEO during the MCAST Research and Innovation EXPO held in December 2020



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
**RESEARCH &
INNOVATION**



Dr Ing. Alex Rizzo - Deputy Principal

Partnerships Office

International Office

Applied Research &
Innovation Centre

Library & Learning Resources



Signing of MoU with the Social Care Standards Authority

Partnerships Office

During the year 2020 the Partnerships Office was instrumental in the signing of twelve Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements, namely with the:

- // Foundation for Social Welfare Services
- // Accra Technical University, Ghana
- // Commission for Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (CGVDV)
- // Air Conditioning Importers Association
- // Social Care Standards Authority (SCSA)
- // Water Loss Research and Analysis Ltd
- // Pegaso International Malta
- // Richmond Foundation
- // Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights – and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari
- // MCST
- // Agency for Infrastructure Malta
- // Fondazzjoni Ċentru għall-Kreattività.



MoU with the Airconditioners Association

These help to increase the cooperation between MCAST and Industry as well as with various other educational and non-educational institutions.

The Partnerships Office continued to expand its network of contacts with local and international industry in order to attract more business for the MCAST Gateway to Industry especially in terms of high-level technical training.

Apart from this, the Office strived in its role as UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre for TVET in Malta and is participating and contributing towards the development of TVET internationally. In fact, MCAST participated and concluded successfully two projects by UNESCO-UNEVOC, one for Innovation Hubs (i-hubs) and one about Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT).

The Partnerships Office has also contributed to international networks such as the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) and the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET).



Erasmus+ mobility in Iceland



Third year Civil Engineering students opportunity to participate in an Erasmus programe in Sweden



ERASMUS+ Student Mobility in Finland

International Office

The International Office continued with its operations to increase the participation of MCAST students and staff in the ERASMUS+ programmes in both Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET).

However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the participation of students and staff and a reduced number of 81 students and 24 staff travelled on mobilities during 2020. Yet the International Office continued to work hard and identify new international partners with which to exchange students and staff once the health emergency is over.

Thirty-two new Interinstitutional Agreements were set up and signed with universities across the EU. MCAST successfully applied for new Erasmus+ project participation, reaching an all-time high of 26 active projects by end 2020. In parallel the International Office continued to expand its international network of educational contacts for the College.

A major contribution of the Office was the drafting of the MCAST Globalisation Strategy 2021-2024. The Office helped in the research, drafting and development of the strategy document until it was formally approved by the MCAST top management in November 2020.

Applied Research and Innovation Centre

Research

During the year 2020, the Applied Research and Innovation Centre deployed and implemented the MCAST Research Framework seeking to engage academics from across all Institutes at MCAST to commence research activities in relation to their expertise. This led MCAST to expand its subset of research active academics from 4 to 96 over the year, with the establishment of 20 research thematic areas endorsed by the Corporate Research Committee.

Through a dedicated team working on pre-award support, MCAST was able to submit over 37 externally funded project proposals throughout the year, of which ten new projects were

successfully awarded. This expanded the profile of Research projects at MCAST through successful consortia in EU funded frameworks including H2020, Interreg ESF, EIT, EAFRD and Erasmus+ as well as local funding opportunities including FUSION, Space Research Fund and Malta Enterprise. The exposure to this activity culminated in December 2020 during the MCAST Research and Innovation EXPO whereby, through the use of an innovative Virtual Campus environment, all research active academics and management were able to disseminate and share their research progress through a two-day event which saw the participation of over 220 attendees across the campus.

MCAST Research Team



Innovation

MCAST continued its drive to see Artificial Intelligence (AI) become an integral part of the institution and well embedded in daily practices.

During 2020, particular focus was given to skilling MCAST's staff through dedicated CPD sessions on the subject matter. A dedicated programme combining robotics and AI was launched to address the need for a technical workforce prepared for tomorrow's AI-augmented industry.

MCAST embarked on two European projects: Introducing Artificial Intelligence to Vocational Schools in Europe and Fostering Student Engagement through AI-driven Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices.

The launch of the MCAST's EdTech framework was pivotal to harness the use of innovative, disruptive technologies within the MCAST ecosystem. The framework allows for a gradual and organic uptake of select educational technologies applicable to MCAST's needs. One such technology that was developed was XR (Extended Reality). This was successfully utilized as an innovative tool in career guidance during the 2020 National STEM Career Expo.

An interesting development was the creation of the first MCAST virtual campus which hosted the MCAST Research and Innovation 2020 EXPO. During 2020, MCAST joined the European EdTech Network.

Library & Learning Resources

The year 2020 can be characterized as a fruitful year for the Library in which a lot of work was done and a lot of productive results were achieved despite facing unprecedented challenges.

The academic year 2020 began with a leadership transition to a new Library Director. Ms Liza Franco was appointed Library Director upon the retirement of Mr Laurence Zerafa after 16 years of service.

Freshers' Week was celebrated in a unique way in 2020, with the addition of colourful activities and competitions. Many students, staff, as well as influential figures such as the President of Malta, His Excellency Dr George Vella, and other dignitaries attended the Library events.

The relocation of the Centre for Maritime Studies Library, Kalkara to the Main Campus Library, Paola took place with careful planning.

When the lockdown was announced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library team worked rapidly to transfer services from the physical library to the online library. During this time, the Library launched the MCAST Master's Dissertations Online Repository, the MCAST Author Database and the MCAST LLRC YouTube Channel.

During 2020 the Library acquired two new databases, IEEE and ProQuest, in addition to the existing databases EBSCO, Emerald and Weblinks, with a budget increase of 160% to an annual value of €91,800.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATION

 **MCAST**
Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology



THANK YOU
for helping us
keep each other
safe at **MCAST.**



Philip Vella - Deputy Principal

Corporate Social
Responsibility & Events
Department

Procurement Office

Communications Office

Finance Office

Human Resources Office

Corporate Social Responsibility and Events Department

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

This Department is responsible for the MCAST CSR initiative, providing MCAST students with opportunities to enhance their studies with life-enriching experiences that add value to their holistic knowledge base with the aim of empowering them to become active and employable citizens.

Throughout 2020 the implementation of the CSR initiative primarily encouraged personal development among students at MCAST, while having a positive impact on the local community. The initiative enhanced relationships with the CSR partners in supporting public value outcomes. All students at MCAST have the opportunity to carry out community work at either non-governmental organisations or sports associations, care homes for the elderly and local councils, among others, as part of their training programme. The CSR programme includes a framework whereby any knowledge and skills acquired through it will be recognised and accredited as part of the College's formal programme of studies.

During the academic year 2020 more than 500 placements were provided

to students. Due to the COVID-19 situation, no more placements were offered but students were given other options to complete their CSR component. MCAST students had the opportunity to carry out community work through various areas such as the environment, animal welfare, culture, education, sports and social care, among others. The activities were various and included administration work, coaching in different sports disciplines, helping out in homes for children and the elderly, maintaining websites and social media platforms, and helping NGOs in their daily work by caring for abandoned animals, among others. Furthermore, students also came up with ideas of their own to help their fellow students or the community.

The MCAST CSR Department has worked closely with various organisations on different projects to help its student and staff population understand better the importance of putting something back into society, investing in worthwhile causes, institutions and organisations, providing support to community initiatives and contributing towards environmental sustainability.



Ftira Day organised by the CSR and Events Department

Events

The CSR and Events Department was set up in December 2019 to lead project activities and manage the development, implementation and monitoring of project plans and coordinate various events, as well as events' logistics from proposal right up to delivery, including setting and maintaining project timelines and priorities.

The year 2020 has seen MCAST organise events very professionally and to very high standards. Although with certain restrictions in place due to COVID-19, a good number of events were organised during 2019-2020. The events that were organised included high profile meetings such as the MCESD meetings, MCAST project related events, visits by Ministers, launch events and fundraising events.

Procurement Office

During 2020, the Procurement Office has further strengthened its coordinating role for the entity's procurement in order to ensure that all relevant procurement procedures are adhered to by all the different Departments and Institutes within MCAST. The Office has continued the processing, issuance and adjudication of requests/calls for quotations and tenders whilst simultaneously monitoring the status/progress of published calls and providing the necessary assistance.

The activities of the Procurement Office during 2020 have resulted in 938

purchase orders which amounted to €1.073 million. Moreover, 23 tenders were published, amounting to €4.7 million, together with the publication of nine Calls for Quotations amounting to €81k, with the latter two being published on the Electronic Public Procurement System. The number of contracts awarded during 2020 resulted in nine tenders amounting to €1.78 million.

Specific training on the use of the Electronic Public Procurement System was delivered to all officers within the Procurement Office.

Communications Office

In 2020 the Communications Office intensified its communications in support of the College's strategic priorities. These efforts included both internal communication within the College as well as external promotion and media relations.

The intranet was further developed for improved internal communications to complement the circulars and announcements sent to internal target audiences. Around 350 announcements were communicated to staff members and students. Updated information was sent to senior management, including daily media coverage and a newly-introduced social media digest. Approximately 489 news links and articles about MCAST and education were disseminated.

The Communications Office was also responsible for designing and publishing COVID-19 related messages and signage.

The Office organised press conferences regularly with an average of one to two events per month. It was responsible for issuing press releases and speaking notes and ensuring good collaboration with the Ministry for Education and other entities.

The Office was also responsible for the MCASTlink publication issued every quarter,

that also included special editions related to MCAST Success Stories.

A mixed media campaign to promote the College's course offer was designed and implemented, including social media, TV and radio adverts, billboards and outdoor signage, print and online advertising. The campaign led to increased visibility and social media engagement.

A social media plan was created, including a strategy for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. A paid campaign to promote intake for courses 2020 was implemented between June and September 2020 resulting in an increased page following of over 25,000.

The following results were achieved:

- The Prospectus PDF was downloaded for offline viewing 1,204 times after a click on our ads.
- The Prospectus landing page was fully loaded 3,292 times after a click on our ads.
- The total number of Landing Page Views on the MCAST website as a result of clicks on the ads was 4,634.
- We reached 48,046 individuals a total of 2,427,769 times.
- We had 43,395-page engagements on the ads.

Finance Office

During 2020 the Finance Office expanded its human resources to ensure effectiveness and efficiency towards its stakeholders. It embarked on a project to ensure that all procedures in this Office were documented to ensure continuity. This function is extremely important for all the College, since this Office not only handles accounting transactions, but it also has the important function of the payroll.

The Office gives a lot of importance to the correctness of data and abides with all the recent world changes. It has introduced a number of procedures to ensure that all information received by the Office is treated correctly and is compliant with the GDPR rules.

During 2020, the College incurred an additional expenditure to ensure that the COVID-19 measures were respected and adhered to.



Human Resources Staff

Human Resources Office

Notwithstanding the challenges in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MCAST Human Resources Office continued to provide the best services required. The HR team worked proficiently by using virtual tools such as Teams, while keeping the same HR procedures.

Information was in constant flow even though it was not possible for the employees to be present physically at the workplace. The processing of salaries, recruitment, employees' progressions and other payroll

provisions proceeded in a timely and meticulous manner.

In 2020 the HR Office continued with the recruitment process. 485 calls for application for vacant positions were issued. Sixty-five calls were for full-time vacancies while 420 posts were for part-time lecturers.

The Office continued to follow legislative procedures, and has updated all its records and processes as per the GDPR provisions, while work on the updating of the related SOPs is still ongoing.

EXCERPTS FROM THE
AUDITED ACCOUNTS

Report of the Board of Governors

The Board presents their report and the audited financial statements of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology ("the College") and consolidated financial statements of the College and its subsidiaries (together, "the Group") for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Principal activities

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) mission is to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an internal dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy.

To achieve this, the College and the Group provide full-time vocational courses at various levels leading to internationally recognised Certificates/Diplomas at further and higher education level as well as ad hoc courses to cater for retraining and up-skilling of the workforce, enhancing mobility, flexibility and employability to meet the challenges of restructuring and the development of the economy in a highly competitive world.

Review of operations

The College and the Group registered surplus for the year amounting €2,506,222 (2019: deficit of €325,909) and of €3,174,455 (2019: deficit of €44,004) respectively.

Board of Governors

The following are the details of individuals who have served as Governors of the College during the year under review and up to date of authorisation of these financial statements:

Prof. Ian Refalo - President	-	appointed on 16th May 2020
Mr. Frederick Schembri - President	-	resigned on 16th May 2020
Prof. Mark G. Borg - Deputy President		
Dr. Amanda Bezzina		
Mr. Brian Farrugia		
Ms. Rhoda Garland		
Ms. Louisa Grech		
Mrs. Marietta Lanzon		
Ms. Marisa Xuereb	-	appointed on 6th April 2020
Ms. Davina Sammut Hill	-	appointed on 8th June 2020
Mr. Kurt Farrugia	-	appointed on 8th June 2020

In accordance with the Education Act, 1988, the Board of Governors are appointed by the Minister for a period of three years and they are eligible for re-appointment.

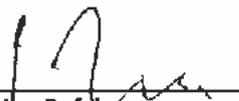
Registered Address

MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola, PLA 9032, Malta.

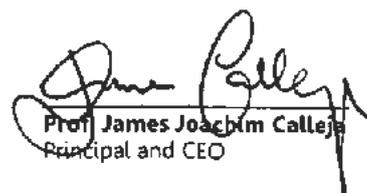
Auditors

Capstone Assurance Ltd, Registered Auditors, have expressed their willingness to continue in office and a resolution for their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Approved by the Board on 17 June 2021.



Prof. Ian Refalo
President



Prof. James Joachim Calleja
Principal and CEO

Statement of Governors' Responsibilities

The Governors' of the College and the Group are required by the Education Act, 1988 and Companies Act, Cap 386, to prepare the annual financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the the College and the Group at the end of each financial period and of its surplus/deficit for that period. In preparation of the annual financial statements, the Governors' are required to:

- Select and apply appropriate accounting policies;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Comply with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the EU; and
- Prepare the annual financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the College and the Group will continue in business.

The Governors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the College and the Group and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Education Act, 1988 and Companies Act, Cap 386. The Governors are also responsible for ensuring that an appropriate system of internal control is in operation to provide them with reasonable assurance that the assets of the College and the Group are being properly safeguarded and that fraud and other irregularities will be prevented or detected.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Governors of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Malta College Of Arts, Science & Technology (the College) and the consolidated financial statements of the College and its subsidiaries (together, the Group), set out on pages 3 - 22, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis of Qualified Opinion section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the College and of the Group as at 31 December 2020, and financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union.

Basis of Qualified Opinion

As disclosed in Note 10, the College and the Group have buildings and improvements recognised at cost, amounting to €25,442,577 as at 31 December 2020. During the reporting period, the Board of Governors updated the depreciation policy bringing the said in line with IAS 16 *Property, Plant and Equipment* and thus appropriately reflecting useful life of the buildings and improvements to 50 years. The Board of Governors did not restate prior year comparative figures in accordance with the IAS 8 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*. Consequently, accumulated depreciation of €18,566,774 on buildings and improvements having a cost value of €19,112,730 as at 01 January 2020, which were previously depreciated over 5 years, remain overstated and carrying amount of assets understated. We were unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to quantify adjustments necessary to property, plant and equipment and reserves.

In addition, as at reporting date we were unable to obtain bank confirmation letters from Bank of Valletta PLC due to changes in the Board of Governors and the Board in Directors and the resultant delays in effecting the necessary changes in authorised signatories. Furthermore, we were unable to obtain sufficient appropriate alternative procedures to confirm completeness and accuracy of bank balances of the College and the Group as at 31 December 2020.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders). Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap.281) in Malta, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

Emphasis of matter

We draw attention to Note 20 in the financial statements which describes uncertainty associated with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the individual financial statements of the College and the consolidated financial statements of the Group subsequent to the year ended 31 December 2020. Our opinion is not qualified in this respect.



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Registered in Malta C57993. Director Kris Baron FCCA, FIA, CISA, CPA.

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Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Other Information

The governors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Governors report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover this information, including the Governors report. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

In addition, in light of the knowledge and understanding of the College and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we are required to report if we have identified material misstatements in the Governors report. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Governors

The Governors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with IFRS as adopted by the EU, and for such internal control as the Governors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Governors are responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Governors either intend to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the College's and Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Governors.



Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Governors use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the College's and the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the College and the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the College and the Group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with the Governors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Under the Education Act, 1988 and Companies Act, Cap 386, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or that returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us.
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have nothing to report to you in respect of these responsibilities.



Kris Baron
for and on behalf of
Capstone Assurance Ltd
Registered Auditor

17 June 2021

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Registered in Malta C57993. Director Kris Baron FCCA, FA, CISA, CPA.

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Statement of Comprehensive Income

	Notes	Group		College	
		2020 €	2019 €	2020 €	2019 €
Income					
Funds allocated by Government	4	37,528,503	32,132,140	37,528,503	32,132,140
Course fees		1,675,791	1,414,730	521,911	547,403
Finance income		509	137	239	137
Other income	5	1,791,932	1,593,388	753,026	905,085
		40,996,735	35,140,395	38,803,679	33,584,765
Expenditure					
Recurrent expenditure		(37,239,307)	(34,959,710)	(36,155,985)	(33,881,122)
Pension contribution		(141,472)	(29,552)	(141,472)	(29,552)
Depreciation	6	-	-	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before taxation	7	3,615,956	151,133	2,506,222	(325,909)
Taxation	8	(441,501)	(195,137)	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		3,174,455	(44,004)	2,506,222	(325,909)

There were no transactions to be reported as 'Other Comprehensive Income' during the year.

The notes on pages 7 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

	Note	Group		College	
		2020 €	2019 €	2020 €	2019 €
ASSETS					
Non-current assets					
Property, plant and equipment	10	15,738,750	11,616,707	15,738,750	11,616,707
Investment in subsidiary	11	-	-	1,999	1,999
Investment in associate	12	-	200	-	-
Deferred tax		700	700	-	-
Total non-current assets		15,739,450	11,617,607	15,740,749	11,618,706
Current assets					
Trade and other receivables	13	5,167,505	5,173,985	7,065,923	5,923,639
Cash and cash equivalents	14	19,655,510	12,197,482	13,960,573	8,010,059
Total current assets		24,823,015	17,371,467	21,026,496	13,933,698
TOTAL ASSETS		40,562,465	28,989,074	36,767,245	25,552,404
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES					
Reserves					
Endowment capital		232,937	232,937	232,937	232,937
Other reserve		23,763,111	16,583,881	23,763,111	16,583,881
Retained earnings/(Accumulated deficit)		1,735,981	(1,435,163)	341,135	(2,161,777)
Total reserves		25,732,029	15,381,655	24,337,183	14,655,041
Liabilities					
Non-current liabilities					
Other payables	15	1,903,356	2,447,172	1,903,356	2,447,172
Provisions	16	304,000	-	304,000	-
Total non-current liabilities		2,207,356	2,447,172	2,207,356	2,447,172
Current liabilities					
Provisions	16	382,334	-	382,334	-
Current tax payable		444,297	195,137	-	-
Trade and other payables	15	11,796,448	10,965,110	9,840,371	8,450,191
Total current liabilities		12,623,079	11,160,247	10,222,705	8,450,191
Total liabilities		14,830,435	13,607,419	12,430,061	10,897,363
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		40,562,464	28,989,074	36,767,244	25,552,404

The notes on pages 7 to 22 are an integral part of these financial statements.

These financial statements on pages 3 to 22 were approved by the Board of Governors on 17 June 2021:


 Prof. Ian Refalo
 President


 Prof. James Joachim Calleja
 Principal and CEO



MCAST

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