

## **CIRCULAR 249/2020: Message from the Principal and CEO**

### **Start of the academic year 2020/2021**

16<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Staff members,

The abrupt closing of our campuses in March as a result of COVID-19 and the transition to online learning has made us deeply appreciate the resilience and connection of our community. Over the summer, we focused on making the College safe and accessible for everyone. MCAST was the first post-secondary education institution to publish its protocol after discussing its content with the Health Authorities and the Malta Union of Teachers.

As we begin to welcome lecturers back on campus, I know that many of you have questions and concerns. I want to reassure you, that even in these uncertain times with the limitations imposed by this pandemic, MCAST is committed to providing high-quality vocational education and positive learning experiences.

The [MCAST protocol for College safety](#) published on our website is part of the College's careful planning to reopen the campuses in Malta and Gozo while minimising risks for staff and students. The protocol is the result of risk assessments carried out across all facilities and ongoing consultation with staff, students, the health authorities and unions. The guidelines, which we will keep updating, include information on specific measures such as face-covering, increased levels of cleaning and social distancing measures. The implementation of this protocol is crucial, and I am confident that we will be **working together** to make it work.

There are 3 main aspects which will determine our effectiveness in the coming months: adaptability, communication and collaboration. The evolving situation requires our readiness to adapt to changes and possible scenarios. As circumstances may change, we may have to adjust elements of our provision at short notice and work with agility. We will also need to maintain clear, consistent messaging across all our channels. The [intranet](#) is the dedicated space for staff only which will be updated regularly with relevant information.

To be successful, we need to keep working together. I take this opportunity to thank the staff who worked relentlessly during the past months on planning and preparation to ensure a safe reopening for new and returning students.

In these unusual times, our public service mission to make education accessible to all becomes ever more relevant.

At MCAST, we recognise that safety and wellbeing go well beyond mask-wearing and sanitising. We know that in this abnormal situation members of our community have been experiencing difficulties and facing additional mental health challenges. Support is available - please reach out - we are here to help.

All best wishes for the start of the academic year and thank you for your flexibility and adaptability in these challenging times.

Prof Joachim James Calleja  
Principal and CEO