



- ✓ *Have a look at the full MCAST DRes regulations at: <https://legislation.mt/eli/ln/2021/302/eng>*
- ✓ *Benefit from the GET QUALIFIED tax rebate scheme for DRes candidates commencing up to end 2023, pending possible extensions to this scheme: <https://getqualified.maltaenterprise.com/applicablecourses>*
- ✓ *See our extensive research in this area of study at: <https://moodle.mcast.edu.mt/course/view.php?id=3596#section-1>*
- ✓ *Have a look at our Qualitative Research Conferences at: <https://research.mcast.edu.mt/applied-qualitative-research>*
- ✓ *Read into our Research Journal at: <https://journal.mcast.edu.mt/resources/html/cms/MAINPAGE>*

### **Overarching Description of the MCAST DRes**

The research-based 'Professional Research Doctorate on the Competitive Behaviour of Small Organizations', or DRes, addresses a very specific, much needed, and purposely focused area of research through applying a powerful mixed-methods research methodology that is based on Grounded Theory and that runs on MCAST's MAXQDA platform. It focuses on building usable, substantive theories for small organizational behaviour, using the grounded theory method of enquiry. It looks towards understanding the patterns of decision-making behaviours, and best-practice models adopted, in both business-oriented small firms and in non-profit oriented small organizations.

### **The Unique Value Proposition for the MCAST Professional Research Doctorate**

The MCAST Professional Research Doctorate (DRes) on the Competitive Behaviour of Small Organizations is a research-driven EQF/MQF Level 8 qualification that takes on a specific remit to understand and build applied theories of small organization competitive behaviour within small island states, using the grounded theory method of enquiry and adopting qualitative and mixed methods techniques. It is argued that a knowledge of applied, substantive models of small organizational actions and behaviours, as these organizations seek to utilize resources more effectively and to remain sustainable within their environments, will allow for a vital mapping of best practice and usable behavioural theories that can be adopted by other small organizations.

### **Outline of DRes Schedule**

The DRes shall run over a minimum of 5 years on a part-time basis, and is generally aimed at professionals that hold relevant first and Masters degrees. The main component of the programme is a research endeavour of PhD level, taken on after following a successful journey through four taught modules relating to the MCAST *Post Graduate Certificate in Research Methods* (PG. Cert. Research Methods) qualification.

## **Why Small Organizations, Particularly for Small Island States such as Malta?**

The National Statistics Office in Malta has identified no fewer than 30,000 small firms that were operational in the latter half of the last decade; 96% of these registered up to 9 full-time employees and the remaining 4% registered 10 to 49 full-time employees. These small firms provide over 65% of employment, 38.7% of the economy's value added and 17% of investments within the private sector in Malta.

Together with these business-oriented organizations, small island states such as Malta are thriving with other forms of non-commercial small organizations that shape the politico-socio-economic climate of the country. Non-Governmental and Voluntary Organizations (NGOs and VOs respectively), play a major role in the beneficial contribution, transformation and well-being of myriad sectors in society. National importance is given to this sector depicted amongst others by the setting up of the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations, the Voluntary Organizations Act 2007, and the National Strategy for Volunteering 2020-2025.

## **External Collaboration**

Since external collaboration is one of the key objectives of this Professional Research Doctorate endeavour, incorporating profit-oriented and non-profit small organizations such as small businesses, NGOs and VOs, will work to build a community of best practice, as well as to elicit the beneficial participation of these entities in the research taking place. Together with its wide remit of collaborating academic and industrial partners, MCAST has selected the following 2 entities for a more-close collaboration:

1. Malta Chamber of SME's; with a focus on small competitive businesses.
2. The Richmond Foundation; as a key national NGO.

## **Why the Grounded Theory Method of Enquiry?**

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

## Programme Design & Implementation Timeline

The Programme would follow a standard design commonly adopted in universities across Europe. Candidate must successfully complete the following components that very much run in sequence, over a standard 5-year part-time period:

1. Four taught research methods modules, delivered during the first year, that focus on the rigour of primary and secondary research, and that allow the candidate to apply the knowledge gained towards a pilot research study that will form the basis of the final research endeavor.
2. A sequence of three publications of increasing academic rigour, generally submitted in the second, third and fourth year sequentially, demonstrating the candidate's build-up towards doctoral academic standing.
3. A full research endeavour at PhD level, examined at the end of the final year through submission of dissertation manuscript and viva, with annual evaluations to establish progress and any issues of concern.

## Fee Structure

| Year   | Annual Fee |
|--------|------------|
| Year 1 | € 3,500    |
| Year 2 | € 3,500    |
| Year 3 | € 4,000    |
| Year 4 | € 4,000    |
| Year 5 | € 5,000    |
| Year 6 | € 5,000    |
| Year 7 | € 5,500    |
| Year 8 | € 5,500    |

*Note 1: The normally expected duration of the programme is at 5 years.*

*Note 2: Fees may be revised in subsequent annual intakes.*