

## MCAST Regulations – MCAST Level 1 Introductory Certificate Course

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The following Regulations are issued by MCAST in virtue of the powers conferred upon it by sections 89 and 90 of the Education Act (Cap. 327) for the purpose of regulating the MCAST Introductory Certificate Courses.

The new **MCAST Level 1 Introductory Certificate** programme will offer MCAST students who sit for the *Initial Assessment Tests* and obtain an overall score below MQC Level 1 Key Skills the opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills in conjunction with vocational skills.

### 1. Citation and interpretation

1. These by-laws may be cited as the by-laws of 2010 for the MCAST Level 1 Introductory Certificate which shall be offered in the following study areas:

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Agribusiness

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Art & Design

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Care

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Computing

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Electrical/Electronic Engineering

MCAST Introductory Certificate in Mechanical/Construction and Engineering Skills

These regulations also cover the Introductory Certificate Course offered at the MCAST Gozo Centre.

### 2. Terms

2.1 Council of Institutes means the Council as established by *Section 91 (1b)* of the said Education Act.

2.2 The “course/s” means the course programme/s leading to the MCAST Introductory Certificate at Level 1.

2.3 ECVET stands for European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training.

### 3. Applicability

3.1 These regulations are applicable for all MCAST Introductory Certificate Level 1 courses.

### 4. Course Requirements for Admissions

4.1 Apart from satisfying the general course requirements for admission as specified in the Admissions Regulations, applicants must satisfy all special course requirements including those listed below:

1. Finished compulsory education
2. Be in possession of the School Leaving Certificate
3. Attend for an assessment / interview / test if required
4. Fulfil any other requirement approved by the COI

OR

4.2 Satisfy an interviewing board set by the COI.

### 5. Special needs

5.1 Students with different learning requirements and/or known medical or psychological conditions are expected to seek guidance from the MCAST Inclusive Education Unit (IEU), (Director, Information and Support Services: tel. 23987128 or the Counsellors: tel. 23987133/4), prior to submitting their application.

5.2 Together with their application form these students must produce recent professional evidence of their specific needs in order to enable MCAST to carry out a fair assessment and offer professional guidance. Recent professional evidence must not be older than 2 years on the date of application and students will be allowed one further year in which to seek and obtain an update report on their claimed condition.

5.3 Medical reports of students are confidential documents and shall only be held at the Registrar's office.

5.4 Failure to inform the MCAST Inclusive Education Unit (IEU) of a student's known serious medical or psychological condition prior to submitting an application, may, sooner or later, lead to problems which may be serious and beyond MCAST's control and/or responsibility.

5.5 Failure to report known medical conditions or medical changes to MCAST (att: Inclusive Education Unit) is an act of negligence and may work against the student himself/herself.

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5.6 The student, parent/s or guardian (if the student is under 18 years of age) are additionally responsible for keeping the College informed of all medical conditions or medical changes and for providing the proper medical documentation updates, specifically stating the ability and/or inability of the student to continue with his/her vocational training.

### **6. Course Coordination**

6.1 Each Institute shall assign a Deputy Director to coordinate the Introductory Certificate Course within the Institute.

### **7. Course Duration and progression**

7.1 The MCAST Introductory Certificate Course at Level 1 shall last 1 academic year.

7.2 Successful completion of the course shall entitle the student to proceed to the Foundation Course at Level 2 which lasts 1 year.

### **8. Introductory Course Content**

8.1 The Introductory Course at Level 1 shall consist of two components, namely, the Key Skills Component and the Vocational Component. In terms of application, the Malta Qualifications Council's weighting for these two components for Level 1 courses has been established in the ratio of 70 : 30 respectively.

8.2 In accordance with the recommendation of the Malta Qualifications Council the two components shall be allocated 40 credits to be divided as follows: 28 credits for the Key Skills and 12 credits for the Vocational component for a total workload of 1000 hours.

### **9. Key Skills**

9.1 The Key Skills component will be common to all Introductory certificate students in all Institutes offering the Level 1 Programme. MCAST offers five Key Skills subjects, namely English, Maltese, Mathematics, Information Technology and Personal and Social Development. Hours and relative ECVET credits are listed in the table below.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Total Hours of Learning</b>	<b>Level 1 Certificate</b>
English	31 wks x 4 hours - 124 hours	<b>8 credits</b>

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	plus 68 hours of self study, etc.	
Maltese	31 wks x 4 hours - 124 hours plus 68 hours of self study, etc.	<b>8 credits</b>
Mathematics	31 wks x 4 hours - 124 hours plus 68 hours of self study, etc.	<b>8 credits</b>
IT	31 wks x 1 hour – 31 hours plus 19 hours of self study, etc.	<b>2 credits</b>
PSD	31 wks x 2 hours – 62 hours plus 12 hours of seminars, etc.	<b>2 credits</b>
	<b>700 hours*</b> <b>(465 contact hours*)</b> <i>*inc. 186 hours of embedded learning</i>	<b>28 credits</b>

### 10. Vocational Component (*\*see para. 20 below*)

10.1 The vocational component shall consist of two vocationally related units offered by each Institute (i.e. IAB, IAD, IBCE, ICS, ICT, IEEE and IME) and relevant to the Institute’s subject area and the equivalent of three other units for embedded learning already accounted for in the Key Skills component, as per table below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Total Hours of Learning</b>	<b>Level 1 Certificate</b>
Vocational Unit 1	31 wks x 2 hours - 62 hours plus 88 hours of practice, etc.	<b>6 credits</b>
Vocational Unit 2	31 wks x 2 hours - 62hours plus 88 hours of practice, etc.	<b>6 credits</b>
Embedded sessions	31 wks x 6 hours - 186 hours*	N/A
	<b>300 hours*</b> <b>(124 contact hours*)</b> <i>* not including 186 hours of embedded sessions already accounted for.</i>	<b>12 credits</b>

### 11. ECVET

11.1 MCAST follows the recommendation of the The Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) and equates 1 credit with 25 hours of total learning time. These shall include contact hours, practical sessions, mentoring, self-study such as reading, research, seminars, conferences, tutorials, assignments and assessment and related organised activities such as informal and non-formal learning.

### 12. Embedded Teaching and Learning

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12.1 Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The model put forward shall see MCAST Level 1 students experiencing most of their literacy and numeracy skills as part of their vocational component.

12.2 The vocational component shall be planned to include teaching of relevant literacy and numeracy skills by the key-skills lecturer.

12.3 Students shall be informed during the induction sessions that the teaching of Maltese, English and Mathematics will be an integral part of their vocational requirements.

12.4 In the embedded sessions, teaching of the two components (Key Skills and vocational skills) shall take place side by side, in what is referred to as double-staffing or team-teaching. Key Skills lecturers shall work closely with vocational lecturers and share the same teaching and learning environment, i.e. workshops, laboratories, studios, places of work, etc.

### **13. Further clarifications: Key Skills**

13.1 In order to satisfy the 28 prescribed Key Skills credits, the 18 Key Skills credits of the table in **para. 9.1**, need to be augmented by 10 further credits. These shall be achieved through embedded learning.

13.2 English, Maltese, Maths shall benefit from 3 further credits each subject. These shall be achieved as a result of further embedding of the Key Skills within the delivery of the vocational component.

13.3 Between them IT and PSD shall be awarded a further 12.5 learning hrs each, to a total of 25 hours. (which is in turn is equivalent to 1 credit). It is recommended that these hours be used for organised talks by visitors and/or seminars in the case of PSD and through visits to industry in the case of IT.

13.4 Students shall be expected to keep a portfolio of work in the case of P.D. for assessment purposes.

13.5 The total number of contact hours for Key Skills application is 700 hours.

### **14. Assignments**

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14.1 Assignments for the Level 1 Key Skills shall be prepared centrally by the LSU Key Skills team of lecturers. These shall then be contextualised by the LSU lecturers attached to the various Institutes. Thus for embedded learning purposes, the assignments shall have direct and exclusive relevance to the vocational units of the respective Institutes.

14.3 English, Maltese and Maths shall each have 3 assignments.

14.4 Internal Verification of contextualised assignments shall be carried out by the subject coordinators or another person appointed by the Director in consultation with the Principal

### **15. Further Clarifications: The Vocational Component**

15.1 The Vocational component of the Introductory Certificate Course (Level 1) shall be relevant to the students' calling. The Vocational Skills component shall consist of TWO units of equal value and carry a total of 12 ECVET credits (see 8.2). The total number of hours of vocational application shall be 300 hours.

15.2 Each of the Vocational study units shall consist of 75 guided learning hours and shall be assessed by TWO assignments.

### **16. Certification**

16.1 Candidates who successfully complete both Component One (Key Skills) and Component Two (Vocational Skills) of the programme will be awarded the MCAST Introductory Certificate at Level 1.

### **17. Submission of assignments and re-sits**

17.1 Students are allowed to attempt an assignment or an assigned task a maximum two times during the course of their studies. After the first attempt, students may achieve either a PASS or a REFERRAL. If, following the lecturer's feedback, a student fails the second attempt the study unit shall be marked FAIL.

17.2 Students shall only be allowed to progress to the Foundation Level 2 course if they achieve a Pass in a minimum of 85% of assigned course tasks and provided that a Pass is obtained in a minimum of 70% of the tasks assigned for each individual study unit.

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17.3 Unsuccessful students may re-apply to repeat the whole programme the following year without any exemption. This means that, if their application is successful, students shall be expected to satisfy all programme study units of the Foundation Level 1 course in both Key Skills and Vocational Practice

17.4 Unsuccessful students will be allowed one further opportunity to apply for a Foundation Level 1 course in any institute. No preference will be given to such applications and applicants will need to satisfy all conditions of entry including any initial assessment tests and/or interview where applicable.

17.5 Repeating students shall only be allowed to progress to the Foundation Level 2 course if they satisfy both conditions listed in para 17.2.

17.6 Students who repeat the year and still fail to obtain the units after having undertaken an overall total of four attempts (two attempts from the first year and two further attempts when repeating the year) may re-apply to join the course as new students (using Application Form A). These applications will be considered after all other applications have been processed and space on the course permitting.

### **18. Progression**

18.1 Students who are in possession of the FULL MCAST Introductory Certificate at Level 1 may apply to continue with their studies and to progress to the MCAST Foundation Certificate Course at level 2. The candidate may need to satisfy any further course requirements as indicated for the new programme.

18.2 For the purpose of progression, candidates must obtain a PASS grade in both the Vocational and the Key Skills components and must have attended an overall 80% of the lectures.

### **19. LSU support**

19.1 The Learning Support Unit shall be exclusively responsible for the Key Skills component of the Level 1 Introductory Certificate Course. The LSU shall also offer additional support to learners as appropriate.

### **20. The Academic Year**

The academic calendar of the College is made up of 32 weeks which are equally divided between two semesters (16 + 16). Any emerging discrepancy in the length of the scholastic year (see the tables under 9.1 and 10.1) is to be utilised for induction, evaluation, revision, consolidation, or any other requirements, for which all MCAST lecturing staff shall be in attendance.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Additional information

##### 1. SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. If students happen to be absent during the week an assignment is issued, it is their responsibility and in their interest to collect the assignment from the lecturer concerned as early as possible on their return to the Institute.
2. Assignments shall only be presented on the submission date. If students know they are unable to be present on the submission date, they are expected to make all necessary arrangements for somebody else to present the work on their behalf.
3. All assignments should be handed in on the due date and at the time prescribed by the lecturer.
4. The director of Institute shall ensure that an appropriate record is kept of all assignments received.
5. For all written assignments, students shall make and retain a photocopy before parting with their work.
6. For courses where 3D experimental work, 3D outcomes or practical work are expected, students should keep an appropriate photographic record of the work they present for assessment.
7. Assignments shall be marked by the lecturer within three working weeks of the published submission date.
8. Individual feedback will be given to students on the Assignment Feedback Form.
9. Lecturer's feedback will state what has been achieved and possible areas for development.
10. Assignment work will then be returned to students, usually during the next individual or group tutorial, when a personal or general verbal feedback will be given.
11. Grades are always subject to Internal Verification.
12. If students receive a REFERRAL grade they will be entitled to arrange a referral tutorial in order to clearly establish what work still has to be completed.
14. Another submission date for the additional work to be completed and handed in will be agreed in writing. Students must note that there will be only ONE referral opportunity per assignment.
15. If students are absent when assignments are returned, it is their responsibility and in their interest to collect their assignment from the lecturer next time they are at the Institute.



### 2. ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION EXTENSIONS

1. Students who cannot hand in an assignment for any unit by the deadline set, owing to extenuating circumstances, must seek approval from the director for an extension.
2. The official Assignment Extension Application Form (Appendix A, available from the Institute Secretary's Office) must be completed explaining the reasons why the student wishes to submit work after the submission date.
3. An extension will only be granted if the student can provide evidence of an extenuating circumstance which is considered valid by the Institute Director or his representative. An extenuating circumstance shall consist of the recording of one or more personal difficulties over which the student had no control.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the necessary evidence to support such claims.
5. Extenuating circumstances shall not include:
  - (a) proximity or number of examinations or assessments;
  - (b) pressure of work;
  - (c) misreading of examination or assessments timetables;
  - (d) poor time management;
  - (e) scheduling of holidays or time abroad;
  - (f) undertaking (part-time) employment.
6. Assignment extensions shall not be given on the day the assignment is due to be submitted. One must apply for an extension a minimum of three working days before the submission date. Extensions shall only be considered if reasons are considered valid by the Director of Institute.
7. If students are ill within three working days of the submission date, they can telephone or e-mail the Director of Institute, requesting an extension. In the case of illness, a doctor's medical certificate shall be required. This is to be presented to the Institute's administration upon return to the institute.
8. A copy of the Assignment Extension Application Form will be kept in the students' personal file held by the tutor. The original should be attached to the assignment when it is submitted. If an extension is agreed, the assignment will then be marked in the normal way.

### 3. LATE SUBMISSION

1. Assignments which are handed in after the submission date without this form shall not normally be assessed. In all cases, it will be deemed to be, and recorded as, a late submission.
2. Late work shall not be marked. Provided it is the first time that a student is presenting work after the deadline, the work will be held by the tutor. It will only be marked when the student has demonstrated an ability to meet a deadline by submitting the next piece of work on time. This is a one-time concession and cannot be granted a second time.
3. If, during the course of their studies, students again fail to submit another assignment by the agreed date, there shall be no further extensions and the students' work shall not be assessed.
4. In the case of para. 3 above, students shall be asked to attend a meeting where the available options will be explained to them.

### 4. REFERRALS

1. If a student's assignment fails to achieve a pass at the first attempt, it will be marked "REFERRED".
2. Students are expected to make arrangements with their tutor to attend a Referral Tutorial to define what still needs to be achieved to gain a Pass.
3. Details of the Referral Tutorial will be kept in the student's personal file. The student will be allowed one opportunity per assignment to re-submit work within the negotiated time.
4. If the work submitted following the tutorial is still not of a Pass standard, the student will have failed that assignment.

**Appendix A**

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION EXTENSION FORM**

<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>			
<b>STUDENT'S NAME:</b>		<b>SUBJECT:</b>	
<b>UNIT NUMBER:</b>		<b>ASSIGNMENT TITLE:</b>	
<b>LECTURER'S NAME:</b>			
<b>ORIGINAL SUBMISSION DATE:</b>			
<b>HAS AN EXTENSION BEEN AGREED? Write YES or NO in the space alongside</b>			
<b>Length in days (maximum TEN) if an extension has been agreed:</b>		<b>If agreed, indicate DATE when work must be presented:</b>	
		<b>TIME:</b>	
<b>Reasons for late submission [to be completed by the student]</b>			
.....			
.....			
.....			
<b>Comments [to be completed by the Tutor]</b>			
<b>Medical Certificate: yes/no</b>			
<b>Other evidence [give details]:</b>			

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**Student's Signature**

**Date:**

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**Director's/Deputy's Signature**

**Date:**

