

# The “Social Care” Course at the University Gozo Centre

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## The First Two Courses

A Certificate Level Course in Social Care was offered at the Gozo Centre in 1997–98. Forty-seven students applied for this course and twenty-seven completed all study units and were awarded a certificate by the Gozo Centre.

This course proved popular enough and was offered for the second time during the following academic year 1998–99. Twenty-three students registered for this course and fifteen successfully completed the course and were awarded with a certificate of completion.

## The Third Course

After these two certificate courses in Social Care, the need was felt for further specialisation in the social care field and a Certificate Course in Day Care and Residential Work was offered between the years 2001 – 03. The course was open for twenty-five applicants. This course consisted of 16 credits through 5 study-units and was divided in three different levels: Introductory level, Intermediate level and Advanced level. Of the twenty-five applicants, fourteen completed all the three levels as well as a practical study unit and a long essay. They were awarded a certificate signed by the Head, Department of Social Policy and Social Work during a purposeful ceremony on the 19th of December 2003.

The Introductory Course for Day Care and Residential Workers consisted of two credits. This study unit developed the knowledge, understanding, practical skills and values for employment or further study in the caring services. The course was very practical and developed the experience and knowledge that

agencies in the caring field usually look for. By the end of this course the students were able to demonstrate personal and interpersonal qualities and skills required for caring in relation to the needs of the service users. Students were able to understand the importance of the role of the care/volunteer as a front worker. They also gained a solid knowledge and ability to recognise the needs of service users.

## The Intermediate Level

The Intermediate Course for Day Care and Residential Workers consisted of another two credits and it continued to develop further the knowledge, understanding, practical skills and values that students acquired in the Introductory Level. By the end of the intermediate Level, students were able to value basic principles of social care, acquired knowledge and aptitude to recognise the sociological and psychological needs of service users, evaluated their personal contribution in the role of a day care/residential/voluntary work, as well as affirmed their role of the day care/residential worker or volunteer in a caring agency.

## The Advanced Level

The Advanced level Course for Day care and Residential Workers consisted of three credits and continued to help students gain more knowledge and skills to work in a team and in understanding group dynamics. Besides, students acquired knowledge and aptitude on personality and the different client groups. They learned to address the service user from a systemic approach and gained insight to legal aspects. Skills in behaviour and risk management were also part of the curricula. Finally students were able to evaluate their personal contribution in creating equal opportunities in the role of a day care/residential worker.

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## A Practical Approach

The Certificate Course in Day Care and Residential Work demanded students to undergo a practical study unit which was worth four credits. Students were required to spend a minimum amount of 100 hours in a Day Care or Residential setting approved by the Board of Studies, as well as keep a Project-Journal related to the field placement. Workshops and tutorials were offered along. The general aim and objective of the practical placement was to give an opportunity for students to practice and evaluate the skills taught along the course and implement social care theories into practice by involving themselves within an organisation as an effective volunteer/care worker. Students performed their practicum within various settings amongst which were day-care and residential homes for the elderly, persons with mental disability, children and young persons, refugees, battered wives, substance abusers and homeless amongst others.



*Mr Victor Galea delivering a short talk during the presentation of certificates event*

## Research Work

The final requirement for the students to be awarded a certificate of completion required students to write a long essay under tutorial supervision. The exercise provided the students with an opportunity to examine in depth a selected area and to understand better the relationship between theory, research and practice. It required from the student a

sustained effort to identify an area of investigation, review the literature, analyse and compare concepts theories and perspectives, weigh and assess evidence and draw the final conclusion on the subject. The results of the long essays of the Day-Care and Residential Work are now available for public use at the Gozo Centre library.



*One of the successful participants delivering a presentation on her long essay during the presentation of certificates event".*

## The Final Assessment

The course was offered by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work of the University of Malta in collaboration with the University of Malta Gozo Centre and the Ministry for Gozo. Spread over four semesters, the final grade was based on the 16 study-unit assessments and a final examination.

The course was very beneficial for Gozo because it provided tuition and training in a very important aspect of life in Gozo, namely Day Care and Residential Work.

The performance of the students was very satisfactory. During the presentation of certificates the students were asked to make a presentation about their work, and it clearly emerged that the students not only availed themselves of the tuition and training given but also contributed by producing very original and useful work themselves.