

University Gozo Centre Students make their Way into the Public Service

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In the autumn of 1999, the University of Malta Gozo Centre offered a Bachelor of Commerce course majoring in Economics and Management. As I sat down for the first lecture I was very nervous. It had been close to 10 years since I had attended university and I knew none of the other students. I had originally began my studies in New York and it had always been one of my regrets that I did not complete my studies. So I leaped at this opportunity to be able to complete my degree with the convenience of lectures in Gozo.

We were a group of twenty who initially began the course. By the time finals came around the number had dropped down to nine. The pressures of work and home life had overcome the others. The remaining nine persisted against many trials and tribulations – including one year of non stop lectures including the summer months and travelling to Malta on Saturdays for lectures in one semester when our lecturer was unable to travel to Gozo.



Some of the participants who successfully completed the B.Com course at the University Gozo Centre.

We were successful in our final exams with 3 obtaining second upper class and the rest second lower. Initially, I had no aspirations beyond obtaining my degree, but fate had other plans. In August 2002 an advert in the newspaper grabbed my attention. The Government was recruiting Management Graduates for the position of Principals within the Public Sector. Although I was employed at the time, I applied. Unbeknownst

to me so did several of my former classmates. Interviews were set for later that year. This was a new method of recruitment for the Government. The aim was to recruit and train a small group of promising individuals with good academic results in areas which would enable them to take up a management roles in the Public Service.

Of the twenty chosen, four were Gozitans and 3 of those were graduates of the Gozo Centre Bachelor of Commerce course. Initially we had a one week Induction Course at the Staff Development Office within the Office of the Prime Minister. There, the speakers were mostly senior Public Officers, who discussed work practices and procedures in the varying sectors they represented. It also included a walking tour of Valletta showing it as a city built as a seat of Government and culminated with an outdoor teambuilding exercise. We, then, underwent an 8 month training period where we were individually paired with mentors – either a Permanent Secretary or a Director for 4 months and were assigned a project. The other half of the mentorship was spent at the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) within the Office of the Prime Minister, where along with our MEU mentor, we worked with other staff and consultants on projects aimed at various ministries. The work was enlightening and rewarding. In the course of 8 months I worked on 4 different projects aimed at 4 different ministries. At the end of our mentorship period, we all met up again to discuss our experiences and evaluate the mentorship.

In the course of the year, further University Gozo Centre graduates made their way into the Public Sector in middle management positions such as Principals, Economic Officers and Policy Officers, not to mention those who were promoted due to their academic achievements.

In all, University Gozo Centre has contributed 6 Principals, 2 Economic Officers, and 1 Policy Officer from 2003 to date, thanks to the courses offered in Gozo. The University Gozo Centre has definitely made a contribution to the Public Service!

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