

# The University Gozo Centre Library

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“A beautiful cloister-like building full of light and good feeling”. This is how the building housing the University of Malta Gozo Centre was described by Professor Lino Briguglio, who, besides being its main founder, has been the University Gozo Centre’s Director since its establishment in 1992. Indeed, this ambience of light and good feeling is definitely experienced as soon as one enters the threshold of the Centre’s small but welcoming library. The imposing dome of the Xewkija Rotunda on the one side and the unobstructed view of the ever-vigilant Citadel and the hills of Xagħra and Zebbug, provide an idyllic background to a place synonymous with quietude and silence.

In fact the library occupies the room found on the west side corner on the second floor of the

building situated on Gozo’s main road, mid-way between Mgarr and Victoria. The building itself dates back to the 1840’s when it was originally built to serve as an experimental farm. However alterations to the building and the construction of a second floor were later effected in order to convert the place into an isolation hospital, which was officially inaugurated on 21 October 1897. Since the 4 May 1996 the premises have been serving as the ‘University of Malta Gozo Centre’ and library services within this Centre were initiated about a year later. As observed by one of the first students of the Centre, one of the problems these students had to face was the fact that they had to cross over to Malta in order to borrow books from the University’s Main Library. It was therefore imperative that a library should be set up and



albeit not large in space and quantity, this library has been servicing the needs of students enrolled in courses and other lectures held at the Centre for the past ten years.

The Library stock adds up to about 1400 books, subjects of which range from Philosophy, Sociology and Religion to Law, Economics, Accounts and the Classics. About 150 books are reserved in a Reference section but all the others are available for borrowers. There is also a small selection of dissertations on Gozitan issues. It is the intention of the Centre's administration to increase the number of such dissertations. It is also planned to establish a new library section which would include books and other literature relating specifically to Gozo. Lecturers are encouraged to suggest books and titles relevant to their particular subjects in order to enhance the collection of books available to their students. Obviously the cost of such books is considerable and the Gozo Centre mainly relies on the budget allocated annually by the University of Malta for this purpose and also on donations by institutions or individuals who have the interest of this center and its students at heart.

The library also includes an attractive and interesting collection of 250 volumes in the Everyman's Library series, which were donated by the British High Commission. Similar sets had been distributed to 4500 state schools throughout the United Kingdom as part of a project supported by a grant of Stg4 million from the Millenium Commission. Authors in this series include Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Giorgio Vasari, Homer, Virgil, Thomas More, William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, John Steinbeck, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jane Austen, the Bronte Sisters, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Nabokov and other noted classical and modern authors. This collection also boasts copies of the New and Old Testament, The Koran and The Confessions of St Augustine making the subject selection range from the profound to the mundane.

It goes without saying that the most demanded books are those relating to the subjects currently being taught and followed at the Gozo Centre. These include Economics, Accounts, Statistics, Management, Commerce, History, History of Arts

and Environmental Studies. However demand for books relating to subjects such as The European Union, Computer Studies and Tourism is also on the increase. The present premises are however constrained by limited space and plans are underway for them to be extended. This, besides providing more shelf space would also enable the library to enhance its services with regards to students' needs.



The library mainly serves the needs of students following courses at the University Gozo Centre.

Undoubtedly the Library services at the University of Malta Gozo Centre have considerably changed during the past ten years. Moreover the recent re-organisation of the Library in general has been favourably noted and appreciated by all those making use of its services. This augurs well for the continuous and future growth of this vital section of this Centre.

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