

Never a Dull Moment

Joseph Calleja and Marvin Grech

We started our working career at the University of Malta, Msida, in different departments. Our duties there consisted mainly of clerical work related to the keeping of students' academic records. The years spent at Tal-Qroqq gave us considerable experience of University life, so that, prior to our transfer to the University Gozo Centre in 2001, we had already acquired a sound knowledge of the day-to-day running of University faculties, departments and institutes.

Our most important tasks at the UGC are obviously those related to the academic courses offered by the various faculties and institutes of the University of Malta. These courses, which are normally run on a part-time basis, cover a wide range of disciplines. This makes our work somewhat different from that performed by non-academic staff at the University campus in Malta. The main reason for this is that here in Gozo we have to deal with deans, heads of department, officers and other staff of the various faculties and institutes, while our colleagues in Malta are normally attached to only one or two departments. In addition we also have to liaise with a large number of lecturers, all with a different type of temperament.

Since a large number of lecturers who offer their services at the Gozo Campus reside in Malta, lectures are normally delivered on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. This system involves the organisation of a very complicated time-table, given the fact that about ten courses are run every weekend. Every slot on the time-table has to be discussed with the lecturer concerned so as to ensure that the required number of hours is offered for each study-unit. Although this involves a lot of combinations



The Campus is administered by Mr Joseph Calleja (right), ably assisted by Mr Marvin Grech.

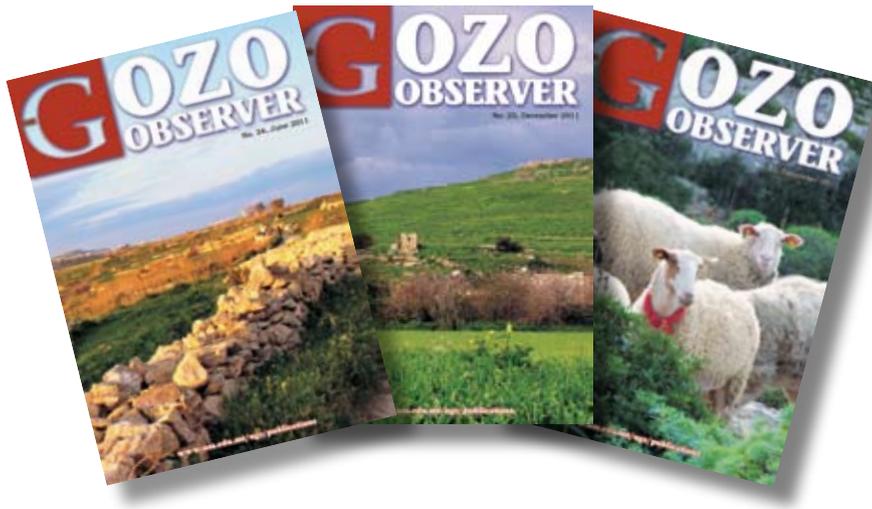
and permutations, it enables us to get to know the lecturers better as we try to solve any logistic problem that may arise. We are always happy when the lecturers concerned appreciate the constraints we face in setting the time-tables. The system also involves the organisation of hospitality and travelling arrangements, and every week we have to make sure that lecturers have somewhere to stay when they come to Gozo.

Lecturing facilities at the Gozo Campus are very good, and this is confirmed by the various lecturers who make use of them. Over the years we have always tried to improve the lecturing facilities through the introduction of the latest technology. At present all lecture rooms are equipped with the basic lecturing

facilities as well as a fixed digital projector and air-conditioners. With the help of the IT Services of the University of Malta, we have managed to equip the campus with a modern computer laboratory, a video-conferencing system and a wi-fi system. Being skilled in IT, and under the direction of the IT Services, we must make sure that our Internet facilities are kept running as they should.

Our duties also include dealing with matters of a financial nature. From time to time we prepare tender documents, issue calls for quotations, process purchase orders, issue payment vouchers, and perform other tasks related to the procurement of goods. Moreover, all claims related to lecturing fees and travelling expenses are processed at our office before they are sent to the Finance Office in Malta for payment. Our office also serves as a cash office for Gozitan students who can settle their

The Gozo Observer is published twice a year by the University Gozo Campus. It contains articles relating to all aspects of life in Gozo, including culture, education, business, arts and literature.



fees in Gozo and avoid the hassle of having to cross over to Malta when they don't need to.

The Gozo Campus does not cater only for Gozitan students following courses in Gozo but also for those who are studying in Malta. Our office offers information about courses to prospective students and serves as a venue when it comes to applications for University admission. This year a pilot project was launched by which a number of Gozitan students following courses at the Msida campus were given the opportunity to sit for the end-of-semester exams in Gozo. We were very happy to be involved in the administration of this new initiative which is likely to expand in the coming years.

At the Gozo Campus we are also responsible for the publication of 'The Gozo Observer' and for the distribution of course brochures and other promotional material. We are happy to be involved in the organisation of social activities, such as the annual summer event, and the running of short courses and seminars offered by the campus from time to time. Over and above all this we are responsible for the upkeep of the place, a 200-year-old building that requires continuous attention and maintenance.

The great advantage of the 'UGC system', as we like to call it, is its flexibility in terms of tasks and working hours. On Fridays we rarely leave the building before nine at night, and Saturday for us is a normal working day. These weekend commitments allow us to vary our work schedule for the rest of the week. Flexibility means variety, and this is the key factor that makes our work at the campus always interesting, stimulating and worthwhile.