

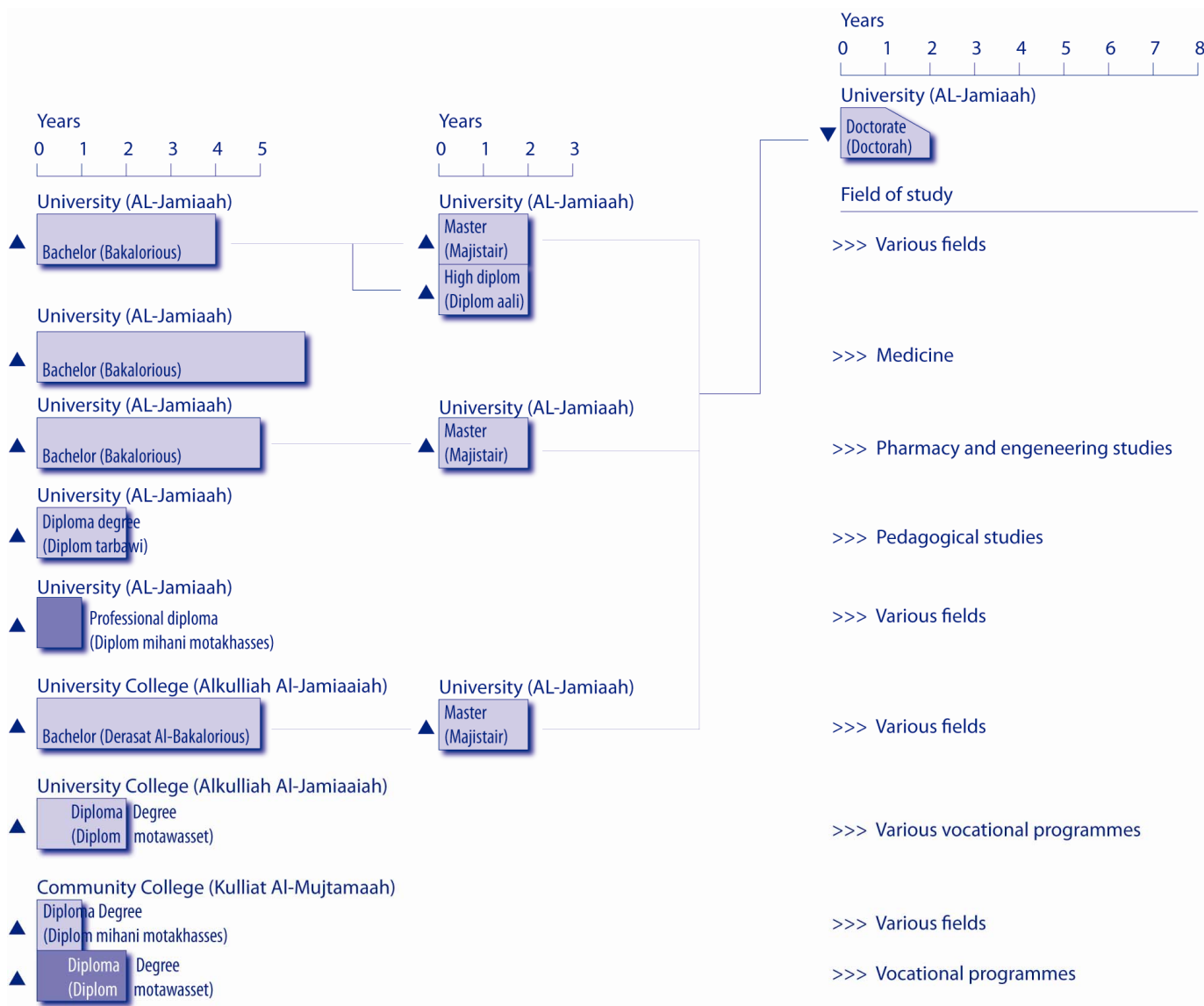


HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY



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The higher education system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory



- Most common length of a Bologna cycle
- Other length of a Bologna cycle
- Programme outside the typical Bologna model
- Professional programme

ECTS

Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

		regulated at national level	decided at institutional level
ALL	programmes have admission requirements	▼	▲
SOME		▽	△

I. Overall description

1. Major characteristics of tertiary education in the country

The development of higher education (HE) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is of relatively recent date. Two-year colleges have existed since the 1950s. These institutions which focused on teacher training, technical education, or liberal arts, were either organized by the government or UNRWA. It is only since the 1970s that universities came into existence. Created during Israeli occupation, these institutions were part of a Palestinian collective effort to preserve the Palestinian identity as well as to provide young Palestinians with the opportunity to pursue HE, after it became increasingly difficult for them to go abroad for such studies. However, the sector has expanded only since the transfer of education from Israel to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) after the Oslo Accords of 1990.

Legislation covering the field of tertiary education

Higher education was legislated through Law No 11 of 1998 on Higher Education. This law gives every citizen a right to higher education (Article 2), gave legal status to HE institutions, and provided the legal framework for their organisation and management. The law recognizes three different types of institutions in HE. These are governmental, public (established by Non-governmental organisations NGOs), and private institutions. Most Higher Education Institutions in OPT are public. The council of higher education is responsible for drafting and enacting the rules that all higher education institutions (HEIs) must adopt. The ministry also provides partial support and funding to non-governmental HEIs. The HEIs are mostly independent but they have to follow the abovementioned law, regulations of the ministry and the council of Higher Education.

Types of tertiary education institutions

According to the Law of Higher Education, HE institutions can be one of the following:

- Universities (*AL-Jamiaah*): consisting of no less than three colleges or faculties, and granting Bachelor degrees or higher.
- University colleges (*Alkulliah Al-Jamiaaiah*): offering academic, technical or professional programmes and

conferring two- or three-year diplomas or ordinary or honours BA degrees;

- Polytechnics (*Alpolytechnik*): granting diplomas or BA and higher degrees in professional and technical fields,
- Community colleges (*Kulliat Al-Mujtamaah*): offering academic, professional or technical programs of a minimum of one year's duration and leading to diplomas in the respective programs. The community colleges offer programs aimed at preparing a middle-level labour force, which forms the link between specialised and skilled workers. The diploma programmes (equivalent to an Associate degree) take approximately 72 credit hours distributed over four semesters. The programs offered by colleges cover many different disciplines such as Management and Administration, secretarial, Office Automation, Marketing, Graphic Design, Industrial Technology, Electronics, Computer Maintenance, Dental Technology, Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration, Electronics, Computer Technology, Fashion Design etc.

The majority of the 48 Palestinian higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza are relatively young; the oldest has only been in existence for 30 years. More than 180 000 students are enrolled in these institutions. It is estimated that the gross enrolment rate for the age group 18-24 years is more than 25.8%. These percentages are relatively high in international standards, especially in comparison to countries in the Middle East and to developing countries in general. From the moment the Palestinian National Authority received command of the territories, it showed great interest in the development of the vocational and technical education and training system (VTET).

The VTET structure in OPT - despite its small size - is considered fragmented with regard to the type of institutions, their objectives, supervisory and responsible parties as well as the historical background of their establishment.

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip there are hundreds of training institutions that provide short and long-term training programmes. These institutions consist of vocational secondary schools, vocational training centres, private cultural centres, charitable associations and developmental institutions. Moreover, there are 23 community colleges offering different educational programs for *Tawjih* graduates.

Types of tertiary education programmes and qualifications

Bachelor and Master programmes are offered at Universities and Polytechnics. These can be followed by doctoral studies at University level. According to the Palestinian Higher Education Law, Polytechnics also have the right to offer doctoral degrees. So-called Diploma Degrees (Professional Programmes) are offered by Community Colleges and University Colleges.

2. Distribution of responsibilities

As a result of the Oslo Accords and as a consequence of the Early Transfer of Authority Agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, the Palestinian Ministries of Education and Higher Education came into existence in August 1994.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoEHE) were merged into one ministry in 2002. Both sub-sectors (general education and higher education) had been under one ministry when the MoEHE was set up in 1994 until it was divided into two ministries in 1996.

At the moment, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education supervises the higher education sector while the responsibility for policy formulation related to the development of the sector rests with the Council for Higher Education which was set up in 2003. Furthermore, in order to avoid fragmentation, planning and supervision of secondary vocational education has been put under the Directorate General for TVET.

In accordance with international norms, the Law of Higher Education (Number 11 of 1998) combines two approaches: (i) central national planning and supervision by MoEHE and the Council for Higher Education, and (ii) self-management, self-monitoring and self-control at institutional level. This means that higher education institutions enjoy autonomy and self-management. They are responsible for admissions, recruitment of staff, assessment of students, granting of degrees and diplomas, and the development of facilities. In addition to the Council of Higher Education, a Council for Scientific Research and a National Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance were set up. With regards to VTET, the Law also stipulated setting up a Supreme Council and an Executive Council for VTET.

Although the Council for Higher Education was reactivated in 2003, its relationship with the institutions of higher education should be better organised, structured and institutionalised. Coordination and cooperation between MoEHE and the institutions, and among the institutions themselves, need to be

strengthened. Management information systems at institutional level and at central Ministry level still need to be improved, harmonised and interfaced and the skills of MoEHE staff to update and use them for decision-making have to be further developed. Important policies and strategies approved by MoEHE and the Council for Higher Education are not adhered to at institutional level. Institutions still do not appreciate the regulatory, planning and developmental role which MoEHE can play and which is needed to link higher education to the needs of the labour market and socio-economic development at-large.

3. Governing bodies of the Higher Education Institutions

In terms of governance (management, supervision and funding) there are four types of HEIs:

Governmental: the Palestinian National Authority runs and finances the governmental Higher Education Institutions in the West Bank (Palestine Technical University-Khadoorie), and the Gaza Strip (Al Aqsa University) which are under the supervision of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

UNRWA: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for OPT Refugees operates one of the largest school systems in the Middle East and has been the main provider of basic education to Palestinian refugees for nearly five decades. The Agency provides primary and junior secondary schooling free of charge for all refugee children in the area of operations. Vocational and technical training courses are given in the eight UNRWA vocational training centers. The Agency also runs an extensive teacher-training program, and offers university scholarships to qualified refugee youth.

Private: these institutions are run and financed by several foundations, charitable societies, religious denominations, individuals and companies.

Public: most higher education institutions (universities) were set up mostly during the period of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The majority are non-profit and originally created and owned by local charity associations and NGOs. They depend on fundraising and receive partial government funding.

The Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VTET) in OPT:

these institutions are supervised by several bodies, consisting of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA, charitable and religious associations, international non-

governmental organizations, developmental organizations and private sector institutions. The governing bodies of HEIs are mentioned above.

4. Financing

Insufficient funding is an ongoing major concern and it is having a seriously negative impact on the quality and relevance of higher education in OPT. Between 60-70% of operating budgets of universities are covered by tuition fees. Since there is no regularity and consistency in the payment of tuition fees, budgets of universities suffer yearly deficits.

An amount of USD 20 million has been the figure allocated constantly to higher education in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) yearly budgets since 2002. In 2009, this amount was raised to USD 34 million, and in 2010 the amount was increased to USD 40 million.

However, in most cases, only around 60% has been disbursed per year in the course of the mentioned period. Revolving funds for student loans, although of significant importance, have suffered from the total non-repayment by students and from a lack of grants from international sources and important contributions from the national budget.

Summary budget estimates of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education are as follows:

In the structure of total expenditures, about 94% is planned for payment of salaries and operational cost and 6% for development expenditures.

In the development budget, capital costs constitute 72% of the total estimated expenditure and current costs 28%. Most of the development expenditure is planned under Goal 1- Access to Education, and for the sectors of Vocational and HE and also for Non-Formal Education. Under Goal 2- Quality is planned for the sectors of Non-Formal Education and General Education.

Goal 3- Management and Goal 4- Relevance have the smallest estimated budget in absolute and relative terms.

5. Students' contributions and financial support

All Palestinian HEIs, except those under UN supervision, impose tuition fees. However, with the assistance of various philanthropic organizations, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education launched at the beginning of the University year 2001-2002 the Student loan Fund. The ministry provides all HEIs with interest-free loans for students with financial

difficulties. The number of recipients is determined at the beginning of each academic year. This form of financial aid is available to students at the beginning of the second semester after their admission as long as they are able to maintain a Cumulative Average (CA) of 65% and above. The CA is equivalent to the Grade Point Average GPA of student grades. The CA is calculated for all credit hours that the student earned in his/her study of academic semesters. The CA appears on the student transcript. From the establishment of the Student loan Fund in 2000 until 2008, the amount received by donors reached USD 123 791 986.

6. Licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and/or programmes

The Palestinian quality assurance policy was upgraded in 2002 simultaneously with the establishment of the 'Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission' (AQAC) as the only authorised agency responsible for accreditation and quality assurance of Higher Education in OPT. The AQAC is a governmental semi autonomous body under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and responsible directly to the Minister. The AQAC is a member of several international networks for quality assurance, such as the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE). In this context, the AQAC negotiates cooperation agreements with regional and international quality agencies for the mutual recognition of accreditation decisions and degrees.

The Palestinian QA system is based on the fact that internal QA is the basis for external QA evaluation. External QA system is compulsory, and concerns public and private institutions, university and non-university sectors and all types of academic and vocational programs.

Accreditation comprises three elements and generally involves three steps with specific activities as follows:

- Self-assessment is a self-evaluation process conducted by the faculty, the administrators, and the staff of the higher education institution (HEI) or academic programmes, resulting in a report that takes as its reference the set of standards of AQAC.
- Peer review: a study visit conducted by a team of peers selected by the AQAC, which reviews the documentation, visits the premises, and interviews the academic and administrative staff, resulting in an assessment report, including a recommendation to the AQAC.

- Decision-making: examination by the AQAC board on the basis of a given set of criteria concerning quality and resulting in a final judgment and the communication of the formal decision to the institution and other concerned parties.

7. Admission

The enrolment and admission at all Palestinian HEIs follow approximately the same procedures. The minimum requirements needed for students to enrol at university are:

- A General Secondary Education Certificate (Tawjihi) or its equivalent (e.g.: SAT or GCE certificates that are awarded to high school students according to their educational system) with equivalence requirements as set by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education). Student placement in the faculties depends on the completed stream (Science or Arts) indicated in the Certificate.
- The student certificate score should not be less than 65% in order to be eligible to apply for admission to the universities.

Admission for first-year students is competitive and is based on the Composite Score of the students, on condition that these scores are not lower than required for admission to a certain faculty. The Composite Score is the average percentage score of the General Secondary Education Certificate or equivalent and a percentage score of the last three years in high school. Some Universities require an English language proficiency exam, and students are placed in English language courses according to their scores.

Transfer students are considered provided they have completed a minimum of 30 credit hours at an accredited university with a grade point average of no less than 70 percent.

8. Organisation of the academic year

The structure of the academic year is defined by the Higher Education institutions themselves. The most common structure is two semesters, with the summer semester (optional) beginning in June. The duration of the academic semester is 16 weeks. Usually the first semester starts in mid-September and ends in January. The second semester starts in February and ends in June.

9. Curriculum content

The college Curricula of the new Diploma program (2-years) is developed by the college, and is approved by the ministry if it meets the accreditation requirements. All diploma programs that are offered by colleges are

under the supervision and monitoring of the ministry, regarding the approval of curriculums, the setting up of the general comprehensive exams. The University curricula are defined at institutional level in line with the National Standards set by the Ministry and according to their course outline.

The most common requirements at all HEIs are as follows:

- University Requirements: basic undergraduate courses, Arabic, English, and others.
- Faculty Requirements: These are introductory courses in the respective disciplines.
- Department Requirements: introductory, advanced and specialised courses.
- Electives.

10. Assessment, progression, certification and degree

A common practice is that the student receives from his professor the course instructions that include course assessment including examinations (written or oral or practical), assignments, projects, quizzes, etc. Usually, the undergraduate course requires students to take at least two or three semester exams and one final exam. Laboratory courses may require students to take written, oral or both exams. The semester work has 60-65% weight while the final exam has 35-40% weight in the final grade of the student. For the graduate course, the students take at least one written exam during the semester, and the other exam may be substituted by projects, studies, or research. In order to pass a course, and to graduate upon completion of all requirements is 70% for undergraduates and 75% for graduates, undergraduates must obtain 60% or more, while a graduate student must obtain at least 70% in each course. The grade point average for students should be satisfactory.

Departments usually develop study plans that lead students from the time they enter university until completion of the requirements and graduation. Except for the entry level courses (those taken by students in their first year at the university), each course usually has one or more prerequisites. A student may enrol in a course after successfully meeting the prerequisite(s). Hence students follow the study plan until completion. In some disciplines, namely medicine and dentistry, the student must pass one year in order to progress to the next. If students fail one or two subjects, they are allowed to re-sit for the exams before the beginning of the next year. Only if they pass such subjects, they may continue to the next year, otherwise the year

will need to be repeated. For some academic programmes, the study plans include practical training, and in this case the university makes necessary arrangements to secure places to do such training. Aside from these cases, universities do not accredit any prior experiential learning such as work, community or volunteer experience.

Once a student completes the requirements for a degree, the university confers the degree upon a decision from the council of deans. No further approvals are needed from the Ministry or any other organisation. If students obtain a Bachelor degree, they may join the labour market or continue for the Master degree, if they meet admission requirements. In the case of some professional specialties such as engineering, pharmacy, medicine, medicine, dentistry, law, etc., the student needs to register in the professional association. Some associations have further requirements such as practical experience or internship. As an example, both medicine and law require the students to conduct supervised practice for one year before they are allowed to practice on their own.

11. Academic staff

University academic staff must have doctoral and Master degrees. The staff with Ph.D. degree are appointed or contracted by the university as an Assistant Professor. They can be promoted after five years to Associate Professor if they meet the promotion requirements set by the university. The Associate Professor can also be promoted to Professor after spending five years in the associate level. The staff with Master degrees are categorised as university teachers, and can be promoted to lecturer after five-seven years according to university rules.

12. Research activities

The scientific research activities in OPT were initiated after 1995 as a result of grants received from international fundraisers.

Palestinian researchers managed to participate in many joint cooperation programmes in the fields of technology and development, in addition to the Dual Programs which were set up to develop Palestinian competence.

There are four main bodies which perform the research activities in OPT including: Higher Education Institutions (precisely the Palestinian universities), governmental research institutions, NGOs and the private sector.

In the HEIs the scientific research activities are focused on basic research. There are now sixteen scientific research centres at the Palestinian universities in the fields of

agriculture, environment, water, energy, and health.

At governmental level, there are some research centres such as the National Research Centre at the Ministry of Agriculture, and Water Management Research at the local Water Authority.

Many NGOs constructed research centres which mostly focus on Social Studies and Research. The Private Sector focused on research activities on existing industries, such as the medical industry, and some food industries. The HEIs are getting better opportunities to develop their research programmes and international cooperation with European universities through Tempus program and other EC programs.

However, it should be mentioned that research still has not enough funding and a national policy for science, technology and research is required.

13. University-enterprise cooperation

The cooperation between HEIs and enterprises is limited. The students are usually placed in enterprises to do their internship training. Some HEIs invite experts to teach a course or to give lectures, but the involvement of enterprises with curricula development is very limited (or even non-existent). Recently, some universities have been trying to commence joint projects with enterprises and this might improve their involvement in the development of curricula.

14. International cooperation

Numerous international organisations have provided invaluable technical and financial support to the HEIs in OPT.

Quality Improvement Fund by the International Bank (QIF):

In order to improve the quality in tertiary education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, the World Bank through (IDA) and the European Commission (EC) have signed an agreement with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) to implement a Tertiary Education Project (TEP). The estimated budget was USD 15 million. TEP has four components; the most important one is the implementation of the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF). Since 2005, many success stories were achieved. QIF has funded 45 projects in five different cycles (24 new partnerships and agreements with private, public and international organizations, eight new academic programs, study tours, etc.).

The academic and administrative cooperation with the French Government

The importance of these fields of cooperation has been underlined and their orientations reformulated during the fourth session of the French-Palestinian Joint Committee that was held in Ramallah in June 2004.

Partnerships and twinning have been built over the years between French and Palestinian universities. Different cooperation projects launched during the past few years have been concluded after yielding very encouraging results, such as the programme of

Mathematics applied to the Economy. More than 200 Palestinians are registered in the French Higher Education system, and 80 of them have a scholarship from the Cooperation Department. An example of academic cooperation is in the field of linguistic and training. Student mobility usually is very difficult due to the existing isolation of different cities imposed on Palestinians due to Israeli Occupation. Although students from other countries are allowed to enrol and study at Palestinian universities, in practice this is very rare due to the difficulty of getting permission to enter the country. The permission must be obtained from the Israeli Authorities.

II. Current challenges and needs

1. Trends and challenges

Four main challenges can be identified as follows:

1. **Access:** higher education has always been characterised by competition between institutions to attract more students in order to increase their income. New programmes were added for this purpose without due attention to the needs of Palestinian society. Supply and, as indicated above, rates of enrollment are already high. The negative consequences on quality are evident. While the rates of enrolment in general are high, the access of students with special needs and from poorer segments of society is still in need of further attention, especially through the improvement of the student loan programme.
2. **Teaching and Training Staff:** low salaries have led staff members to take up extra work, which has its negative impact on the quality of teaching and on the amount and quality of research carried out. The professional development of staff members is restricted due to the absence of regular fellowship and scholarship programmes to upgrade their qualifications and their teaching skills.
3. **Quality and Relevance:** the weak link of programmes to the needs of the labour market is presently a central issue in all national development programmes and projects. The high percentage of students studying social sciences (75%) is a major contributor to unemployment among graduates. The high student/teacher ratio is a factor leading to the lowering of

standards of teaching and learning. How it is to be addressed will prove to be a challenge under the present financial constraints. As will the issue of the limited physical, material and educational resources which could enhance quality and relevance. In this regard, the need to improve the electronic linking and networking of local universities with Arab and international university resources and research networks is a major issue. Research is still not considered a priority by the national and the international funders of higher education. Funding is therefore limited and irregular. It is an uncontested fact internationally that research has a direct impact on the quality of teaching. Programmes are needed to encourage research and to provide information about what kind of research is being conducted and where. A national policy for science, technology and research is also required. There is an evident need to better link the two sectors of general education and tertiary education, as the outputs from one provide input to the other. It is hoped that the National Strategy for Teacher Education, if implemented properly, will make a significant contribution in this regard since most of its implementation is supposed to be executed by post-secondary institutions.

4. **Funding Tertiary Education:** insufficient funding is an ongoing major concern and it is having a serious negative impact on the quality and relevance of higher education (see analysis above in section 4).

As far as the technical and Vocational Education and Training (VTET) is concerned, increasing enrolment remains the major challenge, in addition to improving the availability of well-equipped schools.

Enrolment in secondary vocational education is indeed still low, standing at just 5.06% of the total number of students in the secondary cycle in 2007/2008, up from 4% in 1999/2000. Although in the same period the percentage of female students of the total number of students in secondary vocational education increased, it still remained at (33.5%). The main reason for the low enrolment in TVET at secondary and post-secondary levels is the negative regard society has for technical and vocational education.

Traditionally, it is thought that those who fail in academic studies or who are not admitted to academic programs of study end up in

vocational and technical specialisations. Career counselling in schools and post-secondary institutions is still almost non-existent which exacerbates this problem. Special efforts are needed to attract females to TVET in general and to non-traditional programs of study which necessitates awareness-raising to make these socially acceptable.

A major challenge is to better link TVET and its outputs, quantitatively and qualitatively, to the widely diversified needs of the labour market. Since the latter are quick to change within the present globalised world economy, programmes of study should be flexible and easy to update and modernise, which is not the case at present. This might also be difficult to do since such continuous change will require ongoing adaptation of the physical facilities and the educational resources the cost of which might be beyond the financial means of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

2. The Bologna Process

The Bologna cycle structure

Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process	Other existing three cycle structure
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Student workload/duration for the most common Bologna programmes			
Bachelor programmes	Not compliant with Bologna	Master programmes	Not compliant with Bologna

Bachelor/Master cycle structure models most commonly implemented	Not compliant with Bologna
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European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Legislation on ECTS	Other credit system
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Diploma Supplement (DS)

Implementation of the Diploma Supplement	No Diploma Supplement
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National Qualification Framework (NQF)

Stage towards establishing a National Qualification Framework	X	Not yet started formally.
		<u>Step 1</u> : Decision taken. Process just started.
		<u>Step 2</u> : The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is underway including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
		<u>Step 3</u> : The NQF has been adopted formally and the implementation has started.
		<u>Step 4</u> : Redesigning the study programmes is ongoing and the process is close to completion.
		<u>Step 5</u> : Overall process fully completed including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

National Quality Assurance System

National body for Quality Assurance	
Name	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC)
Year of establishment	2002
Status	Government-dependent body that reports to the minister
Principal 'object' of the evaluations	Institutions plus programmes
Body responsible for	Governmental, Public and Private higher education institutions
Main outcome of the review	x A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate institutions or new colleges or programmes/teach at certain levels/undertake research, etc.
	Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specific areas

Recognition of qualifications

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Adoption of national laws/regulations required to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of academic study in the country	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of work in the country	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	

III. Participation in EU programmes

1. Tempus

Occupied Palestinian Territory has participated in the Tempus Programme since 2002.

1. Statistics

Number of projects in which one or several institutions in the country have been involved (as coordinator, contractor or partner)

	TEMPUS I and II	TEMPUS III	TEMPUS IV		
	1990-1999	2000-2006	2008	2009	2010
Joint European Projects (JEP)	-	11	2	0	3
Structural & Complementary Measures (Tempus III) Structural Measures (Tempus IV)	-	3	0	2	0
Total	-	14	2	2	3

Higher education institutions with highest TEMPUS participation during TEMPUS I to III (1990-2006)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JEP	SCM
AL QUDS UNIVERSITY	5	4	1
BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY	5	4	1
AN NAJAH UNIVERSITY	3	2	1
BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY	3	3	0

2. Impact of the TEMPUS Programme

With the advent of the Tempus programme in OPT between 2002 to 2006 and then from July 2007 until now, the most important impact is that the fragmentation between the Palestinian Institutions themselves, and with other European institutions, has been overcome. Therefore a good inter-university network has been set up between the staff of the consortium members who participated in Tempus projects.

Since half of the Joint Projects were aimed at integrating Master degrees into some Palestinian Universities, the Tempus programme has contributed significantly to the development of existing curricula and human resources in various crucial sectors in OPT, such as the sectors of water and environment, international relations, energy, tourism, etc.

In addition, the development of Master programmes opened new opportunities for access to students. More importantly, the impact of Tempus was seen also on research development at universities and, consequently, the outcome of the research is of great benefit to the Palestinian National Development and

economy.

In particular, the 'Master programme in *Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Infrastructure*' at Birzeit University has contributed effectively to support and develop the Institute of Environmental and Water Studies (IEWS) that offers and contributes to the capacity building of the Palestinian water and environmental sectors by providing knowledge, advisory services, graduate education (Master level), research and continuous education through short-term training in water and environment and related issues. In addition, the Institute participates in solving crucial water and environmental problems within OPT and the neighbouring countries through research projects, consulting activities and joint regional activities.

The Master programme in '*Clean Energy and Conservation Strategies*' at An-Najah National University was the key supporter for the Energy Research Center (ERC) that is concerned with research, development, system design, feasibility studies, and training in all conventional and renewable energy fields, energy management and energy conservation.

2. Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education with a strong international focus. It operates through three actions:

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (Master Courses and Joint Doctorates)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are operated by consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs) from the EU and (since 2009) elsewhere in the world. They provide an integrated course and joint or multiple diplomas following study or research at two or more HEIs. Master Courses and Joint Doctorates are selected each year following a Call for Proposals. There are currently 123 Master and 24 Doctorate programmes offering EU-funded scholarships or fellowships to students and scholars from all over the world.

Action 2 – Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (former External Cooperation Window)

Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and from a particular region in the world on the other. Together the partnerships manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – bachelors, masters, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The programme is focused on geographical "lots" of countries or regions covered by the EU's financial instruments for cooperation. These lots include most Tempus countries. New partnerships are selected each year through Calls for Proposals.

Action 3 – Erasmus Mundus Attractiveness projects

This Action of the Programme funds projects to enhance the attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of European higher education worldwide. HEIs (and other key players in the HE sector) may apply.

More information: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus

Number of students/staff participating in the programme

Erasmus Mundus – Joint degrees (Action 1)

	2009/2010	2010/ 2011
Students	2	2
Scholars	-	n/a

Nationals of the country participated in the programme for the first time in 2009-2010 (students).

Erasmus Mundus– Partnerships (External Cooperation Window, Action 2)

Year of the Grant Allocation	2007	2008	2009
Undergraduate	9	12	4
Master	21	22	24
Doctorate	31	17	15
Post-Doctorate	4	4	2
Academic staff	9	3	5
Total	74	58	50

Institutions participating in the programme up to and including 2010

Institutions	Action 1 Joint Programmes	Action 2 Partnerships	Action 3 Attractiveness projects
AL-Aqsa University		X	
Al-Azhar university		X	
Al-Quds university		X	
An-Najah national university		X	
Arab American university		X	
Birzeit university			X
Community college of applied science and technology		X	
Hebron university		X	
The Islamic university of Gaza			X

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<http://www.mohe.gov.ps/ENG/index.html>

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