European Commission

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE

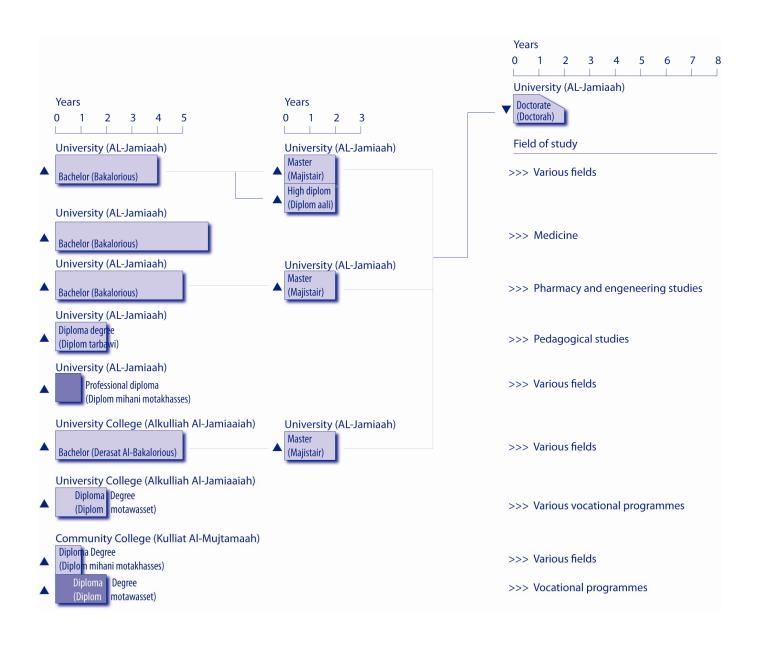# OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

Tempus

The higher education system in the occupied Palestinian territory

Years
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Doctorate
(Doctorah)

Field of study

>>> Various fields

>>> Medicine

>>> Pharmacy and engeneering studies

>>> Pedagogical studies

>>> Various fields

>>> Various fields

>>> Various vocational programmes

>>> Various fields

>>> Vocational programmes

Years
0   1   2   3   4   5

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Bachelor (Bakalorious)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Bachelor (Bakalorious)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Bachelor (Bakalorious)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Diploma degree
(Diplom tarbawi)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Professional diploma
(Diplom mihani motakhasses)

University College (Alkulliah Al-Jamiaaiah)

Bachelor (Derasat Al-Bakalorious)

University College (Alkulliah Al-Jamiaaiah)

Diploma   Degree
(Diplom   motawasset)

Community College (Kulliat Al-Mujtamaah)

Diploma Degree
(Diplom mihani motakhasses)

Diploma   Degree
(Diplom   motawasset)

Years
0   1   2   3

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Master
(Majistair)

High diplom
(Diplom aali)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Master
(Majistair)

University (AL-Jamiaah)

Master
(Majistair)

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 focus on teacher training, technical education or liberal arts, were either organised by the government or by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). It is only since the 1970s that universities came into existence. Created during the Israeli occupation, these institutions were part of a Palestinian collective effort to preserve their 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 regulated through the Law on Higher Education No 11 of 1998. This law gives every citizen the possibility to access higher education (Article 2), gives legal status to HE institutions and provides the legal framework for their organisation and management. The law recognises three different types of institutions in HE. These are governmental, public (established by Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)), and private institutions. Most higher education institutions (HEIs) in the oPt are public. The Council of Higher Education is responsible for drafting and enacting the rules that all higher education institutions 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 above-mentioned law, regulations of the ministry and the Council of Higher Education.

Types of tertiary education institutions

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

- Universities (*AL-Jamiaah*): consisting of no less than three colleges or faculties which confer 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 Bachelor degrees;
- Polytechnics *(Alpolytechnik)*: they confer diplomas or Bachelor. and higher degrees in professional and technical fields;
- Community colleges *(Kulliat Al-Mujtamaah)*: offering academic, professional or technical programmes of a minimum of one year's duration leading to diplomas in the respective programmes. The community colleges offer programmes 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) consist of approximately 72 credit hours distributed over four semesters. The programmes 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 49 Palestinian higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are relatively young; the oldest has only been in existence for 30 years.

More than 213 000 students are enrolled in these institutions. It is estimated that the gross enrolment rate for the age group of 18-24 year olds is more than 25.8 %. These percentages are relatively high by 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 a vocational and technical education and training system (VTET).

The VTET structure in the 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 programmes for *Tawjihi* 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 Law on Higher Education, polytechnics also have the right to offer doctoral degrees. So-called diploma degrees (professional programmes) are offered by community colleges and university colleges.

Number of students
213 000
Number of HEIs
49

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. Originally 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, the planning and supervision of secondary vocational education has been put under the Directorate General for TVET.

In accordance with international norms, the Law on Higher Education No 11 of 1998 combines two approaches:

- Central national planning and supervision by MoEHE and the Council for Higher Education,

- 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 regard 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 the 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 the

MoEHE staff to update and their use for decision-making have to be further developed. Important policies and strategies approved by the 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 the MoEHE can play and which is needed to link higher education to the needs of the labour market and socio-economic development at-large.

In May 2012, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was divided into two separate Ministries. Therefore, there is now one single Ministry devoted to Higher Education.

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 the 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 centres. The Agency also runs an extensive teacher-training programme 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 the Gaza Strip. 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 the 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 organisations, developmental organisations and private sector institutions. The governing bodies of HEIs are mentioned above.

4. Financing

Insufficient funding is an on-going major concern and it is having a seriously negative impact on the quality and relevance of higher education in the oPt. Between 60-70 % of the 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.

The amount of USD 20 million has been allocated to higher education in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) budgets every year since 2002. In 2009, this amount was raised to USD 34 million, and in 2010 the amount was increased to USD 40 million. In 2011, the higher education budget was significantly increased to USD 90 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 expenditure, about 94 % is allocated for the payment of salaries and operational costs, and 6 % for development expenditure.

- 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 the following premises:

-Goal 1- Access to Education, including the sectors of Vocational and HE and also for Non-Formal Education.

-Goal 2- Quality is planned for the sectors of Non-Formal Education and General Education.

-Goal 3- Management

-Goal 4- Relevance has the smallest estimated budget in absolute and relative terms.

5. Student contributions and financial support

All Palestinian HEIs, except those under UN supervision, impose tuition fees. However, with the assistance of various philanthropic organisations, 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 from donors rose to more than USD 123 million.

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 the accreditation and quality assurance of Higher Education in the 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 belief that internal QA is the basis for external QA evaluation. External QA evaluation is compulsory, and applies to public and private institutions, university and non-university sectors and all types of academic and vocational programmes.

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

- Self-assessment: a self-evaluation process conducted by the faculty, the administrators and the staff of the higher education institution 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, reviews 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.

Students can be transferred upon finalization of a minimum of 30 credit hours at an accredited university with a grade point average of no less than 70 %.

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 curriculum of the new diploma programme (2 years) is developed by the college, and is approved by the Ministry if it meets the accreditation requirements. All diploma programmes that are offered by colleges are under the supervision and monitoring of the Ministry, which approves the curricula, and the organisation 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: introductory courses in the respective disciplines.
– Department requirements: introductory, advanced and specialised courses.
– A certain number of passed electives.

10. Assessment, progression, certification and degree

The common practice is that students receive from their professor the course instructions that include the course assessment comprising examinations (written or oral or practical), assignments, projects, tests, 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 is 35-40 % of the final grade. 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 the requirement is 70 % pass-rate for undergraduates and 75 % for graduates. The grade point average for students should be satisfactory.

Departments usually develop study plans that lead students from the time they enter university to the completion of their studies 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 the exams before the beginning of the following year. Only if they pass those subjects can they continue to the next year, otherwise the course has to be repeated.

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

Once a student has accomplished with the requirements for a degree, the university confers the degree upon confirmation by the Council of Deans. No further approvals are needed from the Ministry or any other organisation. If students obtain a Bachelor degree, they may enter the labour market or continue for a Master degree, if they meet the admission requirements. In the case of some professional specialties such as engineering, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, law, etc., the students should register in a professional association. Some associations have further requirements such as practical experience or internship. As an example, for both medicine and law the students are required to complete supervised practical training for one year before they are allowed to practice on their own.

11. Academic staff

University academic staff must have Master degree or a Ph.D Staff with a Ph.D are appointed or contracted by the university as assistant professors. They can be promoted after five years to associate professor if they meet the promotion requirements set by the university. An associate professor can also be promoted to professor after spending five years at associate level. The staff with Master degrees are categorised as university teachers and can be promoted to lecturer after five to seven years according to the university rules.

12. Research activities

Scientific research activities in the oPt were initiated after 1995 as a result of grants received from international fundraisers.

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

There are four main bodies which undertake research activities in the oPt: 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 in the Palestinian universities in the fields of agriculture, the environment, water, energy and health.

At governmental level, there are some research centres such as the National Research Centre of 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 focuses on research activities on existing industries, such as the medical industry and some food industries. The HEIs have better opportunities to develop their research programmes and international cooperation with European universities through the Tempus programme and other EU programmes.

However, it should be mentioned that research still lacks 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 in curricular development is very limited (or even non-existent). Recently, some universities have been trying to start 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 the oPt.

Quality Improvement Fund by the International Bank (QIF):

In order to improve the quality in tertiary education institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 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 organisations, eight new academic programmes, 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 linguistics and training. Student mobility usually is very difficult due to the existing isolation of different cities imposed on Palestinians due to the Israeli occupation. Although students from other countries are allowed to enrol and study in 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 challenge

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 enrolment 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 a 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 the standards of teaching and learning. How it is 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 on-going major concern and it is having a serious negative impact on the quality and relevance of higher education (see analysis above in section 4).
   - Community colleges receive smaller portions of the funds when compared with the universities that receive more than 85 % of the financial support.
   - Inefficient mechanisms in the management of the students' loans fund.

Furthermore, challenges directly related to the HE system itself can be identified:

- No steps were taken to help the MoEHE to build its capacities and strengthen its regulatory role in the higher education system.
- Tangible quality issues and challenges at HE institutions have not been supported or even investigated.
- There is a HE strategy without dissemination or an action plan.
- Most of the focus is on capacity building which involves a review of issues that deal with quality and efficiency.

As far as 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 still low, standing at just 5.06 % of the total number of students in the secondary cycle in 2007/2008, an increase on the 4 % from the 1999/2000. While 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 low reputation society has for technical and vocational education.

Traditionally, those who fail in academic studies or who are not admitted to academic programmes 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 programmes 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. Taking into account the rapid changes 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. Moreover, such continuous changes 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 the Gaza Strip.

2. The Bologna Process[1]

General Information

		Bologna-Signatory Country
Level of integration in the Bologna Process	X	Non Bologna-Signatory Country
		Bologna Process officially embedded in the education system
	X	Bologna Process being implemented by ad hoc groups under the supervision of the Ministry of Education
		No particular mechanism supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process

Bologna cycle structure

Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process	Another three-cycle structure exists

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[1] Source: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. 'State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Partner Countries (2012)', A Tempus Study, No 9, April 2012, EACEA, Brussels.

Student workload/duration for the most common Bologna programmes			
Bachelor programmes	Another three-cycle structure exists	**Master programmes**	Another three-cycle structure exists

Bachelor/Master cycle structure models most commonly implemented	Another three-cycle structure exists

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Definition of the Learning Outcomes Concept	No definition of learning outcomes at national level

Level of implementation of ECTS	Another credit system exists

Indicative number of hours of student workload corresponding to one ECTS	Another credit system or student workload in use – cannot specify ECTS

Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS)

Level of implementation of the Bologna Diploma Supplement	No Diploma Supplement issued

Diploma Supplement issued	No Diploma Supplement

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

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

Quality Assurance Practices

National Quality Assurance body				
Name	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC)			
Status	A single or several independent national bodies for quality assurance have been established.			
Year of establishment	2002			
Main outcome of the review	X	A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate		
		Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality		
		Both permission and advice		
		Not available		
Involvement in external quality assurance process		Decision-making role	Participation	No participation
	Academic staff	X		
	Students			X
	International Experts	X		

Recognition of foreign qualifications

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications for academic study	Recognition for academic study by central or regional governmental authorities	
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications for professional employment	Recognition for professional employment by central or regional governmental authorities	

Joint Degrees

Establishment of joint degrees and programmes in higher education legislation	Joint programmes and joint degrees are allowed in the higher education legislation.

III. Participation in EU programmes

1. Tempus

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

1.1 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	2011	2012
Joint Projects (JEP)	-	11	2	0	3	2	4
Structural & Complementary Measures (Tempus III) **Structural Measures (Tempus IV)**	-	3	0	2	0	0	0
Total	**-**	**14**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**4**

Higher education institutions with the highest participation under TEMPUS IV (2008-2012)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JP	SM
Birzeit University	8	7	1
An Najah University	7	6	1
Al quds University	5	3	2
Palestine Polytechnic University	5	5	0
Islamic University	3	3	0
Hebron University	2	1	1

Higher education institutions coordinating TEMPUS IV projects (2008-2012)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JP	SM
An Najah University	1	1	0
Birzeit University	3	2	1

1.2 Impact of the TEMPUS Programme

With the participation of the oPt in the Tempus programme between 2002 and 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 have 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 the oPt, such as the sectors of water and the 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 the 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.

In brief, Tempus gave a significant contribution to:

- Enhance an inter-university network in the oPt.
- Strengthen Euro-Med university consortia.
- Integrate newly needed M.A. programmes which significantly contributed not only to enhance research, but also to the development of human resources and curricula especially in sectors of water, development, energy, international relations, tourism, etc.
- Create new opportunities for students

2. Erasmus Mundus

The objective of the Erasmus Mundus programme is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education. It does this through three Actions:

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

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 131 Masters and 34 Doctorates offering EU-funded scholarships or fellowships to students and scholars.

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

Under Action 2, Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region, or geographical 'lot' on the other. Together the partnerships manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – Bachelor, Master, doctorate, post-doctorate and for academic staff.

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. Action 3 provides support to activities related to the international dimension of all aspects of higher education, such as promotion, accessibility, quality assurance, credit recognition, mutual recognition of qualifications, curriculum development and mobility.

More information:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_en.php

Number of students/staff participating in the programme

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes

Person type	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Grand Total
Master Student	0	3	2	1	3	2	2	1	1	**14**
Master Scholar**	0	0	0	0	1	0	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	**1**
Doctoral candidate*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**0**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**15**

* First selection of doctoral candidates made for 2010-2011 academic year.

**Since 2010, EMMC consortia have selected scholars over the course of the academic year, rather than at the beginning, so nationalities of selected scholars will only be known when final reports are submitted

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

	Undergraduate	Master	Doctorate	Post-doctorate	Staff	TOTAL
2007	9	21	31	4	9	**74**
2008	12	22	16	4	3	**57**
2009	4	20	14	2	5	**45**
2010*	4	11	8	3	11	**37**
2011**	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	***NA***
TOTAL	**29**	**74**	**69**	**13**	**28**	**213**

Institutions participating in the programme up to and including 2011

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	X
Community College of Applied Science and Technology		X	
Hebron University		X	
The Islamic University of Gaza			X

IV. Bibliographical references and websites

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– General Directorate for Technical and Vocational Education and Training at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, VTETin oPt, MoEHE, Ramallah, oPt, 2009.
– World Bank, West Bank and Gaza strip UPDATE, the Quarterly Publication of the West Bank and Gaza Office, Ramallah and Gaza, Palestine, April 2006
– Website of the oPt Ministry of Education and Higher Education: http://www.mohe.gov.ps/ENG/index.html

For further information:
- **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)**
Unit P10 - Tempus and Bilateral Cooperation with Industrialised Countries
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Avenue du Bourget 1 (BOUR 02/017) B-1140 Brussels, Belgium
Contact: EACEA-Tempus-Info@ec.europa.eu
Web-site: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/

- **National Tempus Office oPt**
Postal address: Ministry of Education and Higher Education Om-Alsharayet, 6th Floor Ramallah oPt
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Web-site: www.tempus.ps

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[2] Nedal Jayousi (NTO occupied Palestinian territory), Daoud Zatari (Palestinian Polytechnic University).