GOOD LUCK ON YOUR ACADEMIC JOURNEY!



جَامِعَة فِلَسطِين الأَهلِيَّة
Palestine Ahliya University

PALESTINE AHLIYA UNIVERSITY

NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter published by the
International Affairs and Public Relations Department

JANUARY 2025

Continuation of Israeli violations against Palestine and higher education institutions

Content:

1. Israeli Violations Against Education
2. Survival of the Smartest... A Trilogy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence
3. Top News
4. International and Local Cooperation
5. Conferences
6. Activities and Events
7. Scientific Research Corner



Ministry of Education & Higher Education

Israeli Occupation Violations Against Education in Palestine

7 October 2023 - 11 February 2025

Students	West Bank			Gaza Strip		
	Martyrs	Injured	Arrested	Martyrs	Injured	Arrested
Schools	91	563	313	12467+	20311+	-
Universities	35	136+	293+	872+	1916+	Unknown

Educational staff	West Bank			Gaza Strip		
	Martyrs	Injured	Arrested	Martyrs	Injured	Arrested
Schools	3	18	157+	569	2703	Unknown
Universities	-	Unknown	9	178	1311+	Unknown

Attacks on Schools & Universities

West Bank

Schools	Universities
(117) schools have been attacked and damaged	(7) Universities and colleges experienced repeated incursions, damage and tampering with possessions

Gaza Strip

Schools	Universities
(241) public schools have been severely damaged, and more than (111) public schools have been completely destroyed (85) public schools have been attacked and damaged (89) UNRWA schools have been attacked and damaged	(20) higher education institutions have been severely damaged More than (51) university buildings have been completely destroyed (57) university buildings have been partially destroyed

In Gaza...

- (298,000) students enrolled in virtual schools.
- A field survey is conducted to determine the extent of the actual damage.

Survival of the Smartest... A Trilogy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence



Dr. Haytham Hijazi
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

In the serene setting of Switzerland, during the cold January of this year, specifically in Davos, the debate at the World Economic Forum was intense among AI leaders regarding Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). I recall the emotional reaction of Yoshua Bengio to Andrew Ng's comment, *"at some point, we will be able to control AI programming and restrain it from performing undesirable functions."* Bengio responded seriously, perhaps even anxious tone, warning: *"We are on a path where we are building machines that go beyond being mere tools—they have their own agency and goals, and this is not a good thing."* Science still doesn't have an answer to how we can control systems that are as intelligent as humans or even less intelligent.

In this article, I will tone down the panic, but with the hope that we, as trustees and officials in higher education in Palestine, as well as specialists in artificial intelligence, can agree on the importance of ringing three essential bells: awareness, human competence, and ethical frameworks.

In light of the unprecedented advancement of generative AI tools, which have become boundless at our fingertips, and our transition from ChatGPT to Perplexity, to DeepSEEK, to Grok, along with the surrender of the mind to an overreliance on machines and a reduction in critical scrutiny in decision-making in critical sectors—perhaps most notably in education, especially higher education and scientific research—the discussion on awareness and competence in artificial intelligence and its ethics has become one of the most contentious and eagerly debated topics for discussion and regulation.

In a study conducted by UNESCO at the end of January of this year on the role of higher education in artificial intelligence strategies, the results indicated that higher education contributes to three main areas: developing talent and the workforce through AI education (95% of the analyzed countries), enhancing research and development (91%), and contributing to the ethical and regulatory frameworks for AI governance (48%).

Awareness of what?

I do not see a significant gap between the three b I previously mentioned and the findings of the aforementioned UNESCO study. Any attempt by higher education institutions to participate in this accelerating race must begin with building awareness. I do not mean merely awareness of the existence of artificial intelligence (especially generative AI) around us, but rather a deeper awareness that includes understanding the global political landscape of AI and recognizing that survival will belong to those who are the most artificially intelligent at the level of nations and governments. The technological war between the United States and China over semiconductor manufacturing, the massive investments major powers are pouring into AI research, and the establishment of high-level positions dedicated to this field all confirm that superiority will belong to those who possess awareness, knowledge, and the necessary tools.

The other type of awareness is the epistemological awareness of generative AI tools, which goes beyond mere cognitive empowerment in artificial intelligence or what is known as AI literacy. What I mean here is the awareness that leads to a deeper understanding of the cognitive nature of these tools, how they generate knowledge, how they process data, and how they make decisions. We must recognize that the most intelligent and complex tools, such as large language models, are trained on vast datasets (possibly available or unavailable) produced by humans. Unlike humans, who can innovate from their life experiences, personal insights, and perhaps awareness, intuition, and ethical systems, artificial intelligence remains confined to data, statistical and mathematical patterns, and probability values upon which it relies to “predict the next word” or “predict the next action.” Thus, we realize that we face the risks of bias, statistical errors, and the danger of machine learning from the machine itself, isolated from humans, in predicting the next word, decision, or action.

Those who possess these tools of awareness, and certainly others, in higher education institutions can begin the phases of development and preparation to contribute to building a clear framework for artificial intelligence within universities and research institutions. This framework would be capable of defining the roles of humans and machines, developing capacities and competencies, and ultimately culminating all these efforts with an ethical system that shapes and organizes the fastest race in modern history.

I remember in the early days of 2023, when discussions were at their peak about the rise of ChatGPT

and the world was preoccupied with its remarkable capabilities, how Palestine Ahliya University began to seriously consider understanding what was happening in this field. The university worked on raising awareness of its various dimensions and studying the implications of generative AI on education and scientific research. This led to the establishment of policies for its use in the teaching and learning process as a starting point.

Human and machine, or machine and human?

I promised not to stir up panic too much at the beginning of this article, but the ring of human competence remains disturbing. In January of this year, less than two months ago, and I don't know why January tends to spark controversy about artificial intelligence, a report published by Phys.org warned that there is a strong negative correlation between the use of AI tools and the decline in individuals' critical thinking skills. By low levels of critical thinking, we mean a diminished ability to critically evaluate information, engage in deep and reflective problem-solving, and learn properly. Our university students are embracing these tools in an unprecedented manner. This is not new or surprising. What is new, however, is that as educational institutions, we are now facing two, and only two, options: either humans continue to think, analyze, and criticize, supported by machines, or machines become the entities that think and decide, with the human›s role reduced to mere reception.

The first option is challenging and requires a serious commitment from universities and higher education institutions to redesign the learning, teaching, and evaluation system. This should include modifying tests, instructional materials, graduation projects, and master's and PhD theses so that students are inevitably guided to use critical thinking skills to read, analyze, understand, critique, filter, and select the outputs of generative AI—while also leveraging these outputs to broaden the horizons of creative thought and innovation. The difficulty of this option has been a strong motivator for the administration of Palestine Ahliya University to develop a new compulsory AI course for students, which will be offered next year, affirming one key lesson: human beings first, then the machine.

Ethics that are not artificial

The third bell may call upon many fields of knowledge and science to collaborate in creating a system of ethics that is not artificial and is not produced by artificial intelligence, but rather produced

by the convergence of educational and pedagogical philosophy, psychology, sociology, and perhaps law, with technology to regulate the fastest race. I must point out here that regulating the pace of this progress is not an academic luxury, but a civilizational necessity that requires full awareness of the capabilities and failures of artificial intelligence, its limitations, and the possibility of its transformation from a mere tool to an entity that influences decision-making and policy formation in unexpected ways—especially with the exponential leaps in the development of generative AI and soon agentic AI. This compels us to reconsider the ethical and legal frameworks that regulate these systems, and raises the question: Do we, as universities and educational institutions, today possess the philosophical and legislative infrastructure capable of steering this development toward the benefit of the student? Or will we later find ourselves facing educational dilemmas for which we were unprepared?

The real challenge facing higher education institutions today is not limited solely to grasping the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence; it also extends to deeper issues related to intellectual property, both institutional and individual privacy, academic plagiarism, and the fine line between the legitimate use of these technologies and an unconscious reliance on them. Palestine Ahliya University has recognized the dangers associated with this and has begun developing a set of governing and binding policies for its members that, on one hand, pave the way for progress and, on the other, mandate the responsible and disciplined use of generative AI tools in educational, learning, research, and administrative processes.

In conclusion, the greatest challenge for higher education institutions is achieving a balance between harnessing the benefits of artificial intelligence and preserving the role of human thinking, creativity, and decision-making. Awareness, competence, and ethics are not mere slogans; they are indispensable foundations for ensuring a sustainable educational and research future that leads artificial intelligence, rather than being led by it. **In this race, survival will belong to the smartest.**

Top News

Dr. Imad Al-Zeer participates in the Board of Directors Meeting of the Arab Council for Student Training and Innovation in Tunisia

Dr. Imad Al-Zeer, President of Palestine Ahliya University, participated in the 32nd Annual Board of Directors meeting of the Arab Council for Student Training and Innovation, which was held on Saturday at the University of Tunis El Manar in the Republic of Tunisia. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Nathir Obeidat, President of the University of Jordan.

Dr. Al-Zeer emphasized the importance of the Arab Council for Student Training and Innovation and its role in promoting collaboration in the field of student training and innovation among Arab universities. He highlighted the need to expand the scope of training programs and develop initiatives that contribute to enhancing students' competencies and refining their skills to meet the demands of the labor market.











*** Palestine Ahliya University Holds Its General Meeting for Academic and Administrative Staff for the Second Semester of 2024/2025.**














International and Local Cooperation

*** President Assistant for Planning and Development at Palestine Ahliya University, Dr. Ahmed Abdou, representing the Arab Council for Academic Exchange, headquartered at Palestine Ahliya University, participated in the twenty-first meeting of the institutions of the Association of Arab Universities, held at Sultan Qaboos University.**









*** A delegation from Palestine Ahliya University, headed by Dr. Imad Al-Zeer, the university president, visits Bethlehem University to extend congratulations to Dr. Fadi Qattan on his appointment as Executive Vice President of Bethlehem University."**











Conferences

Palestine Ahliya University, represented by its President, Dr. Imad Al-Zeer, and the President Assistant for International and Public Relations Affairs, Mr. Jiries Abu Ghanam, participated in the First Conference of Arab and Indian University Presidents, held in the Indian capital, New Delhi. The conference was organized within the education sector to establish the Arab-Indian Universities Union.

The conference focused on cooperation in higher education and skills development between India and the Arab League towards growth and prosperity. It emphasized strengthening academic collaboration, including the use of digital platforms, as well as promoting joint research and innovation in science and technology, particularly in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology. Additionally, the conference highlighted the importance of faculty and student exchange and cooperation in curriculum development.

On the sidelines of the conference, a visit was made to the Palestinian Embassy in India, where a meeting was held with the Charge d'Affaires, Dr. Abdul Razzaq Abu Jazar, to discuss ways of mutual cooperation.







The Faculty of Law Holds Its First Peer-Reviewed Student Legal Conference Titled "Legal Drafting in Light of Artificial Intelligence" in Collaboration with the Official Gazette Bureau













Palestine Ahliya University invites researchers and interested individuals to submit research papers for the conference

“Education for Innovation in the Digital Age: Enhancing a Culture of Knowledge Production”

Palestine Ahliya University

Under the patronage of His Excellency, the Minister of Education and Higher Education Prof. Amjad Barham
In partnership with the Association of Arab Universities
Palestine Ahliya University is honored to invite you to attend:
The Second International Educational Conference

Education for Innovation in the Digital Age: Enhancing a Culture of Knowledge Production

About the Conference:

Emphasizing the importance of the intersection between effective education, innovation, and digital transformation in shaping the future of knowledge production has become an urgent necessity in our time. This requires reshaping the educational process to align with the rapid advancements in curricula, modern teaching methods, and educational technology. The goal is to cultivate a generation that is innovative and actively contributes to knowledge production rather than merely consuming it. The conference focuses on developing educational frameworks that foster creativity, critical thinking, and innovation through the integration of digital technologies. It also aims to highlight the role of individuals, educational institutions, and decision-makers in empowering teachers and learners with the digital and educational skills necessary to build a generation that is innovative, a producer of knowledge, aware, independent, and well-equipped with science and knowledge.

Conference Objectives:

- Fostering creativity and knowledge production in the digital age.
- Integrating technology and artificial intelligence into education to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- Empowering teachers and learners with the digital skills necessary for innovation and knowledge production.

Conference Themes:

Theme One: Education for Innovation	Theme Two: The Role of Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Education and Innovation
• Educational strategies to foster creativity and critical thinking among learners. • The role of teachers and institutions in creating an innovation-driven learning environment. • Transitioning from traditional education to problem-solving and knowledge-production-based learning. • Promoting a culture of scientific research among students at all educational levels. • The reality of innovation in the era of digital learning. • Innovation and creativity in curricula and teaching methods.	• Utilizing digital technologies to enhance innovative education. • Virtual and augmented reality for building interactive learning environments. • Employing digital applications to promote innovative learning. • Evaluating digital applications. • Proposed frameworks to enhance innovation and knowledge production in the digital age. • Generative AI and enhancing the learning experience.
Theme Three: Digital Skills, Digital Ethics, and Privacy Protection	**Theme Four: Knowledge Production in the Digital Age**
• The digital gap and digital literacy. • Safe and responsible use of digital applications. • Academic integrity in the era of generative AI. • Responsibilities of higher education institutions regarding students' and academics' use of generative AI applications. • Digital Awareness and the culture of Responsibility.	• Education centered on knowledge production versus consumption. • Scientific research to stimulate knowledge production. • Leveraging digital applications for knowledge production. • Evaluating the role of higher education institutions in fostering innovation and a culture of knowledge production. • Partnership for innovation and knowledge production. • Lessons Learned and Inspiring Stories.

Participation Timeline:

Item	From	To
Abstract submission and acceptance/rejection notification	15/02/2025	30/03/2025
Full paper submission and acceptance/rejection notification	01/04/2025	30/05/2025
Tuesday-Wednesday, 17-18/06/2025	17+18	Conference Palace / Bethlehem

Correspondence:

Please direct all correspondence to:
Phone: 022751566 / Mobile: 05997920028 / (WhatsApp: 00972597920028)
Email: conference@paluniv.edu.ps

Chair of the Scientific Committee
Dr. Mahmoud Itmeizeh

Activities and Events

Palestine Ahliya University participates in the Orientation Day for high school students in the Bethlehem Governorate.




















العلوم الطبية المساندة
جامعة الوطنية


العلوم الطبية المساندة
جامعة الوطن



Palestine Ahliya University participated in the launch event of the press conference announcing the activities of "University Innovation Day" at Palestinian universities. During the event, Dr. Ahmed Abdou, President Assistant for Planning and Development, representing Palestine Ahliya University, participated in signing an official memorandum of memorandum as part of the agreements signed between the Higher Council for Innovation and Excellence and the participating Palestinian universities.







Mohammed Qassam Al-Wardian, a Computer Engineering student, qualifies to participate in the International Hackathon for Quantum Computing and Artificial Intelligence, which will be held in Abu Dhabi. His qualification comes after his outstanding performance in the Third Palestinian National Hackathon, organized by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy in collaboration with the Center for Technological Innovation and the Palestinian Computing Hackathon Committee. His team secured second place in the national competition in Palestine, which saw the participation of 285 students from various Palestinian universities, including both undergraduate and master's students. Additionally, Dr. Emma Qumsieh participated as a jury member in the hackathon and supervised groups of students in the competition.





The Faculty of Law at Palestine Ahliya University hosts Mr. Emile Al-Mashriqi, a lawyer from the Society of St. Yves, to discuss

"Legal Response Mechanisms to Israeli Violations against Land and Housing in Area C"

in cooperation with the Land Research Center.





The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at Palestine Ahliya University, in collaboration with the Bethlehem Branch of the Engineers Syndicate, jointly organizes a training workshop for students specializing in Civil Engineering, Building Services, and Interior Design and Decoration on the requirements for engineering plans as outlined by the Engineers Syndicate.





Pharmacist Dr. Shahd Awwad delivers a lecture to students of the 'Introduction to Global Culture' course titled "Medication Management – Optimal Use and Therapeutic Safety"





Palestine Ahliya University conducts a series of field visits to public high schools in the West Bank governorates to introduce students to the academic programs offered by the university, guiding and assisting them in choosing their academic specializations.











Scientific Research Corner



Palestine Ahliya University is pleased to announce the release of the second issue of Volume One (2024) of the

"Ahliya Journal of Business Technology and the Economics of the Middle East and North Africa"

issued by the Scientific Research Department. This peer-reviewed, open-access journal serves as a reliable reference for researchers and specialists, focusing on the latest advancements in technology and business while offering a unique opportunity to explore the economic impacts of these innovations.

This issue includes a collection of research articles covering a variety of topics, including financial distress prediction, cybersecurity attacks and customer satisfaction, identity verification using artificial intelligence, AI in human resource management, AI in workforce development and the effectiveness of decision-making, entrepreneurial traits and sales growth, modern leadership styles, and leadership development.

To view the second issue, please visit the journal's website:

https://journal.paluniv.edu.ps/index.php/ajbte/index.

We also invite interested researchers to join the journal's editorial board. For inquiries, please contact us via email at:

ajbte@paluniv.edu.ps



Dr. Adnan Qabajeh participates in publishing a new study titled
"Trends And Patterns In Coso-Related Auditing Research: A Bibliometric Study"



Dr. Mahmoud Shakarna participates in publishing a new study titled
"Sustainable valorisation of sand concrete properties using quarry waste as crushed sand"



Dr. Haneen Dwaib participates in publishing a new study titled
"Protocol for producing a rat model of non-obese prediabetes using a mild hypercaloric diet approach"



Dr. Rawan Siaj participates in publishing a new study titled
"Evaluating the Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on the Development of Creative Thinking among University Students in Jordan"

Palestine Ahliya University is pleased to open its doors for productive research partnerships with academic institutions and distinguished researchers in various fields.

You can contact us via email at: research.clinic@paluniv.edu.ps



جامعة فلسطين الأهلية - جبل ظاهر - بيت لحم

02-2751566 02-2749652 P.O Box: 1041 palestineahliya

Bethlehem, Palestine pau@paluniv.edu.ps

جامعة فلسطين الأهلية - Palestine Ahliya University

www.paluniv.edu.ps

جَامِعَة فِلَسطِين الأَهلِيَّة

Palestine Ahliya University