

HESPAL

**Higher Education Scholarships
for Palestinians**

Application Guidance Notes

Cycle 2026

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1. Key highlights

Launch of call: 8 December 2025

Scholarship Academic Year: 2026–2027

Deadline to submit the full application: Friday 27 February 2026, by 11:59 PM.

HESPAL online application link: <https://form.jotform.com/253353142267353>

For 2026, HESPAL will be open exclusively to master's degree applicants from Gaza.

2. HESPAL Introduction

HESPAL offers a unique opportunity for the academic in Palestine to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK. Delivered in partnership with Palestinian and UK universities, the scholarship aims to support young Palestinian academics, develop their expertise, and contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Palestinian higher education sector. **HESPAL objectives are to:**

- Contribute to the creation of Palestine's next generation of senior academics.
- Develop sustainable institutional links between Palestinian and UK universities.
- Support professional networks to sustain the scholar's longer-term career.

The scholarship covers the main expenses for selected scholars, including:

- Academic tuition fees, through fee waivers offered by participating UK partner universities.
- Living allowance for the 12 months duration of master's programmes.
- Arrival allowance and thesis allowance.
- Additional allowance (for 2026 scholars) to contribute toward visa, health insurance and/or travel costs.

Scholars are expected to cover all other expenses and any unforeseen costs.

HESPAL is supported by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Pears Foundation, the UK Department for Education (DfE), and the Amjad and Suha Bseiso Foundation. UK partner universities are also key contributors, providing full tuition fee waivers for HESPAL scholars and, in some cases, contributing to the full cost of the scholarship.

Partner Palestinian Universities for the 2026 cycle: All universities in Gaza.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the HESPAL 2026 cycle, applicants must be:

- Palestinian from the Gaza Strip (including displaced Gazans).
- Applying for a master's (MA) programme only — PhD applicants are not eligible.
- Employed by or part of the academic staff at a Gazan university.
- Nominated by their Gazan university.

Applicants will be required to provide a valid English-language certificate accepted by the UK university to which they are applying.

For more information regarding the IELTS exams test dates, fees and locations please visit our website <https://www.britishcouncil.ps/en/exam/ielts/dates-fees-locations>

Women, displaced academics, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Support for applicants with disabilities will be provided where programme capacity and available funding allow.

4. How to apply

The application process will be facilitated through our partner Gaza universities. Once the HESPAL call is open, Gaza universities publicise the call across their academic staff and nominate up to 5 candidates.

Nominated scholars must follow the application process, which includes the following steps:

1) Complete and submit the HESPAL online application form:

Use the link below to access and fill in the HESPAL application form and upload the required supporting documents. The application must be completed with the approval of your home Palestinian university.

Application link: <https://form.jotform.com/253353142267353>

Before you start filling out the online application form, you are advised to:

- Carefully read and understand each section of the application, along with the overall requirements for your candidacy.
- Explore and carefully identify the subject area(s) you wish to pursue in your studies.
- Conduct thorough research on the programmes offered by the UK partner universities to ensure they align with your academic and professional goals.
- Ensure that you meet the specified qualifications and required grades for your selected programme.
- Prepare and compile all supporting documents required, as detailed in section 4 of the guidelines.

The HESPAL scheme is highly competitive, and merit based. It is therefore essential to complete the application form in full. **Please note that late or incomplete applications will be disqualified.**

2) Apply to UK partner universities participating in the HESPAL programme.

- Check the list of HESPAL UK partner universities for the 2026 cycle.
- Identify three to five UK partner universities that you are interested in and specify the programme or course of study you wish to pursue.
- Apply for each of your preferred programmes directly through the universities' application portals. It is the responsibility of each candidate to thoroughly research and understand the application requirements and procedures for the universities they are interested in.
- Candidates must secure offers from partner UK universities to be considered for HESPAL scholarship placements at that institution. (Offers may be received at a later stage in the process) *

* Please note that securing an offer from a university **does not** guarantee a HESPAL scholarship placement. It is a prerequisite, but not a guarantee.

5. Supporting Documents

The following documents must be uploaded and submitted with the HESPAL application:

- One recent passport sized photo.
- Copy of Passport (or ID).
- An official copy of the academic certificate for all higher education qualification including BA, MA or/and PhD (in English).
- Nomination and proof of employment letter from home university.
- A valid English-language certificate accepted by the UK university to which applicants are applying.

6. Selection Process

HESPAL Selection and Placement Process

- Each Gaza university sends its list of nominated applicants to the British Council. Nominated scholars then submit their full online application by the set deadline.
- The British Council checks eligibility of candidates and sends a confirmed list of applicants to the relevant UK partner universities, as defined by the scholars' applications.
- UK partner universities evaluate the applications and provide the British Council with a list of applicants they would be willing to accept, ranking their top three preferences. *
- Final scholarship placements are made determined based on the student's acceptance, the ranking by the UK and Palestinian universities, and HESPAL funding partners' selection priorities.
- If the number of candidates placed in UK universities exceeds available HESPAL scholarship funding, the British Council reserves the right to initiate additional selection procedures and/or develop a reserve list in line with ranking. If selected scholars withdraw, reserve candidates may be offered a place.
- The British Council informs the Gaza Universities of the final results and issues award letters for successful scholars. **
- Successful applicants follow up on necessary communication and arrangements with the UK partner university offering a place.

* Please note the placement of a student at their preferred UK partner university cannot be guaranteed.

** Please note that due to the high number of applications, we are unable to discuss the status of any application at any time during the process of selection.

7. General Information

For enquiries, contact Hiba Hammouri, HESPAL Coordinator at WhatsApp number: +970 - 0562100768 or email: hiba.hammouriadeeb@britishcouncil.org

Annex: List of UK partner universities

The following universities have been identified as partner institutions for the HESPAL cycle 2026. **All offer one-year master's programmes for 2026.**

	University Name
1	Imperial College London
2	Lancaster University
3	Oxford Brookes University
4	The University of Edinburgh
5	University of Bath
6	University of Bristol
7	University of Cumbria
8	University of Essex
9	University of Exeter
10	University of Leicester
11	University of Southampton
12	University of St Andrews
13	University of Stirling
14	University of Sussex
15	University of York