

Call for Applications

E-Pal PhD Scholarship Program (EPSP)

Deadline to submit applications: 31 December 2022

About the E-Pal project

‘Equip Palestine with E-Learning (E-Pal)’ project is a collaboration between the Palestine Polytechnic University/Hebron-West Bank, University College of Applied Sciences/Gaza, the University of Oslo/Oslo-Norway and Oslo Metropolitan University/Oslo-Norway, funded by Norad through the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)-Norway.

E-Pal has as a main objective to strengthen e-learning in the Palestinian higher education sector, and to Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and education as a field of research in Palestine. E-Pal focuses on six interrelated areas:

1. Conducting and publishing research on e-learning in higher education in Palestine and on the recent global trends in the field.
2. Organizing training and development workshops and courses for Palestinian academics in e-learning in higher education.
3. Developing existing educational offerings in Palestinian universities to meet the new demands in higher education for more focus on e-learning and blended learning.
4. Developing a new master programme in Palestine focusing on e-learning in higher education, and new e-learning study and training centres,
5. Contributing in developing governmental and institutional policies related to e-learning in higher education.
6. Further develop Palestinian higher education institutions' networks in relation to e-learning in higher education.

The EPSP

The E-Pal project is currently recruiting three PhD students, who will complete a PhD work on e-learning in higher education in close collaboration with the Project leadership. The E-Pal project strives to ensure diversity and equal opportunities in its recruitment practices, including diversity related to gender and disabilities.

EPSP thematic areas for research

The E-Pal project focuses on teaching and learning in higher education that is supported by digital tools. Below, we refer to this as *technology-enhanced learning*. Examples of technology-enhanced learning include (but are not limited to):

- Courses that combine face-to-face, synchronous teaching with online, asynchronous learning environments (such as Moodle or Google Classroom; flipped classroom)
- Courses that use simulations technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, in teaching activities
- MOOCs and other kinds of self-regulated, online courses.

1. **Teaching and learning in technology-enhanced learning environments.** Projects within this thematic area will examine how processes of teaching and learning can be supported by digital tools/environments. The relationship between digital tools/environments and research-based principles for teaching and learning is of key importance. Relevant actors include students, teachers and educational leaders.
2. **Organisational approaches to technology-enhanced learning environments in higher education.** Projects within this thematic area will examine conditions for, and processes of, organisational change in relation to technology-enhanced learning in higher education. The increased use of digital technologies in educational processes requires organisational and institutional support. Such support is frequently lacking in the higher education sector. Projects within this thematic area should contribute with research that examines the relationship between technology-enhanced learning and organisational change.
3. **The use of digital simulations in technology-enhanced learning environments.** Digital simulations, including virtual and augmented reality, carry significant potential for supporting student learning. Projects within this thematic area will examine processes of teaching and learning related to the use of simulations in higher education. Key issues include learning through simulations and de-brief exercises, transformation of knowledge through simulations, and formative and summative assessment.
4. **Policy and governance of technology-enhanced learning in higher education.** Projects within this thematic area will examine national and institutional policies for technology-enhanced learning, preferably from an international, comparative perspective. Subthemes include policy development, implementation and quality assurance.

Beneficiaries of the three scholarships:

1. One PhD scholarship is available for one staff member at Palestine Polytechnic University. The applicant needs to be a permanent, full time academic employee (tenure track contract), or administrative employees who have teaching experience.
2. One PhD scholarship is available for one staff member at University College of Applied Sciences. The applicant needs to be a permanent, full time academic or administrative employee. Applicants of administrative contracts must have had an academic workload for a minimum of three years.

3. One PhD scholarship is available for one staff member at another Palestinian higher education institution (West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem). The applicant needs to be a permanent, full time academic employee.

EPSP Details:

1. EPSP is open for all Palestinian Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs)
2. The applicant must be a Palestinian currently employed at a Palestinian Higher Education Institution, holding a Palestinian or Jerusalem ID;
3. All candidates need to commit to three years of full-time work at their institution after completion of their PhD project.
4. Successful candidates need to search and obtain admission for PhD programs in accredited universities in any country they desire. Approval of the university and the program choice need to be granted.
5. The nature of the program in regards to the learning settings, i. e. face-to-face, online, or blended setting, depends on the approved program offered by the approved university.
6. The nature of the PhD research outcome, such as dissertation, published articles, or comprehensive exam depends on the approved program offered by the approved university.
7. The successful candidates will be offered a scholarship for three years. During this time, applicants are expected to work full time on their PhD projects, and to contribute to the realisation of the E-Pal project.
8. Successful candidates are expected to participate actively in the E-Pal research group, and to register at a relevant PhD program (to be selected in collaboration with the project leadership).
9. Successful candidates can not work more than 25% in other types of employment during this period.
10. The EPSP includes:
 - a. One round-trip or two one-way flight tickets to the university that the candidate gets admitted to.
 - b. A monthly stipend of 19.000 NOK (Norwegian Kroner) for three years.
11. The EPSP does not include:
 - a. Tuition and fees: Many European universities provide free enrollment to their programs. However, if the candidate chooses to study in a country that requires payments of fees and tuition, candidates should pay their own expenses.
 - b. Health insurance: Many European universities provide health insurance once the candidates enrol at their universities
12. The EPSP allows:
 - a. the successful candidates to apply for additional fund from other sources
 - b. the successful candidates to cover their own tuition and fees if they choose to study at a university that does not cover such expenses
 - c. the successful candidates to bring their families/dependents and financially support them. The EPSP only offers a monthly stipend of 19.000 NOK per candidate.

Qualifications:

Required qualifications

In order to be eligible for the EPSP, candidates must

- hold a master's degree within the fields of education, social sciences, information technology, organisational studies, computer engineering, humanities, or other fields of high relevance to the E-Pal project. Other academic backgrounds can be considered if the proposed research project is of excellent quality.
- have a strong mastery of the English language (written and oral).
- have a minimum grade point average of 85% or an equivalence to 'Very Good' on their MA degree.
- be able to take up the scholarship in the academic year 2023/2024.

Desired qualifications

- Strong motivation and interest in academic research
- Ability to engage in an interdisciplinary research group
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently according to set schedules
- Strong collaborative skills

E-Pal Scholarship Application:

How to apply:

Complete the Online Form <https://nettskjema.no/a/273702>

Applicants must attach all accompanying documents as detailed in the Online Form

Required Documents:

1. Cover letter including a statement of motivation, your suitability for the position (for example, previous experience with research), and how a PhD can be of future benefit to your work/to your institution.
2. Nomination letter from your employer expressing support for your application and an explanation of how a PhD will benefit your institution in the future.
3. CV (summarising education, previous positions and other qualifying experience) (maximum 2 pages)
4. Project Proposal Description (6-10 pages excluding the reference list, written in English, 12 pt Times New Roman, 1,5 line spacing). Please use this template:
[EPSP_Project Description template.docx](#)
5. A copy of your Master thesis.
6. Degree certificates from your BA and Master's degrees, along with grade transcripts. You can also submit other course certificates if you consider them relevant for the position.
7. Three references with complete contact information (e.g., Master thesis supervisor, work supervisor, etc.)
8. (Optional) Applicants that have previous experience with scientific publications can submit up to 5 publications. This point is optional.

Things to keep in mind:

When applying, applicants should keep the following issues in mind:

1. All documentation should be in English.

2. All applicants must submit a project description (point 4 above) based on the Project Description template. If you do not submit a project description, your application will not be considered.
3. The proposal should be based on *empirical* research. We will not consider project proposals that are purely theoretical.
4. It is a requirement that the proposed research focuses on higher education. We will not consider project proposals that focus on primary or secondary school.
5. The choice of PhD program will be determined in cooperation with each successful applicant. If you have suggestions for suitable PhD programs/specific institutions, you can describe them in your letter of motivation.
6. International mobility, including staying one year in Norway, is encouraged but not strictly required.

Selection procedure

Applications will be assessed by an external scientific committee composed of specialists in the field who are not involved in the E-Pal projects. In the assessment of applications, emphasis will be placed on

- the quality of the project description
- the relevance of the proposed project for E-Pal
- the applicant's grades from previous degrees/courses in higher education
- the quality of their master's thesis.

Emphasis will also be placed on the applicants' academic aptitude for completing the research training program. Interviews will be conducted as part of the recruitment process.

Important Deadlines:

- **October 16, 2022:** EPSP application opens.
- **October 25, 2022 at 11:00am-** **Information Session** to be held on Zoom. Here is the link for the Zoom Session:
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://uio.zoom.us/j/61092242787>
Meeting ID: 610 9224 2787/Passcode: NORHEDEPAL
- **November 1, 2022:** **Webinar on how to write your PhD proposal**
- **December 31, 2022 at 11:00am:** Deadline to submit applications
- March 13, 2023: results of first round of candidates.

Further information

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Mohammed Tamimi, Palestine Polytechnic University

Email: tamimim@ppu.edu

Mobile: 00970599366722

Ms. Ola Azam, University College of Applied Sciences

Email: ir@ucas.edu.ps

Mobile: 00970598705848

