

Scholarships for Palestinian Students offered by the Government of Malta for Postgraduate Studies at the University of Malta

Call for Applications 2017

The Government of Malta announces the fourth call for applications for Palestinian students wishing to pursue post-graduate studies at the University of Malta. The Scholarships are designed to facilitate the formation of young Palestinian professionals in two key areas which have become increasingly recognised as critical pillars for the creation of a more sustainable future for Palestine, namely humanitarian action, and cultural heritage. Malta is an ideal meeting point for the realization of this goal, not only because of the relevant expertise it offers in these two sectors, but also because of the strong historic and cultural ties it enjoys with the Arab world as well as with Europe.

Objective

The specialised formation of young and promising Palestinian citizens is an important pillar for the ongoing capacity-building efforts in Palestine. Two of the emerging sectors where more young professionals are needed on the ground are humanitarian action, and the conservation and management of cultural heritage. An investment in the specialised formation of professionals in these two sectors is an investment in the future of Palestine, with a better and more sustainable quality of life for its citizens.

Why sponsor students in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage?

The main objective of the international community's engagement in Palestine is the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. Cultural heritage is widely recognised as a powerful medium for the formation of a sense of identity, civic pride and community regeneration. A number of Palestinian initiatives are already exploring the immensely rich patrimony of Palestine to help build a better future for the country. The formation of more young professionals will directly support the growth and consolidation of these home-grown initiatives.

A fundamental principle of sound and sustainable heritage conservation and management is the empowerment and the enablement of local communities with the skills and tools to conserve and manage their own cultural heritage resources. The formation of heritage management and conservation/restoration professionals within a community is the most essential step in this process of emancipation from an excessive and long-term dependence on external expertise.

A second principle of sustainable heritage management is the development of conservation/restoration and management techniques that are suited to local materials, traditions and skills, in order to ensure that they may be replicated and sustained with the least possible dependence on externally-devised solutions.

There are a number of distinct similarities between Maltese and Palestinian built heritage. For this reason the training and expertise offered by the University of Malta are highly relevant to the Palestinian context.

These common characteristics should also facilitate the creation of long-term synergies between the University of Malta and Palestinian universities.

The scholarship scheme will directly support the successful and sustainable delivery of these goals through capacity-building at a local level, in order to help develop a professional workforce on the ground that is capable of developing and maintaining an indigenous heritage management and conservation practice.

Why sponsor students in Humanitarian Action?

The overall situation in Palestine and particularly in Gaza, as well as the continued existence of large refugee camps calls for a high degree of expertise in humanitarian action. Humanitarian issues related to the Palestinian situation are also continuously on the agenda of international organisations, including the United Nations and its various agencies. It is imperative that Palestinians have the capacity and professional knowledge to take the lead in shaping both policy and practice related to humanitarian action in Palestine at the international, regional, and local levels.

Humanitarian action today emphasizes local ownership, participation and bottom-up approaches. Thus, it is only logical from this perspective to develop extensive Palestinian expertise on an issue which, unfortunately, affects the Palestinian people on a daily basis.

The Master of Arts in Humanitarian Action of the University of Malta combines theory and practice in such a way as to enable the students to work on a range of issues related to humanitarian action, from humanitarian diplomacy, via forced migration and refugee law to management in humanitarian action, all issues of particular interest in the Palestinian context.

Brief overview of bilateral relations between Malta and Palestine

Ever since its independence, Malta has traditionally held close and friendly relations with the Palestinian people. Malta was one of the first European countries to support the principle of a two-state solution to the long-standing conflict in the Middle East. To this end, its foreign policy has consistently supported international efforts aimed at a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the conflict and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel.

Malta remains committed to complement its political engagement with practical assistance to state-building efforts. Apart from giving a financial contribution to the *Mécanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique* (PEGASE) Malta also contributes regularly to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Furthermore, Malta has regularly participated in donor conferences and pledged contributions.

Malta sponsored a workshop on the conservation of built heritage in Palestine. The workshop, organised by Heritage Malta and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation & Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), was hosted in Bethlehem during December 2011. A follow-up workshop, held in Ramallah during September 2012 finalised work on the Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter). During February 2013 the Palestinian Minister for Tourism and the Antiquities launched the Charter - the first of its kind in the Arab world.

In addition to these ad hoc contributions, Malta has a well-established tradition of offering two scholarships annually in the field of Diplomatic Studies for Master's programmes at the University of Malta and at the Malta-based Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC). Over forty students have benefited from these scholarships so far and graduates from these programmes are currently working at the Office of the President, Palestinian ministries, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public and private institutions in Palestine. In addition, twice a year, Malta sponsors the participation of two Palestinian officials in MEDAC seminars.

Throughout the years, Malta and Palestine have also sought to deepen their bilateral relations through the intensification of cooperation in various sectors. During July 2008, President Mahmoud Abbas paid a first visit to Malta. In June 2009 Malta inaugurated its Representative Office in Ramallah. The Hon. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta, paid a first visit to Palestine on 17 October 2013. During his visit the Prime Minister of Malta reaffirmed Malta's commitment to state-building efforts in Palestine, and in line with this policy he announced the setting up of the present scholarship scheme. The Hon. George W. Vella, Foreign Minister of Malta, last visited Palestine during October 2014 and was the first Foreign Minister to visit Gaza following the hostilities of the previous summer.

The present scholarship scheme, supporting the areas of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Humanitarian Action was launched in 2014 with two full scholarships funded annually. A total of six students have benefited so far, with two students graduating in November 2016, two students set to graduate in November 2017 and another two students currently finishing their first year of study.

The University of Malta

Lying at the cross-roads of the Mediterranean, the University of Malta has, over its 400-year history, been the hub for international academic exchange on the island. This legacy has been carried on to the present day as the University currently hosts close to one thousand international students from 92 different countries, active collaborations with universities in Europe, Asia, the United States, Africa and Australia and a host of international visitors, experts and external examiners from different parts of the globe which have turned the University into an international campus which celebrates the diversity and cultural richness of all those who frequent it. With English as its language of instruction and wide-ranging support services to meet the needs of its local and international community, the University consistently seeks to embark on projects and initiatives in order to continue boosting its international student figures and extending its network to new partners in order to create sustainable collaborations in diverse fields of interest. The University of Malta is the highest teaching institution in Malta, it is publicly funded and is open to all those who have the requisite qualifications. Just over 11,000 students are currently pursuing studies at Foundation, Undergraduate and Post-graduate level. Apart from the 1,000 international students mentioned above, the University hosts approximately 400 students each year on Erasmus and other exchange programmes with Universities across the world.

The principal contact point for prospective and registered international students/visitors is the International Office: <http://www.um.edu.mt/international>

The University today has fourteen different faculties and a number of interdisciplinary Institutes and Centres covering a wide range of areas of study and research. The University of Malta has also set up a School of

Performing Arts and an International School for Foundation Studies. The campus is home to the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies and the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI).

Academic relations between the University of Malta and Universities in Palestine in relation with this Call

The University of Malta's Department of International Relations in the Faculty of Arts, and the Department of Conservation and Built Heritage in the Faculty for the Built Environment have for a long time been committed to developing a strong relationship with their colleagues and counterparts in several Universities in Palestine, as well as NGOs active in their field. Collaborations over recent years have included a series of visits, exchanges, meetings, lectures, a round table discussion and an exhibition, all of which have underlined the potential benefits and paved the way for greater collaboration between the two countries in these fields. A number of other departments of the University of Malta hold excellent academic ties with Palestinian counterparts and as explained previously, the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies has been a host for Palestinian students and academics for several years.

The strong relations between the University of Malta and its Palestinian partners, have been recently enhanced through the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) programme which aims at fostering deeper cooperation with institutions located outside the European Union. The University of Malta, since the start of the Erasmus+ ICM programme in 2015, has secured funding for exchanges with four Palestinian Universities with which it has also signed an Erasmus+ Inter-institutional agreement. A number of exchanges have been successfully executed during the current academic year.

An academic from the Department of International Relations, through its cooperation with An Najah University, had the opportunity to visit the University's campus and conduct a series of lectures. During the coming academic year, the department will reciprocate the visit by inviting an academic from the same university to deliver lectures addressing issues pertaining to the MENA region.

The Erasmus+ ICM programme funds, were also pivotal in the exchanges between the Department of Conservation and Built Heritage and Al Quds University where two Palestinian academics visited the University of Malta to deliver a number of lectures and public lectures on areas related to the conservation and management of archaeological sites and the impact of modern development on cultural heritage among other related issues and challenges.

In return, two Maltese academics travelled to Palestine on two separate occasions to deliver lectures at the same University whilst also sharing and gaining further knowledge on stone conservation.

Cooperation with Birzeit University also resulted in academic staff mobility with a focus on the field of humanitarian action and the refugee context.

Through Erasmus+ ICM programme funds, the University of Malta's International office hosted a number of administrative staff from the same University in order to provide training on the coordination of exchange and exchange of experience in order to enhance the ongoing collaboration.

Courses to be funded through this Call (2017)

Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage Management, within the Department of Conservation and Built Heritage, Faculty for the Built Environment

Brief Description

The MA in Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) is an interdisciplinary programme aimed at persons working as heritage managers, or wishing to enter this field. The course draws on expertise across the University of Malta and beyond to provide a sound formation in the mediation of contemporary issues concerning cultural heritage resources, and practical skills that will help participants become effective leaders in this field. The geographical focus of the course is the Mediterranean region, however the principles, concepts and approaches acquired will be global in scope and relevance.

The full-time programme comprises two semesters of taught study-units (55 ECTS), a work placement during the summer semester (5 ECTS), and a dissertation (30 ECTS) that is undertaken during the first semester of the second year.

The MA in Cultural Heritage Management offers students:

- a sound understanding of contemporary issues in cultural resource management, and the skills to mediate these issues on the ground
- the preparation to be effective leaders and actors in the public arena of cultural heritage
- a range of practical skills that will make them more effective professionals
- a variety of methods for evaluating cultural heritage resources
- the skills to prepare a management plan for a specific cultural heritage resource
- critical reflection on heritage management practices, including their own

A more detailed description may be viewed at:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/ben/overview/PMACHMFTT2-2015-6-O>¹

The detailed course bye-laws may be viewed at:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/faculties/ben/ma-cultural-heritage-mgt-bl-2013>

Admission Requirements

The Course shall be open to applicants in possession of a Bachelor's degree classified at least at Second Class Honours or Category II, in a discipline related to History, Archaeology, History of Art, Conservation,

¹ The updated overview for the Course commencing in October 2017 will be available at:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/ben/overview/PMACHMFTT2-2017-8-O>

Education or in any other area deemed relevant by the Faculty Board of the Faculty for the Built Environment.

Applicants are required to present an internationally recognized English Language proficiency Certificate at the required level. Further information is available at:

http://www.um.edu.mt/international/international/english_language_requirements

Ideal Student Profile

The ideal applicant, besides holding a first degree in a subject related to the fields indicated above, would ideally be a practicing professional in the cultural heritage sector in Palestine, or demonstrate a high degree of motivation to acquire and develop the specialised knowledge and skills to become an effective practitioner in that sector, in roles such as cultural heritage managers, curators or docents.

Master of Arts in Humanitarian Action

The Master's programme approaches humanitarian action from both a practical and an analytical perspective. Students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to critically analyse humanitarian action, and work effectively in the humanitarian field. The programme is taught by a combination of in-house experts and experienced guest lecturers from Malta and abroad. The first semester provides a multidisciplinary overview of humanitarian action, while, in the second semester, students focus on forced migration and human security. Candidates for the M.A. in Humanitarian Action will thus gain a comprehensive understanding of:

- The variety of humanitarian and more long-term responses to crises across the globe
- How such responses are shaped and what consequences they have
- The institutional and legal framework for humanitarian action
- Medical and public health aspects of humanitarian action
- Management and humanitarian action
- Anthropology and humanitarian action
- Applied ethics in humanitarian action
- Human security, forced migration and humanitarian action
- Migration and migration control
- Applied refugee law and statelessness
- Applied research methods in humanitarian action

The M.A. also offers the possibility of placements for those students who wish to expand their hands-on experience of what working in the humanitarian and development fields entails.

The programme is intended for individuals working in, or aspiring to work in, humanitarian agencies, international organizations, NGOs and private foundations, government agencies, the armed forces (in peacekeeping and search and rescue), and the private sector (with social responsibility issues).

The M.A. enables students to develop a range of skills, including:

- The ability to analyse critically humanitarian action, how it is framed, structured, and delivered
- The ability to plan, programme, implement, and evaluate effectively humanitarian and/or development interventions
- The ability to navigate among the numerous players involved in humanitarian and development assistance
- Confident oral presentation skills on the topics covered
- Analytical writing in the area of humanitarian and development cooperation

Admission Requirements

1) A recognised degree as deemed relevant by the Faculty Board of Arts.

Given the multidisciplinary character of humanitarian work, students are expected to hold a first degree obtained with second class or equivalent, in any subject considered to be relevant by the Admissions Committee.

2) English Language Proficiency.

Applicants who have not studied in Malta are required to present an internationally recognised English Language Proficiency Certificate at the required level. Further information about English Language Requirements is available at:

http://www.um.edu.mt/international/international/english_language_requirements

3) Further details.

For further details, see Bye-Laws for Degree of Master of Arts available at http://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/103405/BA-BAH-BL-2005-2.pdf.pdf

and the Course Overview and Programme available at:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/arts/overview/PMAHMAFET12-2017-8-O>

Ideal Student Profile

The ideal applicant should have a serious and manifest commitment to humanitarianism, with some prior experience in the humanitarian and/or development sector and a strong motivation to pursue postgraduate studies. The applicant should have intercultural communication skills. Knowledge of languages beyond English and Arabic is an asset.

The Scholarship

The scholarship will cover

- Payment of the University of Malta Tuition Fees and/or Enrolment fee.
- Health Insurance to cover a premium up to a maximum of EUR 500 per year. Students will be guided on this and other arrangements upon arrival.
- Reimbursement for the obligatory Health Test to be carried out in Malta as required for the processing of the Residence Permit. (Information about the health test that will be carried out upon arrival in Malta is available at: <http://www.um.edu.mt/international/international/healthtests>).
- A monthly subsistence allowance amounting to EUR 1000 per month to be used towards accommodation, living, transport and academic expenses and any other expenses that may arise. The monthly subsistence allowance will be payable for the published duration of the full-time programme, without any extensions.
- One return journey to Palestine the cost of which is capped at EUR 1000. Any additional trips or travel costs higher than this amount will have to be covered by the student.

Two scholarships will be awarded – one for the candidate selected for the Master of Arts in Humanitarian Action and another one for the candidate selected for the Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage Management.

The scholarship holders will be requested to attend the Orientation Programme that is organised for all new international students joining the University of Malta. This will be held on September 27, 2017

Instructions to Applicants and Conditions of Selection

- Applicants need to have submitted their application online and provided copies of their academic qualifications and all other requested documentation to the University of Malta by the 20th July 2017. Information is available at:
http://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/232200/octoberadmissioninfo.pdf
- Applicants are requested to pay the application fee to the University of Malta in order for their application to be considered. The application fee is non-refundable. Details concerning the applicable fees are available at:
http://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/232200/octoberadmissioninfo.pdf
- Applicants who wish to be considered for the scholarship are required to present a letter of motivation and three letters of reference. These are to be submitted as signed and scanned copies to the attention of the Director, International Office by email at: international@um.edu.mt. The covering message is to include reference to the application code generated by the online application and should also be submitted by the 20th July 2017. Documents that are submitted after the deadline cannot be considered.
- Applicants for the above mentioned courses who intend to apply for the scholarship must meet the entry requirements set out by the University of Malta and the conditions for joining the specific

programmes indicated above at the time of application. Applicants who can only be considered on a conditional basis (i.e. are not in a position to provide proof of attainment of the academic qualifications required to join the programme) at the time of application cannot be considered for the scholarship. This also refers to the requirement to present an internationally recognized English Language proficiency Certificate at the required level.

- Applicants may be required to attend an interview at the Representative Office of Malta in Palestine.
- Applicants for other courses cannot be considered for these scholarships.
- Applicants should be Palestinian Nationals, are currently residing in Palestine and show a clear intention to return to Palestine at the end of their studies in Malta.
- Candidates employed in public office in Palestine, or working actively with NGOs in Palestine, will be preferred.
- Preference will be given to candidates who would be unable to attend the programme without the scholarship.
- The scholarship holder will be requested to enter into an agreement with the University of Malta for the duration of his studies in Malta, which agreement will be binding in terms of the observation of rules and regulations of the host University and host country, to seriously engage in full-time studies, register monthly progress with his academic tutor/coordinator and complete the set programme within the established time-frame.

Further information is available through:

The International Office, University of Malta – international@um.edu.mt

The Representative Office of Malta in Ramallah – Mr Reuben Gauci: reuben.gauci@gov.mt

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