



Introduction

For more than 90 years, Birzeit University, and all of its constituents, has strived to create an open, exciting community where creativity and innovation can flourish and where students — now more than 15,000 — gain the skills, perspectives, and knowledge they need to lead the Palestinian society as part of a student-centered teaching and learning process.

The knowledge and experiences that students gain at such an open, free community are essential to the development of not only the students themselves, but also the growth of the Palestinian society as a whole. It is because of this importance that Birzeit University offers its suite of financial aid programs to students, helping them become leaders in the development of their communities, whether near or far.

Financial aid programs attract high-achieving students and present them with the opportunity to focus their attention to further develop themselves and drive their communities forward. Moreover, scholarships awarded to financially disadvantaged students mean that students of all backgrounds have the opportunity to complete their studies, secure meaningful employment, support their families, and serve and build their communities.

It through these financial aid programs and initiatives that Birzeit University safeguards the right to education of Palestinian students, and it is through these programs and initiatives, too, that the university maintains its mission of developing and advancing the Palestinian community and the broader region.

Such lofty goals could have never been approachable without the help and generosity of our friends and supporters, whose kind gifts and contributions not only support the advancement of Birzeit University's academic programs and community-engagement initiatives, but also help motivate the development of the Palestinian community and bolster its steadfastness against the Israeli occupation.

Indeed, the critical role played by the university in guiding Palestinian youth and giving them the tools and opportunities to lead and guide the growth of the community is only possible through the generosity of our friends and supporters, and for that we couldn't be more grateful.

Thank you on behalf of Birzeit University and its community.



The Scholarship Program

Birzeit University's Scholarship Program was established as a comprehensive student aid scheme that ensures students from all backgrounds have the means and the opportunity to complete their studies at the university, especially those from towns and villages under the threat of Israeli landgrabs. The program covers several scholarships designed to serve different parts of the Palestinian community, including:

- Merit-based scholarships
- Employment scholarships for academically distinguished university graduates
- Scholarships for Jerusalemite students and those from marginalized areas such as the Jordan Valley and Masafer Yatta.
- Program-specific scholarships promoting academic programs offered by the university's nine faculties.
- Special needs scholarships
- Zakat Fund scholarships.
- Need-based scholarships

The Scholarship Program 2021–2022



6,500,000

Million USD

financial aid disbursed in the 2021–2022 academic year

45%

Percentage of students receiving financial aid

of the total student body



6,500

Financial aid recipients

including scholarships, grants, and loans from all sources



1,290

Students awarded merit-based scholarships



62%

Percentage of female students

of the total student body



55



Students awarded scholarships

Special needs scholarships



From the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem: Fundraising campaigns at Birzeit

The 2021–2022 academic year was extraordinary by all means. COVID-19 was still affecting communities far and wide, and many Palestinian families faced increasingly heavy financial hardships. The Israeli occupation also intensified its attacks against education in Palestine, arresting and harassing students and faculty alike and attempting to further limit Birzeit University's connections with international academic institutions.

With the help of its friends and donors, however, Birzeit University was able to provide Palestinian students with the help they need to complete their studies and pursue their dreams through several successful fundraising campaigns. These include the 2021–2022 Ramadan Campaign, which raised over \$400,000 and helped more than 300 students, and the Shireen Abu Akleh memorial campaign, which helped establish the Shireen Abu Akleh Endowed Scholarship, awarded annually to high-achieving female journalism students at Birzeit University. Of particular focus to Birzeit University are special-needs students, who were all awarded financial aid in the 2021–2022 academic year. An annual scholarship was also recently established to further help special-needs students with their studies and progress at the university. Additionally, the university's administration, together with the faculty and staff of the Committee for Persons with Special Needs, is constantly working to make the campus a more inclusive space, suitable for the needs of all students.

The university is also actively engaging and building connections with marginalized communities in Palestine, especially in the Jordan Valley and Masafer Yatta, where difficult economic circumstances and the looming threat of forcible eviction by the Israeli occupation have made access to higher education almost impossible. The university, out of its belief in the right to education for all, has awarded scholarships as well as living expenses grants to students from these marginalized areas.

Scholarship selection process

Students who receive scholarships or other forms of financial aid are selected by the university's Financial Aid Unit based on several criteria in a transparent, fair, and multi-layered process.

Scholarship selection begins with the students filling out a Financial Aid Application through the university's Ritaj web portal, in which they detail their economic status and their family's sources of income, among other aspects. The Financial Aid Unit then reviews these applications and verifies the information contained within them and, in certain cases, carries out field visits to verify the status of applicants.

Scholarships are awarded by the Financial Aid Unit together with the Scholarships and Financial Aid Committee, which ensures that every student selected for financial aid meets the university's criteria and conditions of the relevant scholarship. The lists of students eligible for financial aid, as well as the students' details, financial aid applications, and academic status, are reviewed on a term-by-term basis.





Developing the Scholarship Program

With the help of Birzeit University's contributors, donors, faculty members, and staff, the Scholarship Program ensures that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain world class education as well as the experience and skills they need to build and develop their communities.

The needs of the Palestinian community, however, are shifting and changing, and to keep abreast of these changes and ensure the needs of the students are met, the Scholarship Program is continually reviewed and developed with new initiatives and campaigns.

The Alumni Giving Program, for instance, was established to bolster the alumni's links with Birzeit University and its community. Through the program, alumni locally and internationally give back to their alma mater, ensuring that their fellow students have the same opportunities that they did. The Employee Giving Program, through which university faculty and staff give part of their salaries to support student financial aid, was originally created at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to help students and their families weather the pandemic's economic and social effects. Finally, the Alumni Fingerprint Program was established to allow graduating students to help their fellow classmates through small but impactful donations.



Birzeit University's Endowment Program

The Endowment Program was established at Birzeit University to provide a sustainable, continued source of funding to help students complete their education and drive forward the Palestinian community at an environment full of creativity and innovation.

Endowments support the university's financial aid programs by providing a steady stream of returns generated by investing assets (contributions, donations, and gifts) into various investment vehicles. As part of Birzeit University's endowment strategy, 80 percent of an endowment's returns are used to provide financial aid, while the remaining 20 percent are re-invested into the initial capital to ensure the endowment's sustainability and growth over time.

As of the publishing of this report, Birzeit University oversees 19 endowments, with assets invested in Palestine and abroad. These endowments have grown from a total of approximately \$12.5 million when they were first established to around \$16.7 million in 2022. This growth, of course, is invested in helping more students complete their education and attain their degrees at Birzeit University.



Scholarship Program testimonials

“Thank you for creating a better future for us all. Without the Scholarship Program, I would have never been able to study at Birzeit University. With your help, we’re able to create our own bright futures.”



Sundos Zubaidi | Fifth-year Doctor of Pharmacy major

“It’s really remarkable how generous and kind these supporters are. They have made it their goal to help students with their education. Their giving creates opportunities for lives full of hope and commitment.”



Ahmad Alawi | Third-year Economics major.

“Thank you for supporting education and students. Your giving and generous donations will help us become active citizens in our Palestinian community, helping it grow and prosper. Words can’t describe how grateful we are for your help.”



Mai Shaheen | Third-year Computer Engineering major



“I was very, very happy when I received news that I was awarded a scholarship. This allows me to complete my studies without worrying about the huge financial obstacles that stand in the way — it also removes a huge burden on my parents.”

Dana Mansour | Second-year Media major



“Our hopes and dreams of creating a better future would not have been achievable, even possible, without your support for thousands of Birzeit University students. I’m more than grateful for receiving a scholarship that has immensely helped me over the past few years, and I hope that your generous contributions continue to support me and my fellow students in our journeys.”

Yazan Hamed | Third-year Business Administration major





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