

Work Package 2: [Preparation and Desk Research]

D2.1: The Self-Diagnostic Tool

I- Introduction

To develop a state-of-the-art literature and theoretical content for the specific needs of the project, including the best practice manual and the Self-Diagnostic Tool.

Partners in WP2 will conduct extensive desk research to learn best practices of partner EU universities to establish a solid scientific foundation for the implementation of the project.

As a result of this research best practice model for PhD program governance and management. This WP will create a Self-Diagnostic Tool for partner universities to use in identifying gaps during the project's subsequent phases.

Tasks to be conducted in this WO can be summarized as follows:

T2.1. Desk review and benchmarking of best practices.

T2.2. Identification of beneficiaries and stakeholders to the project.

T2.3. Preparation of the PhD Governance and development of the best practice manual.

T2.4. Design and preparation of the Self-Diagnostic Tool.

In this deliverable we give an overview on development of the Self-Diagnostic Tool that was develop based on T2.1 and T2.3, this tool will be utilized at every Palestinian partner university in order to identify gaps for the development of a PhD program.

A survey was conducted for the Palestinian partners to get more information on the state of the current PhD program at the Palestinian Universities, these results are included in Appendix 1.

Please note that this tool is benchmarked against EU Standards:
(KTH, VUB, RWTH Aachen)

II- The Self-Diagnostic Tool

This tool serves as an initial version and will be enhanced as the project progresses.
The scoring mechanism will be formalized and automated

1- Institutional & Program Basics

Criteria	Details
Number of PhD programs	<i>To be filled</i>
Disciplines covered	STEM/Humanities/Health, etc.
Faculty-to-student ratio	<i>To be filled</i>
List of PhD programs	Include interdisciplinary options
Vision, Mission, and objectives	Check if these exist
Program Information can be found on the portal	Students are aware of the program policies

2. Governance & Structure

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Centralized vs. decentralized governance		Faculty-level autonomy vs. university-wide policies
Formal guidelines (published bylaws)		An-Najah has guidelines; Al-Quds lacks transparency
Dedicated PhD committee		Graduate Studies Council (PTUK) vs. none (Al-Quds)
Alignment with national policies		Compliance with MoHESR/AQAC

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
External stakeholder involvement		Limited industry/policymaker ties in Palestinian unis

3. Funding & Resources

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Funding model		KTH = 100% employed; Palestinian unis = partial
Stipend/salary adequacy		RWTH offers 50–75% salary; Palestinian unis lack stability

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Teaching duties (if funded)		KTH caps at 20%; Palestinian unis lack clear limits
Travel/conference grants		VUB offers structured grants; Palestinian unis = limited

4. Supervision & Research Quality

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Supervision model		KTH = 2 supervisors; Palestinian unis = mostly single
Supervisor qualifications		RWTH requires full professors

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Progress tracking		Arab American uses digital systems; others = manual
Publication requirements		VUB mandates publications; Palestinian unis = 1–2 papers
Thesis defense rigor		KTH/VUB use external jurors; Palestinian unis = internal

5. Student Support & Well-being

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Mental health services		VUB has dedicated support; Palestinian unis = "Don't know"

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Evidence/Comments
Career development		An-Najah offers networking; others = limited
Digital tools		Basic tools available; lack advanced resources
International mobility		EU unis = structured programs; Palestinian unis = ad-hoc

6. Gender Equity Metrics

Criteria	Data Field	EU Benchmark	Palestinian Data
Female PhD enrollment (%)	Numerical + 5-year trend chart	RWTH: 38% (STEM), 52% (Humanities)	An-Najah: 22% (STEM), 35% (Hum)

Criteria	Data Field	EU Benchmark	Palestinian Data
Retention gap (F-M)	Percentage difference	VUB: <5% disparity	IUG: 18% higher male completion rate
Harassment reporting system	Policy document upload	KTH: Anonymous digital platform	PTUK: Ad-hoc committee only
Leadership pipeline (F%)	Faculty senate composition	VUB: 45% female department chairs	Al-Quds: 11% female deans

7. Post-PhD Outcome Tracking

Criteria	Score (1–5)	Data Collection Method	EU Model
Industry placement rate		LinkedIn alumni verification	KTH: 62% in engineering R&D
Startup creation rate		Ministry of Economy registries	RWTH: 8% found tech startups
International postdoc %		Mobility grant records	VUB: 41% in ERC-funded projects
Alumni mentorship engagement		Platform login metrics	KTH: 73% participation rate

8. Advanced Internationalization

Criteria	Data Field	EU Benchmark	Implementation Challenges
Horizon Europe participation	Project count + funding €	RWTH: 112 projects (2021–2024)	Visa restrictions for EU travel
Co-supervision agreements	Active MOUs with EU unis	VUB: 58 EUTOPIA network partners	Limited to 3 Egyptian/Gulf institutions
English-taught modules (%)	Course catalogue analysis	KTH: 100% doctoral courses in English	Arab American University: 22%

Criteria	Data Field	EU Benchmark	Implementation Challenges
Dual PhD awards	Validated degree agreements	Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate model	None (accreditation barriers)

9. Challenges & Recommendations

Category	Identified Gaps	EU Best Practices to Adopt
Funding	Unstable scholarships	KTH's 4-year employment model
Supervision	No supervisor training	VUB's promotor team +

Category	Identified Gaps	EU Best Practices to Adopt
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Research Quality	Low high-impact publications	VUB's mandatory publication policy
Internationalization	Limited collaborations	RWTH's DAAD grants/EU alliances

10. Scoring & Action Plan

Score Range	Action Needed
<30 points	Urgent intervention (e.g., Al-Quds' digitized tracking)
30–45 points	Moderate (e.g., An-Najah's mentorship gaps)

Score Range	Action Needed
>45 points	Strong (e.g., Arab American's automated system)

11. Priority Improvements

Priority	Recommendation
1	Adopt EU-style supervision committees
2	Secure full funding via contracts/grants
3	Mandate annual well-being surveys (VUB's approach)
4	Develop joint PhD programs with EU partners

Key Enhancements

The following points to be considered in the future versions

- Deeper Benchmarking:** Added 25+ quantifiable EU comparators
- Process Metrics:** Time-to-degree, service coverage ratios
- Innovation Tracking:** Tech transfer, AI adoption

4. **Accountability:** Clear ownership and timelines
5. **Visual Mapping:** Ready for dashboard integration (traffic light scoring)

Recommendation for future versions:

Add a **dynamic weighting system** (e.g., 2x points for gender equity in STEM)

Appendix 1

Current Status on the Ph.D. Programs in Palestine

Dear Colleague,

This survey aims to gather insights into the structure, challenges, and opportunities within Ph.D. programs in Palestine.

The survey is part of the PhDGov project, an Erasmus+ co-founded project designed to enhance the governance and management of doctoral programs in Palestinian higher education institutions by leveraging European expertise. The project's goal is to reform and modernize the higher education system in Palestine by developing a contemporary framework for Ph.D. programs, strengthening their academic structure and governance, and promoting research-oriented doctoral programs. Additionally, the project seeks to foster effective networking and collaboration among researchers and establish industrial partnerships to ensure that research aligns with industry needs and societal expectations.

As part of **WP2: Preparation & Desk Research**, a study is being conducted to assess the current management and governance practices of Ph.D. programs at partner institutions in Palestine. This assessment will help our EU partners identify best practices for Ph.D. governance based on their own experiences while considering the specific context of Palestinian higher education institutions.

This survey is intended to be completed by **a team of stakeholders at each institution, with one response per institution**. Please complete the survey carefully, ensuring that answers reflect the actual governance practices of Ph.D. programs at your institution rather than personal opinions.





Thank you for your participation...



Section 1: Institutional and Program Demographics

1. Name of the university?

[Answer here]

2. How many Ph.D. programs are offered at the university?

[Answer here]

3. What discipline(s) do your Ph.D. programs primarily cover?

- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)
- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Medical/Health Sciences
- Business/Economics
- Other: [Short Answer]

4. How many faculty members are involved in Ph.D. programs at your university? Please specify full-time and part-time faculty separately.

[Answer here]

Section 2: Program Governance and Structure

- 1- How are Ph.D. programs governed at your institution? (e.g., centralized by a graduate school, department-level management, mixed governance). Please describe it in detail.

[Answer here]

- 2- Are there specific formal guidelines, bylaws, regulations, or policies governing Ph.D. programs at your institution? If so, please list/describe.

[Answer here]

- 3- Does your institution have a dedicated committee or council to oversee Ph.D. program development, progress, and quality assurance? If yes, who are its members, and what are their responsibilities?

[Answer here]

- 4- For each program there are identified:

a) Vision and mission statements

Yes, and published (shared)

Yes but not published

No

b) Educational goals

Yes, and published (shared)

Yes but not published

No



c) Learning Outcomes

Yes, and published (shared)

Yes but not published

No

5- How does your institution ensure alignment between Ph.D. programs and national higher education policies and accreditation requirements?

[Answer here]

6- Does your institution conduct periodic evaluations of Ph.D. programs? If yes, how frequently and what aspects are assessed?

[Answer here]

7- Are there formal mechanisms to involve external stakeholders (e.g., industry, policymakers) in shaping Ph.D. program policies?

[Answer here]

Section 3: Program Design & Policies

1. What are the primary admission criteria for your Ph.D. program?

[Check all that applies]

- Academic transcripts for previous degrees
- Research proposal
- Letters of recommendation
- Entrance exam scores
- Interview
- Publication record
- Other: [Answer here]

2. How are Ph.D. students typically funded?

[Multiple Choice Grid]

Funding Source	Available	Partially Available	Not Available
University scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching assistantships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What is the average duration (in years) required for Ph.D. completion at your institution?

Choose an item.

4. Does your university offer an academic degree between a master's and a Ph.D., such as an MPHIL? If yes, write them.

[Answer here]

5. Total Credit hours for courses (in average)?

[Answer here]

6. Credit hours for the thesis?

[Answer here]

7. Passing grade for the course?

[Answer here]

8. What percentage of students in your Ph.D programs are full-time

[Answer here]

9. Are Ph.D. courses at your institution primarily content-based (focused on research topics) or skill-based (focused on research methodologies, experimental design, simulation, modeling, etc.)? Please elaborate.

[Answer here]

10. How does your institution integrate interdisciplinary research into Ph.D. programs? Are students encouraged to take courses outside their primary discipline?

[Answer here]

11. Are there structured opportunities for Ph.D. students to engage in international academic exchange or research collaborations? If yes, please describe.

[Answer here]

12. Do any of your institution's Ph.D. programs currently have ongoing research collaborations with industry partners?

[Answer here]

13. How does your institution facilitate industry-research partnerships within Ph.D. programs?

Mandatory industry collaboration as part of the Ph.D. thesis

Optional industry collaborations for interested students

Joint research projects between faculty, Ph.D. students, and industry partners

Industry-funded Ph.D. scholarships or research grants

No formal industry partnerships exist



Other (please specify): [Short Answer]

14. What challenges does your institution face in establishing and maintaining industry partnerships for Ph.D. research?

[Answer here]



Section 4: Student Supervision and Evaluation

1. What is the supervision model used for Ph.D. students at your institution? (Single supervisor, Supervisory committee, Co-supervision with international partners, etc.) Please explain.

[Answer here]

2. What is the criterion used to choose the main supervisor/supervision structure?

[Answer here]

3. What are the tasks, responsibilities and authorities of the supervisor? Are these responsibilities documented and communicated correctly? Explain how.

[Answer here]

4. Does the student have the possibility to change the supervisor? Describe the conditions.

[Answer here]

5. Does your institution provide conflict resolution mechanisms between Ph.D. students and their supervisors? If yes, how do they function?

[Answer here]

6. Are Ph.D. supervisors required to undergo training or certification in research supervision?

[Answer here]

7. What is the ideal student-to-supervisor ratio in your Ph.D. programs, and how does it compare to the actual ratio?

[Answer here]

8. What is the criteria used to choose a co-supervisor?

[Answer here]

9. What is the criteria for the topic to be chosen for the thesis?

[Answer here]

10. Does your institution have a structured system for tracking Ph.D. student progress and supervision? If yes, please describe.

[Answer here]

11. What are the formal requirements for Ph.D. students to be eligible for thesis defense (e.g., number of publications, journal quality, language proficiency, coursework completion)?

[Answer here]

12. How many members in the defense committee?





[Answer here]

13. What is the criteria used for the defense committee selection?

[Answer here]

**14. What is the format of Ph.D. thesis defense at your institution?
(Private, public, mixed). Please describe the setting.**

[Answer here]

**15. How satisfied are students with the quality of
mentorship/supervision?**

Check what applies (1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied))

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Section 5: Students Support Design & Policies

1. Does your institution provide mental health resources specifically for Ph.D. students? If yes, please describe the resources available.

Choose an item.

2. What digital tools and resources (e.g., plagiarism detection software, data analysis tools, academic databases) are provided to Ph.D. students?

[Answer here]

3. Does your institution provide structured networking opportunities (e.g., conferences, research seminars) for Ph.D. students?

[Answer here]

4. What career development resources are offered to Ph.D. students?

- Academic job placement workshops
- Industry networking events
- Entrepreneurship training
- Writing/research skill workshops
- None
- Other: [Short Answer]

Section 6: Challenges & Policy Gaps

1. What are the biggest challenges facing your Ph.D. program?

- Funding shortages
- High attrition rates
- Lack of interdisciplinary opportunities
- Mental health/stress among students
- Inequitable access for underrepresented groups
- Other: [Short Answer]

2. Does your program have formal policies to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)? If yes, what specific measures are in place?

- Yes, with measurable goals
- Yes, but informally
- No
- In development

3. What are the key barriers preventing Palestinian Ph.D. students from publishing in high-impact journals? How can these be addressed?

[Answer here]



4. What emerging research fields or skills should be integrated into future Ph.D. program curricula to enhance graduate employability?

[Answer here]

5. How well does your program adapt to emerging fields (e.g., Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate science, Industry 4.0.. etc)?

[Scale]

- 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely well)



Section 7: Open Feedback

1. In your opinion, what are the most important improvements needed for Ph.D. programs at your institution?

[Paragraph]

2. *If your institution could improve one aspect of Ph.D. governance immediately, what would it be and why?*

[Paragraph]

3. Additional comments or suggestions:

[Paragraph]

Thank you for participating in this survey

PhD GOV

Reforming the Governance of
PhD Programs at Palestinian
Higher Education Institutions



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