

Quality Improvement Fund

This Newsletter is issued quarterly aiming at promoting results and outputs of the QIF projects



11th Edition
2018

“QIF” Background

In 2005 The Palestinian National Authority through its Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) implemented a Tertiary Education Project with the support of the World Bank and participation of the European Union (EU) between 2005 and 2009. On July 2nd, 2012, the MOEHE received new financing from the World Bank in the amount of USD 6.5 million, under the project named “Education to Work Transition Project – E2WTP”. A major component of this Project was The Quality Improvement Funds (QIF). QIF is being administered by Projects Coordination Unit (PCU), branched out of the MOEHE. PCU includes small technical staff (QIF Team) that is accountable to a centralized Board representative from eleven qualified stakeholders representing the academia and the private sector as well. The project mainly aims at enhancing Palestinian youth’s transition from education to work through fostering the linkage between Tertiary Education Institutions “TEIs” and private sector employers.

A new allocation of USD 5 million-grant was approved on December 2, 2016 by the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors to support ongoing efforts to increase job opportunities for Palestinian graduates. The additional financing for the Education to Work Transition Project -E2WTP will focus –through additional 2 cycles- on improving the employability of Palestinian students graduating from tertiary education institutions, thus improving their job prospects as well.

QIF will continue to manage the grants in a similar transparent and competitive manner to provide incentives to TEIs to develop and implement employment-oriented education programs in partnership with the private sector. TEIs have fostered their partnership with private sector employers through collaboratively designing curricula, updating teaching practices and providing practical training to students. It is expected that QIF will (i) increase the productive linkages between TEIs and businesses; (ii) promote social responsibility among the business community; and (iii) better prepare graduates to find and keep gainful employment.

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Collaboration Across Borders

Under a QIF Project titled “Developing Knowledge and Skills of Computer Technology Program Students to meet the needs of Labour Market”, Gaza Community College for Tourism Studies “GCCTS” has signed a Memorandum of Understanding “MoU” with Al-Quds University in West Bank for future joint work.

The study tour to West Bank under the QIF project opened

distinctive prospects for the development of education in GCCTS. The MoU includes the exchange of academic and training experiences in the field of computer technology in particular, and includes foundations for future joint projects aimed at developing a joint professional program in the field of computer technology. In addition, the MoU includes practical procedures for the development of ICT curricula by tackling the new regional and international IT trends.

Guest Corner

The Effect of Institutional Culture on Project Success

Dina Nasser, QIF Board Member

All universities have quality units to support the implementation of their projects and contribute to quality improvement in education across all university departments, it has been noted that there are internal and external factors that contribute to the project success and cannot be simply referenced to the achievements of a single unit. One such internal factor is the institutional culture of the university.

Reviewing the literature on effects of institutional culture on project success or project management has led me to find several articles addressing the main components of an institutional culture that can be summarized as follows: The vision, mission and strategy of an institution, its structure, its leadership actions, human resources and performance measures¹.

Using the language of quality improvement, each component of the statements below is presented in the format of affirmative actions that can contribute positively towards the institutional culture. It will be up to each Dean or head of department to reflect on their role and address means of verification of these statements in a manner that can contribute positively to an institutional culture that values quality improvement in education.

The vision, mission and strategy;

Each employee within the university can articulate the universities vision and mission statements.

Staff within the college of the department implementing a QIF project are able to articulate how it contributes towards the university’s vision, mission and strategy.

Structure

The structure within the university or among the departments allows for collaborative innovation.

Leadership actions

The Dean or department heads communicate the values of the university in their actions

The Dean manages the college by walking - walks around, spends time talking with employees and students listening to their suggestions and concerns.

The Dean or department head promotes a collaborative manner of work.

Human resources and performance measures

Faculty are supported in seeking continuous education.

Faculty are supported in reviewing their programs and updating them to meet market needs.

Performance measures:

Ultimately what is measured defines the value the university is placing on the quality of education and is much interrelated with the statements described above. Once a university has measures that address quality placing emphasis on collaborative processes and outcomes, a project being implemented under QIF will achieve its objectives or possibly address the components within the culture of the institution that need to reflect improving quality in education in practical terms.

¹ Suda, L. V. (2007). The meaning and importance of culture for project success. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress 2007—EMEA, Budapest, Hungary. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.



TEIs Inspiring Stories:

IUG Opens New Horizon for its Students Through a Pioneer Freelance Lab

Based on the mission of The Islamic University of Gaza to keep pace with international development, and to foster the educational atmosphere with the modern technologies along with its partners; Palestinian Information Technology Association (PITA), Palestine Information and Communications Technology (PICTI) and European Institute for Training and Development (EUTD); the faculty of IT celebrated the opening of Freelance Lab through QIF funded project titled "Developing the competencies of IT graduates to integrate into the freelancing and software outsourcing".

Laboratory experience is an indispensable part of the educational process and a key factor in preparing students to smoothly engage in the labor market. Hence, the freelance lab was designed to simulate the real environment of freelance workspace and software outsourcing companies, where senior students and graduates can start creating their profiles on several freelancing platforms and offer proposals for clients' jobs based on their skills to make money online.

The lab is fully furnished to the highest of standards, and highly equipped with the latest technologies. This will definitely increase the effectiveness of the training sessions and the academic lectures that would be delivered to the project beneficiaries and university students.

The enhancement of facilities aims to cope with the overall development of the project that includes upgrading the curriculum, enhancing teaching methodologies, supporting and building capacities of faculty members, senior students, and graduates.

PPU Faculty Members Skilled up with a Pioneer Training

Under the frame of capacity building and as part of a QIF funded project titled "Improvement of the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Educational Programs", PPU in collaboration with the Palestine BIMCAD, which is an authorized training center for Autodesk in Palestine have conducted advanced training sessions in the field of "Revit MEP" to nine faculty members and project partners representatives. The training which is the latest of its kind in Palestine, helps mechanical engineers to design models of a high level of detail that enables them for early identification of errors.

It is worth mentioning that this joint effort has resulted in a stronger commitment from the project partners and will have positive reflection on students and graduates in practical training and job opportunities.

Practice Tip:

Financial management is a key stone for the success of any project. Financial management and proper planning help smooth flow of funds and avoids any shortcomings during the project implementation. Here are some highlights to guide a TEI in this area:

- **Plan and re-plan:** Planning is a main and essential component of financial management; for short and long terms. You should always have a plan on how to disburse the funds available for your project. Then; you have to review actual disbursement, compare it with your plans, and finally re-estimate and re-plan.
- **Keep records on time:** keeping records on time is very important to avoid missing or duplicating any financial information. You should have a good accounting system (usually as part of the institution system); have all your payments processed without delays; make sure that taxes are paid on time; and have a list of all your commitments (either disbursed or undisbursed); thus, knowing what future payments to expect.
- **Keep copies of supporting documents:** in order to avoid any delays in preparing financial reports and payment requests; it is preferred that you keep copies of all your project payments ready to be sent when your report is completed.
- **Reporting Deadlines:** it is very important to pay attention to reporting deadlines. For quarterly reports; you are required to submit the reports 15 days after the end of each quarter.
- **Don't run out of money:** you need to review the bank statement of your project on a regular basis; per the grant agreement once you spend 75% of the amounts received; you can request the following payment. You don't need to wait until the balance at your bank account is zero to request a payment. This may lead to delays in payments for suppliers and consultants; therefore, affecting your progress.



Palestinian Nursing Interns with Regional Experience

Under a QIF project titled "Developing and Enhancing the Quality of Practical Nursing Program in Palestine", a consortium of four Palestinian Academic institutes (Modern University College, In'ash El-Usra Society College, Al-Rawda Technical Community College, Haja Andaleeb Al-Amad Nursing & Midwifery College) jointly with their partners from four Palestinian hospitals were invited to visit Altinbas University in Turkey and Princess Sarvath Al Hassan college in Jordan. The visit came aiming at developing foundation for a collaborative relationship between the participating TEIs and to explore the best models and strategies to enhance the competences and capacities of the nursing programs offered by the four colleges.

During the visit, the delegation had the chance to explore the implemented model of collaboration between the academic institutes and their partners in receiving interns, designing courses and building capacities.

The study tour was an invaluable opportunity where two MOUs were signed with the hosting universities to receive Palestinian interns in the near future.

Complex Task Approach... A Bridge Between Students and Labor Market

Possession of technical skills is no longer enough to engage graduates in the labor market. These days, it is necessary for graduates to have cognitive skills, life skills and high flexibility to enable them to continuously improve themselves to achieve comprehensive development. Therefore, the University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS) under a QIF project titled "GIS for Community" has adopted the Complex Task Approach (CTA) in developing the curriculum of GIS program.

"By following the CTA in the curriculum revision and development for the GIS program, we aimed to design a curriculum to gradually provide the students with the required competencies that enable them to acquire a professional technical experience in their field", Mr.

Effective Cooperation Between An- Najah National University and Wageningen University

Aspiring to a better quality and teaching outcomes, the Agriculture program under a QIF funded project "Transforming Agriculture Curriculum and Training Practices- TACT" had the chance to cooperate with one of the most leading academic institutes in agriculture and research in the world "Wageningen University and Research- WUR- Netherland.

A delegation of Five faculty members and project partner representative had visited WUR where they received interactive training sessions on coaching techniques, designing, guiding, and assessing experiential and authentic learning methods based on competence-based learning principles. Moreover, the participants had worked on the organization and structure of the internship and types of student training and work agreements. Now with the new academic year 2018- 2019, the agriculture program had started in the first semester piloting one course- Protected Agriculture Management- with Plant Production & Protection department. In the second semester, FAVM will implement the new curriculum in the Plant Production & Protection; Animal Production & Animal Health; and Nutrition & Food Technology programs.



Tamer Eshtawi, the head of the Steering Committee. Through CTA, the curriculum was revised in cooperation with the private sector through the "Expert workers workshop" and the "Verification workshop". The private sector defined the complex tasks and competencies that the GIS technician should have to compete in the labor market. The complex tasks were defined and divided into learning situations that form the curriculum.

"The CTA guarantees that the students are provided with the technical competencies, the personal competencies and the social competencies that are necessary to help students to transit smoothly from the education to the work." Mr. Shadi Kuhail, the coordinator of the GIS program at UCAS.