

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

February 2018



## **Birzeit University's Vision**

An entrepreneurial institution with all its constituents actively engaged in knowledge production both nationally and globally.

## **Our Mission**

Providing an autonomous enlightened university environment that celebrates freedom of thought and expression, embraces democratic practices and dialogue, and provokes excellence, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in teaching, learning and research to contribute to society's progress and advancement through transformative knowledge and capacity development.

*Produced by the Birzeit University Public Relations Office, with Seitz Communications*

*All photos are by Eyad Jadallah*

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## INTRODUCTION

Birzeit University has a long and venerable history as a leading education institution in Palestine and the region.

In order to continue that tradition, it is critical that the university and its many branches communicate in one voice about the institution's mission and program.

This communications guide is intended to provide a backbone for promoting and talking about the work of the university for both the campus community and the outside audience. That audience is diverse – it speaks many languages and comes from a variety of cultural contexts. Central to Birzeit's ethos is a spirit of broad-mindedness and ideas exchange. Moreover, the continuing military occupation and the political climate provide a difficult and murky backdrop to the work of the university and its academics. It is critical that the Birzeit community has effective and clear guidelines for breaking through those barriers to promote and further its work in both image and word.

This booklet has been produced in English because the English language has distinctly different standards and aspirations than Arabic, despite the Arabic language's obvious importance at the university. Another similar guide is being produced for Arabic language communications.



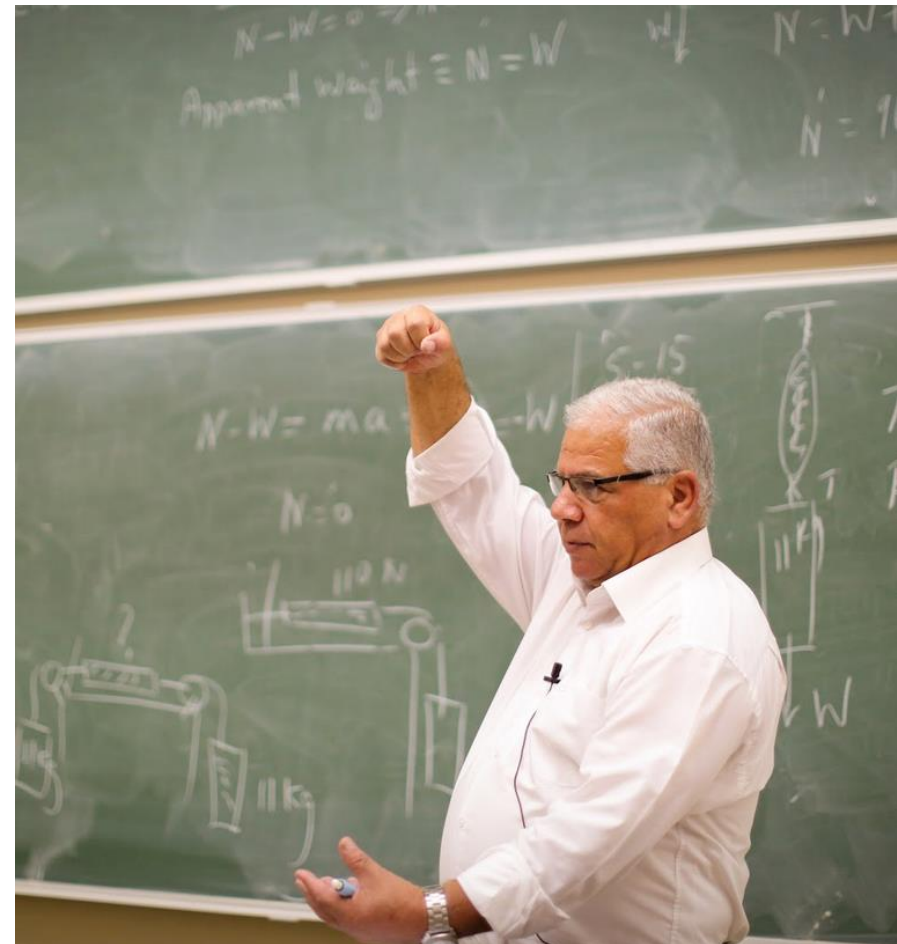
## PRINCIPLES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Three main principles should always be upheld in presenting the work of Birzeit University. These are general concepts separate from, but supportive of, the university's unique mission.

**Clarity** Words and images used in university publications should be direct and clear, using simple presentation to make their point. Always know the point of the communication before work begins.

**Brevity** In this environment where so many messages are competing for our time, messages and communications should be brief, come right to the point, and avoid all repetition. First impressions are made in an instant and they are often all that matters.

**Honesty** Presenting the truth is more than just presenting facts. It also means telling a "clean" story, one free of mystery and guile. Accompanying images promote transparency and make powerful statements.



## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Birzeit University employees or agents otherwise tasked with presenting the institution and its mission to external audiences should maintain the following ethical principles:

- **Always act in the best interests of the university and its community.**
- **Be honest and accurate in all communications.** Putting the university's best face forward does not require exaggeration or deception.
- **Act quickly to correct inaccurate or erroneous communications.** An early correction can prevent long-term damage to the university's reputation.
- If you aren't sure if something is true, **investigate it before publication** and dissemination.
- **Reveal the sponsors of events and interests represented.** It is important to give credit where it is due, and to acknowledge existing institutional financial ties.
- **Protect confidences.** Private information about students, staff or confidential university proceedings should be protected.
- **Protect the vulnerable.** Humor is good, but not at the expense of the disabled or the elderly, for example. Children (those under age 18) require permission from a parent or guardian before their images or stories are used. Avoid using gender stereotypes and promote gender equality.

- **Remember the context of occupation.** All achievements by the university and its students are made by overcoming this hurdle. Your audience does not always know or understand the details of Palestinian life under occupation and will require clear and simple descriptions.





## SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION

All communications produced for the university should support and promote the university's mission and values with the following central themes:

**Excellence in Academics** Communications should promote the university's advances in teaching, learning and research, and highlight the creative achievements of members of the community.

**Freedom of Thought & Expression** The university celebrates freedom of thought and expression and embraces democratic practices and dialogue. Communications should reflect campus diversity and demonstrate intellectual pluralism.

**Equity & Equality** University communications should take pains to promote pluralism and support a greater role for women and girls, while rejecting all forms of discrimination, as perpetuated by silent omission or open prejudice.

**Students First** Students and student life should remain the center of all communications work, with images and words reflecting their achievements, challenges and academic experiences. Communications should avoid presenting meetings and discussions of officials; instead show what each event means to students.

**Community Service & Lifelong Learning** The community service requirement connects student experience with society, and sets Birzeit University apart from other institutions. Personal and professional development does not end outside the classroom.

**Sustainable Development** Effective and efficient governance of the university should be a model for the community and the sustainable use of resources. Communications should reflect achievements and challenges, especially the challenges that the occupation poses to reaching developmental and productive goals.



## LANGUAGE BASICS – A STYLE GUIDE

The following are simply language guidelines that all written university communications must follow.

When communications are not unified in form, they convey an appearance of confusion and disorganization. Please refer to this guide regularly for all English writing on the university website and social media, in individual communications, in writing brochures and other communications efforts.

### Voice

The university's voice is simple, direct, and supportive of diversity and the exchange of ideas. Jargon should be avoided, and acronyms should be explained if used at all. Scientific writing should be simplified so that someone who is not expert in that field can understand what is happening and appreciate its value.

**If you can write a simple direct sentence – subject + verb + object – this is always preferable to long indirect sentences.**

Avoid formal and often unnecessary connectors, such as “thus,” “therefore,” “consequently,” and “as such.” Usually you can reverse the order of the sentence for a simpler form.

*The students were excited, and therefore the event had a lot of energy.*

BECOMES

*The event was energized by the students' excitement.*

OR

*The students energized the event with their excitement.*

### Basic Tools

Can't find the answer here? Use the AP Style Guide as a reference.

- English language communications should **use American English** and all of its conventions. “Analyze” not “analyse.” “Program” not “programme.”
- **Date format should use the American style:** “January 29, 2018” not “29 January 2018.”
- **One through nine are written out**, while numbers 10 and higher are written as numerals.
- **Percentages are written as numerals, followed by “percent.”** – The statistic was 25 percent.
- **Ages and prices are also written with the numeral first, followed by the description.**
  - He was 10 years old and had never see a \$10 dollar bill.
- **Double quotation marks (instead of single quotation marks) are used to mark all quotations.** Periods and commas go inside the quotation marks, even if they are not part of the quotation.
  - “He told me he would visit today,” Carl said.
  - The imitation “rocket ship” could barely get off the ground.
- **Single quotation marks are only used instead of double quotations in a headline, and for a quote located inside another quotation.**

- Headline: Screenplay for ‘Maramieh’ highlights loss
  - “‘You are doing well in this class,’ my professor told me,” said Muhammed.
- **Respect the existing spelling of proper names** (“United Nations Relief and Works Agency” not “UN Relief Works Agency” and “United Nations Development Programme” not “United Nations Development Program”).
  - **Use the spelling that individuals have chosen in English for transliterated names** (“Hanan Ashrawi” not “Hanan al-Ashrawi”). If you are unsure, look up the usage on a prominent English news source (Associated Press, for example) or the university staff list.
  - In writing, the use of “doctor” as an honorific is only used for medical doctors. Instead **use the person’s formal work title with capital letters** (“Chemistry Department Chair Sarah al-Ahmed”) or **an informal description of her work** (“chemistry professor Susan al-Ahmed”) to describe her position. While this may feel very awkward and even uncomfortable in the formal Arabic context, there are good reasons why honorifics should not be used and work titles or roles are better:
    1. Honorifics are unevenly applied in a way that supports gender inequality and ageism – too often, men or elders are assumed to be “doctor” or just called that as a way of showing respect, while women and young people are not, thereby reducing their status.
    2. In the academic context, they are often misapplied, with some people being assumed to be PhDs when they are not. Are you going to check if someone has completed his/her dissertation every time? It is impossible to be really accurate and also fair, otherwise.)

## Capitalization

- Headlines for articles on the website should use sentence case (the first letter and proper nouns capitalized only)
  - Bulgarian foreign minister tours museum
  - Foreign minister Medvedev tours museum
  - Bulgaria Ministry of Foreign Affairs to fund museum
- Titles and sub-titles in print publications can use sentence case or title case, but should be consistent throughout the publication.

## Acronyms & Abbreviations

While acronyms (e.g. PLO, PA, BZU) can assist brevity, they also can make writing inaccessible and appear cryptic or in code.

**Avoid using BZU except in social media.** Use “the university” or “the institution” if you need a substitute for the university’s full name. It is usually redundant to use “BZU” in titles that are published on the university website. **Never use “BZU” in the text of news articles or the website.**

While it is tempting to use acronyms to indicate the long titles of Birzeit University institutes and centers, this should be avoided. (Always ask yourself, will a new reader know what this is? If the answer is no, then avoid it.) First course of action should be to reframe the headline so the emphasis is on students or the activity, not the center/institute. This should work almost always, and should help correct the over-reliance on bureaucratic action that exists in the news stories. The second strategy should be to shorten the name to make it descriptive, as follows (in this case, the short form is not capitalized, even in a headline):

- “Institute of Community and Public Health” becomes “public health institute...”
- “Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute of International Studies” should become “international studies institute...”

Abbreviations and acronyms should not be used for words or titles that occur only once or twice in a text. If a title or phrase occurs many times in a document, a short form may be used.

When an abbreviation or acronym must be used, including BZU, it should be spelled out the first time and then shortened thereafter.

## Simplified Verbs

Instead of:

1. “Make a decision” use decide
2. “Perform an analysis” use analyze
3. “Find a solution” use solve
4. “Make a suggestion” use suggest
5. “Raise an objection” use object
6. “Provide clarification” use clarify
7. “Make a recommendation” use recommend
8. “Arrive at a conclusion” use conclude
9. “Undertake a development” use develop
10. “Make a revision” use revise

*(from MediaHQ, “10 need-to-know verbs to simplify your press release”)*

## Using Language to Focus on Students & Campus Life

News articles and press releases should always emphasize Birzeit University’s unique learning environment. *Students should be drawn to attend there, scholars to teach and learn there, and donors to provide it support.*

While the many meetings conducted by the university administration are an important part of campus news, these stories should be reframed to emphasize their significance to the students and staff.

Articles where the only news is that a meeting was held should be written up as two paragraphs and placed in a section of the website reserved for “news shorts.”

Otherwise, news of meetings and conferences should be reframed.

The headline and first paragraph should emphasize the significance of the event, rather than emphasizing the official bodies or figures involved.

The second paragraph can then state who and what and where – the main facts. For example:

### **MDC teams up with Al-Wehdat Club, launches media training course**

*Participants were trained on public speaking, news writing, and broadcast skills*

The Media Development Center at Birzeit University, in cooperation with Al-Wehdat Sports Club, has recently launched the “Media Spokesperson” training course in Amman, Jordan.

Al-Wehdat Board Member and Media Spokesperson Tariq Rawdeh said that the club is “looking forward to a new era of media coverage and production, especially after the inauguration of the press conference room. We need to strengthen our media presence to match the club’s victories and achievements.”

BECOMES

### **Amman sports club ‘spokespeople’ get media savvy**

#### *Pioneering media communications course crosses borders*

Aspiring spokespeople learned public speaking, news writing and broadcasting in a new media center course launched in Amman, at the invitation of a local club.

The Media Development Center at Birzeit University worked with Al-Wehdat Sports Club to launch its “Media Spokesperson” training course in the Jordanian capital last month. The move took a course developed in the West Bank, where media skills have thrived, and repackaged it abroad.

Al-Wehdat Board Member and Media Spokesperson Ghassab Khaleel said that the club is “looking forward to a new era of media coverage and production, especially after the inauguration of the press conference room. We need to strengthen our media presence to match the club’s victories and achievements.”

## PRODUCING CONTENT

This section focuses on strategies for writing, photographing and producing key communications items, while staying true to the overarching themes addressed in the preceding sections of this booklet.

### Navigating Translation

Many of the items that are produced by the Birzeit University communications team are translated from Arabic to English and visa versa. This poses numerous challenges, from adding time in the workflow that is required to get from idea to final product, to navigating the differences in

the two languages. Some terms are difficult to translate, and the translator must always refer to other sources to make sure that proper names are translated correctly for the language in question.

While the translation of text often seeks to stay as close to the original as possible, the communications team should avoid stopping there. **It is almost always necessary to dramatically rewrite translated text to make it more direct and remove what in Arabic is flowery and artistic but in English appears convoluted.**

**Always revert to direct voice and subject + verb + direct object construction.**

The following are some common “Arab-izations” to watch for in English:

- **“on one hand... on the other hand”** – This structure is used often in translated Arabic and it is almost always unnecessary in English.
- **“stressed [on]”** – Should usually be “emphasized”
- **“at the local/national/international level”** – When possible replace with “locally,” “nationally,” “internationally” or even another adjective. Often not needed.
- **“Within the framework of...”** – Replace with “related to” or rework to avoid the extra phrase
- **“trainings”** - Not a word, only use “training course” or “training session.”
- **“take a decision”** – Should be “make a decision” or even better, “decide.”

Also avoid development language or “academese”:

- **“cooperate” or “in cooperation with”** as it is overused. Try “worked together,” “teamed up,” “partnered,” etc.

- “aimed to” – Remove entirely as unnecessary, unless you are going to go on to say why it failed. In reporting, either it did or it didn’t.
- “Implemented,” “executed,” “developed” are all programmatic and dry. Try “set in motion,” “drafted,” “took steps” or just cut.

## Writing Headlines & Titles

English language titles or headlines are brief and direct, emphasizing the action that is taking place in the main story.

They should use sentence case on the website or other social media, meaning that only the first letter is capitalized. Print media can use title case (each main word is capitalized) or sentence case but should remain consistent throughout.

Many of the rules for writing a good headline are the same as those used in good writing:

- **Keep it short.** Headlines can leave out prepositions and connecting words for brevity. Drop “the,” “an,” “and,” “in,” “its” and other connecting words. A headline does not have to include all the information (who, what, where and when) but should inform who and what in a way that captures interest.

*Professor takes part in archeological planning session located in Salfeet*

BECOMES

*Professor joins Salfeet archeological planning session*

OR

*Professor pioneers archeology technique for Salfeet plenary*

- **Be direct and dynamic.** Use summary words instead of words that are formal and technical. Emphasize action instead of verbs like “plans,” “does,” “addresses,” “discuss,” “addresses,” “takes part in” etc. Why is this happening important for the wider community? *Instead of highlighting the holding of an event, highlight what the event was about.*

*Professor joins Salfeet archeological planning session*

BECOMES

*Salfeet archeological dig to explore ancient inn*

*Sumud Campaign discusses National Refugee Development outcomes at the Hebron Polytechnic University*

BECOMES

*Refugee campaigners mourn setbacks at Hebron meet*

- **Be accurate.** Your headline should reflect what is included in the story. Due to increasing use of social media, there is a growing

tendency to pull out a few words from an article for a sensational headline. A few extra “clicks” are not worth the spread of inaccuracies and falsehoods. Relate the facts and let them tell the story.

*Israeli forces carry out unprecedented raid, devastating university lab*

BECOMES

*In first, Israeli forces destroy lab equipment in raid*

- **Use present tense and subject + verb construction.**

*Reflections of the students and facilitators of ‘Change’*

BECOMES

*Participants ask if ‘Change’ can alter the media landscape*

- **Your headline should not repeat the first paragraph.** This is a very common mistake. Choose other words or details further down in the story to highlight in the headline and avoid repetition.

*BZU takes part in high school guidance session in Jericho*

Representatives from Birzeit University’s Registration and Admissions Department took part in a guidance session for high school students in the Jericho governorate on February 14, 2018.

BECOMES

*Admissions seeks to attract new students in Jericho*

- **Focus on students and student life.** Every aspect of university public relations should emphasize the significance of an event for students and the community over bureaucratic events – headlines are no exception to this rule.

*BZ French delegation visits Birzeit University*

BECOMES

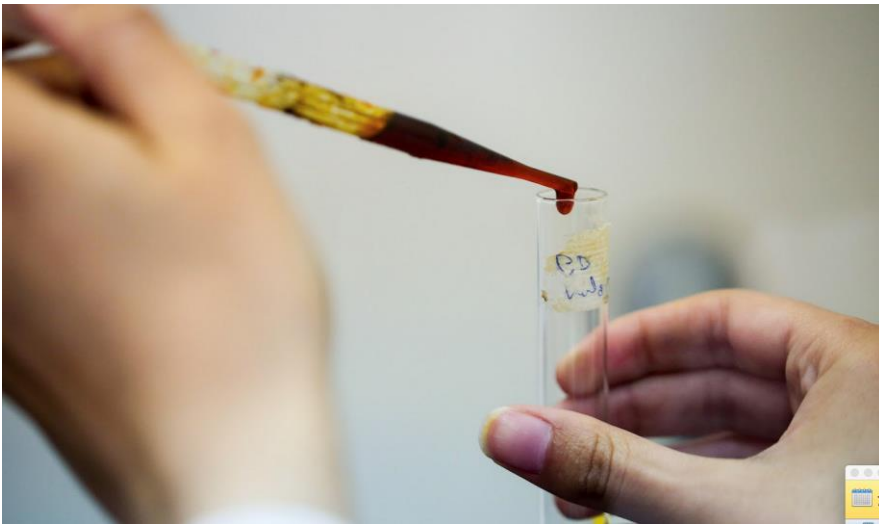
*Birzeit law students to gain French connections*

- **Beware of “click bait” headlines.** Increasingly, even the most respected news organizations are using headlines meant to entice the reader to click into an article, because that is how they make money. This fact is changing standards for everyone. Some examples from the *New York Times*:
  - [\*‘I Can’t Stop’: Schools Struggle With Explosion in Vaping\*](#)
  - [\*How to Fill Unpleasant Jobs in Undesirable Places: Recruit Refugees\*](#)

These headlines shun the typical noun + verb format of the headline for a more descriptive unconventional style. **It continues to be important, however, that the headline provides accurate information about what is in the article.** The two examples above are still doing the “work” required of a title. It is also significant that news giants like the *New York Times* use different headlines for the same article in different platforms – a formal voice is used for

print, while more casual forms are used in a newsletter or on the internet, etc.

- **When its not news, a title can be used instead of a headline.** When writing headlines for reviews, opinion pieces or blogs, the noun + verb form can be abandoned for something more illustrative. A title that asks a question, for example, or has a clear opinion, can be the ideal way to signal to the reader that this article is not just news. *This style should not be used for news items.*





## Press Releases

Periodically, Birzeit University will want to highlight aspects of its programming for the media, or give information about events that are happening and have implications for the wider community. In this case, a press release is an important tool.

In today's world, where newsrooms are understaffed and the internet allows for widespread dissemination of information, a well-written press release might be reproduced by the media almost verbatim. It is important not to rush, therefore, and to make sure the press release is drafted to serve the university's best interests.

### Tips for Writing a Press Release

1. **Start with a newsworthy story.** It is important to include in the press release information that shows why the news media should care about the event you are reporting.
2. **Write your press release like a news story,** with a headline, interesting first paragraph, interesting details and quotations from significant people. If you use clear, direct language and don't exaggerate or use academic language, the reporter will often publish the press release as is!
3. **Provide good quotations.** Statements from university officials should be interesting and related to the event that occurred, not just stock quotes that could apply to anything.
4. **Contact your top media targets personally.** It is not enough to just send out your press release into email and expect it to make it into the news. You will get much better results if you maintain a list of your top media contacts for different audiences and contact those people directly by phone or even personal email when you have a press release to distribute.

*(Source: adapted from Moneywatch, CBS News)*

### Sample Press Release

Following is a sample press release, with key items highlighted.

#### **Israeli military campus raid violates right to education, says Birzeit University**

BIRZEIT, WEST BANK – February 27, 2018 - Birzeit University is gravely concerned after a raid on its main campus by Israeli occupation forces in the early morning hours of Thursday, December 20, 2018. The raid is the latest in a series of violations of Palestinians' right to education, says the prominent West Bank university. [THIS PARAGRAPH IS THE MAIN POINT YOU WANT TO CONVEY.]

At dawn, a large number of heavily-armed Israeli forces forced their way onto the university campus, detaining the university's security guards in the process. The soldiers then broke into the administration offices and stole files related to student activities in a flagrant violation of the institution's sovereignty. [WHAT HAPPENED?]

"We condemn this attack on the university," said university president Said Sayid. "Every time the military enters the university grounds it disrupts our work and perpetuates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. This is a violation of international law." [MEANINGFUL QUOTE FROM UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL]

The Israeli occupation has repeatedly impeded the work of Palestinian universities. In June 2014 and January 2016, the Israeli occupation raided Birzeit University and confiscated materials from student bloc offices. The military has also raided other Palestinian institutions of higher learning. [BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE]

The university has documented additional violations of the right to education, including detaining students on their way to class, the placing of checkpoints outside the university, and preventing professors from obtaining visas to teach at the university. Between 1988 and 1992, the Israeli military closed Birzeit University, stalling the graduation of hundreds of students. [BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE]

Birzeit University, started in 1924 as a girl's school, is committed to the values of democracy, freedom of speech and respect for human rights. The university today has both graduate and undergraduate programs and nearly 14,000 students. [BACKGROUND ON THE UNIVERSITY]

The university calls on academic institutions and human rights organizations to advocate for an immediate end to these raids and violations, as they contravene international law and international humanitarian law. [AN "ASK" – OR WHAT YOU WANT THE AUDIENCE TO DO]

*For more information contact: [include name of official, title, phone number and email]*



## Writing News Stories

Most of the news stories produced for Birzeit University will be published on the website, although it is good practice to include good news or human interest stories within annual reports or other reports to illustrate more factual material.

As such, they should take care to observe the conventions of the internet – **news stories should be brief, be mindful of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and always highlight the interests of the students and the wider community.**

Before writing a news article, also read the sections and the beginning of this guide on ethics and style, and the section on writing headlines, as many of their points apply here as well.

### Getting Started

Any reporter will tell you that most of the work of writing a news story happens before you even sit down to write.

- **Do you have a good story?** Is it interesting to people outside the university community? If it doesn't seem so at first, can you make it more interesting to the community?
- **Do you have the facts?** Vague news articles, incorrect reporting, or stories that leave information out do a disservice to your efforts to promote the university. After reading one story like that, readers are much less likely to return to the website.
- **Do you know the real names and spelling of the names of all of those involved?** Because you are often working in two platforms, translating Arabic to English, this can be a big problem. When individuals or institutions are misidentified or their names misspelled, they could be angered, but also, over time, the practice will do serious damage to your SEO.

### What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Internet search engines like Google have several ways of determining which websites are most relevant to those searching the internet. The only way to get “seen” by those searching is to write content that helps those tools find the Birzeit University website and all of its pages.

There are several ways that news stories – and all content – help to improve the institution's ranking in internet searches.

1. **Use words in your writing that are searched for frequently.**
2. **Write useful content that is linked to by other sources, whether they are social media, news outlets, or other web pages.**
3. **Link to other institutions and websites. Maybe they will return the favor!**

These three things together can dramatically improve the SEO for individual pages on the university website and the SEO for the website overall.

- **Do you have at least one interesting quote?** Longer articles should have more than one quote. While some news items that appear on the website are very brief and undeveloped, it is better to spend more time on producing more in-depth news articles instead of briefs that give little or repeated information. *Perhaps a section of the website could be developed to feature very short two- or three-sentence “highlights” to make sure all campus news is covered without repetition and dull reporting.*

## A Word on Quotations

Setting the stage for quotations can seem repetitive when you do it often, however, it is important to remember that the aim is to draw attention to the quote – not to the surrounding language. For example, it is usually ideal to write:

- *“The level of awareness among Palestinian youth was truly remarkable,” said researcher Lutfi Abughazalah.*

Other verbs that can be used:

- instead of “said”: *remarked, noted, stated, commented, says*
- when the speaker is clearly answering a reporters’ question: *replied, responded*
- when a bit of emotion is evident (be careful of actual meaning here): *asserted, declared, announced, disclosed*

Most other words indicating speech carry with them too much emotion or meaning for a news story, i.e. they indicate that the reporter is making a judgment and will either distract or sway the reader about the material.

Quotations can also be inserted at the end of the sentence. This is especially useful when only part of the quote is unique or interesting, or to reduce academic language. For example:

*Ex. 1: Birzeit University media processor Salam Abdullah highlighted the ability of Palestinian youth to accurately identify their reality, saying, “The extent to which those young men and women are capable of recognizing the issues entrenched in their reality and the Palestinian context is truly astonishing. They are, however, unable to pinpoint or locate a solution that allows them to establish an alternative reality.”*

## BECOMES

*Ex. 2: Birzeit University media professor Salam Abdullah praised the students for their ability to identify the issues they cope with daily as Palestinians. “They are, however, unable to pinpoint or locate a solution that allows them to establish an alternative reality,” he went on.*

OR

*Ex. 3: Birzeit University media professor Salam Abdullah called Palestinian young people’s awareness of their reality “truly astonishing” but said most could not identify a solution that would change it.*

It is not necessary to add a linking verb such as “saying” or “adding” (see Ex. 1). The quote can sometimes stand entirely on its own in a separate sentence, as long as the speaker has already been introduced (in Ex. 2, “he went on” could be removed entirely).

- **Do you have a good photograph to accompany this story?** Nothing can create a mood or send a message like a good photograph. It is important, when possible, to illustrate your news story with an image. (See the section on photography for more details in selecting images.)

Once these questions are answered, the actual writing of your news story can begin. Each article should have four parts: the lead or opening paragraph, the main paragraph, quotations and background information.

**LEAD: Your lead should be about 25 words long and attract the attention of the reader.** Use simple, active language and try not to start with “it”. You can start an article with a question, a quotation, or by

describing a scene. Or you can get right to the point and put all of your factual information – who, what, where, when and why – at the top.

**MAIN PARAGRAPH: This paragraph includes the main point that you want to communicate.** It answers the question of what the story is and why does it matter to the broader community.

**OPENING QUOTATION: Your first quotation should illustrate your main paragraph.** Quotations introduce real people into your story and allow them to express their viewpoints. Quotes should never be used to give information that is basically factual and that can be provided as background information. Instead, they should provide color, humor, opinion, or illustrate the facts of the story that you have presented.

**BACKGROUND: Background paragraphs appear after the main information to help the reader understand context, previous events and the importance of what they are reading.** Less relevant background, for example, information about the university or partner institutions, can come at the end of the article.

### Sample News Story

#### **Israel suspends plan to tax Jerusalem church properties**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem’s mayor on Tuesday suspended a plan to impose taxes on properties owned by Christian churches, backing away from a move that had enraged religious leaders and led to the closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. [LEAD]

In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said a professional team was being established to negotiate with church officials to “formulate a solution.” [MAIN PARAGRAPH – TELLS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED]

“As a result, the Jerusalem Municipality is suspending the collection actions it has taken in recent weeks,” it said. [INTRODUCTORY QUOTE]

Roman Catholic officials issued a statement saying that Christian leaders were holding consultations and would soon announce their response, including a decision on whether to reopen the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and leaders of other Christian denominations closed the famed church on Sunday to protest an order by Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat to begin taxing their properties. [BACKGROUND]

The church is revered as the site where Jesus was crucified and resurrected, and the decision closed one of Jerusalem’s most visited holy sites just ahead of the busy Easter season. [LESS IMPORTANT BACKGROUND]

Barkat said his decision affected only commercial properties, such as hotels, restaurants and offices, and not houses of worship. He said other cities followed similar practices worldwide.

“As the mayor of the city of Jerusalem, my goal and role is to make sure people pay their taxes,” he said in an interview earlier Tuesday. “We have no negative or bad intentions here.” [SECOND QUOTE]

The churches accused Barkat of acting in bad faith and undermining a longstanding status quo. They say their non-church properties still serve religious purposes by providing services to pilgrims and local flocks.

In Tuesday’s announcement, Netanyahu said Cabinet Minister Tzachi Hanegbi would head the new negotiating committee, which will include representatives from the city, and the finance, foreign and interior ministries.

“The team will negotiate with the representatives of the churches to resolve the issue,” it said.

In addition to suspending tax collection, Netanyahu’s office said that proposed legislation governing the sale of church lands in Jerusalem was also being suspended.

## Feature Story

A feature story is simply a news story that is more in-depth and allows more description. Its form is almost exactly as described above, except there is more room for storytelling or a number of voices. Sometimes, it is useful to break up a feature story with sub-titles.

## Sample Feature Story

### **Urgently needed medications give newborn infants better chance at life**

In hospitals in the Gaza Strip, a growing crisis is threatening the very youngest patients. Stockpiles of critical medications have become so depleted that more than one-third are unavailable for use.

“There is very little standing between children and life-threatening illness,” says Gaza doctor Mohammed Hamdan. For infants only hours old, access to antibiotics, fluids and working incubators is urgent and saves lives. Half of all newborn deaths in Gaza occur in the first 24 hours after birth. [FIRST TWO PARAGRAPHS TOGETHER, INCLUDING THE FIRST QUOTE, FORM THE LEAD]

That’s why Palestine United has partnered with Samidoon to provide 4,000 newborn infants at four hospitals in Gaza with medications, disposables and other needed supplies. The project, funded by the United Nations, seeks to fill a growing gap in the chronic shortage in medical supplies that has plagued the Gaza Strip for the last ten years. [HERE IS THE MAIN PARAGRAPH – WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT]

#### CHRONIC SHORTAGE

Central pharmacies in the Gaza Strip seek to maintain a certain amount of critical drugs and equipment in order to meet the needs of its two million residents, half of which are children. [A SUB-TITLE INDICATES A SHIFT IN SUBJECT]

Since a closure was imposed on Gaza in 2007 restricting the entry and exit of people and goods and sending the economy into a tailspin, there has been a shortfall in the available pharmaceuticals and disposables needed for treating common and urgent conditions. [BACKGROUND]

Usually, international aid organizations and the Palestinian government in Ramallah try to make up the difference, paying for and transporting needed



items. Of the \$41 million in drugs and medical disposables Gaza needs annually, Ramallah officials send \$10 million, international organizations offer \$8 million, and the government in Gaza purchases \$10 million, leaving a \$10 million annual shortfall. [BACKGROUND]

But this year, the government in Ramallah stopped its pharmaceutical assistance in March, increasing the need and advancing the crisis already worsened by reduced support from international donors. The authority in the Gaza Strip is run by Hamas, which has been isolated by the international community and Israel.

Health officials in Gaza says that the current situation threatens the lives of about 113 newborn infants in neonatal intensive care units.

#### PURCHASING LIFE-SAVING DRUGS

Palestine United is helping to ease the crisis by providing some of the missing items, including antibiotics, analgesics, critical fluids, and post-operative and obstetric medications. It is also ensuring that 2,500 women who have high-risk pregnancies are visited at home to make sure they receive care for their newborn infants and that any health problems are treated right away. [ANOTHER SHIFT, TO WHAT IS BEING DONE]

An on-going power crisis limits access to electricity to hours a day, meaning that lifesaving hospital equipment such as incubators and dialysis machines are often run using generators. The lack of power threatens access to pumped water, increasing the prevalence of waterborne disease. Those who cannot be treated in the Gaza Strip must apply for permission to be treated elsewhere; in 2016 more than one-fourth of applications each month were delayed on average and one per cent were outright denied. As the situation deteriorates in the Gaza Strip, children are most vulnerable to tragic outcomes. [MORE BACKGROUND]

“The shortage of drugs can cause a rapid deterioration in cases,” says Dr. Hamdan, “thereby increasing the possibilities of complications and death and increasing mortality rates.” Like much of the rest of the world, Gaza has seen a

decline in its infant mortality rate in the last ten years – except among newborn infants. [SECOND QUOTATION]

Palestine United is on the front lines, making sure that children born into the Gaza Strip have a fighting chance at life. UN officials have warned, however, that the crisis in clean water and on-going closure are increasingly making the Gaza Strip uninhabitable – by 2020, it will be unfit for human habitation. [HERE THERE IS AN “ASK” – SOMETHING MUST BE DONE]

*Source: C. Seitz, some details changed*



Less of this:

## Images & Photography

Birzeit University has adopted the use of quality photography as a priority in its public relations content. The effect of photographs is strong and apparent - a picture is worth a thousand words, as they say.

Seventy-five percent of readers notice photographs before they notice text, which means that pictures are the best method to attract a readers' attention.

### Photo Presentation

**Photos should emphasize students and student life.** Too often, the face of the university is officials and seated meetings.

More of this:



**Portraits, close-ups and action shots are preferred**, while pictures of groups meeting or even standing together should be avoided.

More of this:



**Images used on the website and print publications should span the page, spreading to the “bleed” rather than ending inside a margin.**

### Ethics & Standards

Certain standards have been established to guide the selection of images for the use in university publications, on the website and on social media.

- Each photograph must represent the university and its campus life.
- Photographs must embody the university’s mission and purpose.
- The photograph should be of artistic quality and value.
- Photographs published must not offend public decency or be in violation of the university’s policies or bylaws.
- Photographs must be relevant to the accompanying article or content.
- Photographs used in print material must be of high quality (at least 300 dpi) to prevent blurring and poor appearance.
- Photographs used on the website must be of the agreed-upon dimensions for the format (depending on the section of the website

Less of this:

in which it will be posted) and should be no more than 500 kb in size and 960 pixels wide to prevent slow download times.

- On social media platforms, photographs must be accompanied by an appropriate photo credit and a link to the relevant news article or department page on the university's website.
- Only in rare cases should photographs be sourced from the internet. These must either be made available through social media, publicly released video, or otherwise released for common use (i.e. permission has been given for non-profit use).
- All photos used must be accompanied by the proper photo credit.
- Photographs must not be blurry, too bright, or too dark.
- Photographs must not bear the photographer's watermark.
- On the website, no more than three photographs should accompany news articles; if more than three must be published, they must be uploaded in a separate album.
- Charts, graphs, and figures must be accompanied by an explanatory text.

- An explanatory text must accompany each video.
- Any video published on social media platforms must be linked to the university's website.

## Videos

- Each video must embody a clear message and represent the university and campus life.
- Each video must contain the university's logo.
- Videos published must not offend public decency or be in violation of the university's policy or bylaws
- The video should be of artistic quality and value.
- Videos must be produced in 1080p or higher video resolutions.
- Videos must be published on the university's YouTube channel before being published on the university's website so as to prevent slow download times.

## Business Letters

Formal business letters should strike a straightforward formal tone. Avoid chatty, wordy sentences or the slang or jargon that has taken over communications in the digital age.

Keep it short, starting with an introduction, then making your main point, and closing with the action that you are seeking from your recipient.

### Letter Format

All of the elements described below should be aligned to the left, no indents needed. It is also unnecessary to use two spaces after each period, an old stylistic throwback to the days of typewriters.

**March 3, 2012**

**Recipient name here**  
**Recipient address here**

**Mr. Said Sayid or Ms. Saida Sayid,**

**Body Text:** State why you are writing. Establish any connection/mutual relationship up front. Group information that is related to one another into paragraphs.

**Closing "Call to Action":** State what the reader needs to do and what you will do to follow up

**Signature Block:** Sign your letter in blue or black ink  
Print your name and title

**Enclosures [Include any enclosure here]**

**CC: [Insert the name of anyone else who will receive the same letter]**

## Annual Reports

Annual Reports are a summation of the university's successes and programming over the year. They are an important fundraising tool and provide a guide to the institution's progress in meeting its annual and other goals.

As such, it is important that they also tell a story – the university's story. It is not useful to provide readers with a chronological list of events or achievements without a filter for helping them to understand this information.

Annual reports should be built around themes. Under those themes, a summary, infographics, and several news stories illustrated with photos can display the year's events. Below is a sample outline for one university's annual report:

### Sample University Annual Report Outline

#### **Introduction**

#### **Academic Achievement**

- Three paragraphs describing the university's goals for that year and how they were achieved.
- An infographic portraying the number of graduates, their grades, staff achievements or other relevant information
- A text box with bullets of one-line examples of achievements
- Two well-written success stories with photographs, dispersed between the above text

#### **Community & Volunteerism**

- Three paragraphs describing the university's goals for that year and how they were achieved.
- An infographic or a series of photos illustrating how students were involved in the community or visa versa
- A text box with bullets of one-line examples of achievements
- Two well-written success stories with photographs

#### **Preparing for the Future**

- Two paragraphs describing the university's fundraising and infrastructure goals for that year and how they were achieved.
- A map or blueprint of new structures
- A text box with bullets of one-line examples of achievements
- Quotes from donors the improvements, or a story about one valued donor and how he/she has supported the university

## Website Basics

The most important part of maintaining the website is preparing quality, unified content (text and images) using the steps provided earlier in this communications guide.

Once the content has been produced, there are some important tips for uploading it onto the website.

### Website Quick Guide

- **Remove any additional whitespace at the beginning and end of each article.** The cursor should be seen blinking after the last period or punctuation mark.
- **Avoid using tables inside an article**, as they are not mobile friendly. Instead link to the table after uploading it as a separate file.
- Images should follow the **Image Dimensions Guide**, this guide has all different images sized on the website
- **Keep the distance between each paragraph in an article the same.** Hit “Enter” for a new paragraph, otherwise “Shift Enter” for a new line.
- The article title is automatically formatted with the “h1” html tag, so all other subsequent tags used in the article should start from “h2” (smaller) and higher. Do not use “h1” tag in the article body as it is reserved for the title.
- **Do not apply any text formatting to the article text.** This includes font size, bold, italic, text color, background color. This helps the pages remain consistent with each other and with the general parameters laid out throughout the website and this style guide. Only styling formats provided by the WYSIWYG editor such as paragraph, h1, h2, h3, h4, h6, are permitted.

- **Use non-ordered (bulleted) lists instead of ordered (numbered) lists.**
- **List items on the website should not include a period or punctuation mark at the end.**
- Check all links added to the content before publication. External links that go to websites outside [www.birzeit.edu](http://www.birzeit.edu) should navigate into a new tab, by setting the target in the link to “\_blank”.
- **Every news item has to have a photo.** If there is not photo available, choose one from the photo library that is close to the topic being discussed.
- Don’t use stock photos (photos for sale or that are watermarked) for any reason. Instead use Common License images with a reference to the source. **If in doubt, do not use.**
- **Avoid using repetitive photos.** Often, images of the university president appear one after the other in the highlight slider as a result of overuse. This should be avoided and is also indicative of over-reporting of bureaucratic issues instead of campus life.
- Do not publish empty pages. Wait until the content is ready and then publish.

### Notes on URL Location

- The URL alias is the page's address on the web. It is the "name" by which a browser identifies a page to display. Examples of URL alias on the university website:
  - <https://www.birzeit.edu/students> indicates the Students page with “students” as the URL alias

- <https://www.birzeit.edu/about/history> indicates the University History page with “about/history” as the URL alias
- <https://www.birzeit.edu/about/history/founders> indicates the Founders page with “about/history/founders” as the URL alias
- When creating a page belongs to one of the following content types: Basis page, Business unit, and Landing page, you should be aware of this page’s position, for example if this page is located under About, the URL alias should be about/page-name
- URL alias and menu link are both responsible for determining the page location. It is also important to provide a suitable menu parent item. For example:
  - <https://www.birzeit.edu/students>, the Students page has <Main menu> as parent item, which means it is located on the website root/first level
  - <https://www.birzeit.edu/about/history>, the University History page has “About” as parent menu item
  - <https://www.birzeit.edu/about/history/founders>, the Founders page has “University History” as parent menu item



# ANNEX A

## Suggested Work Flow

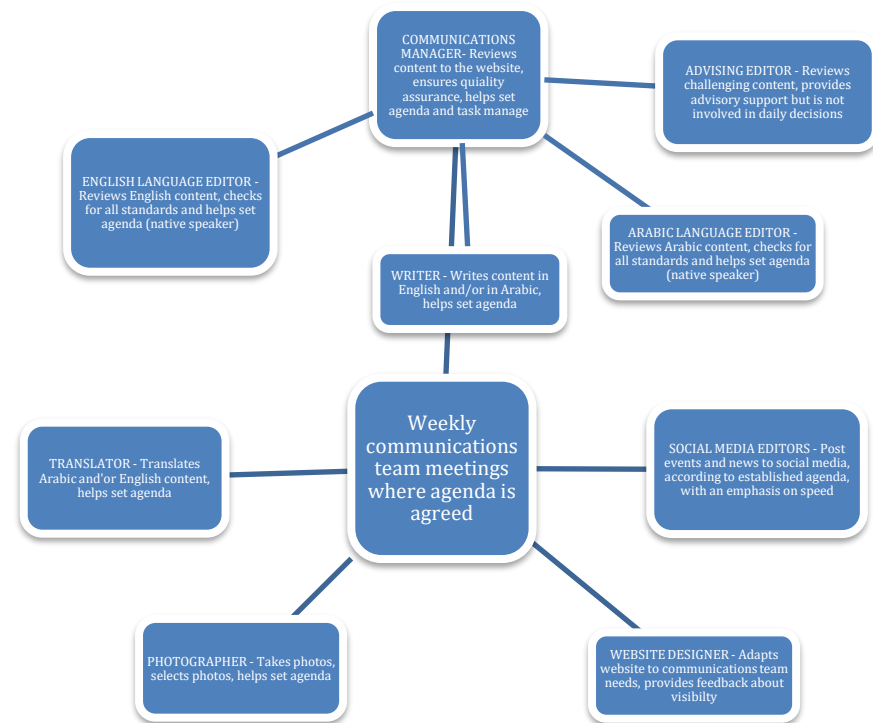
All communications staff should participate in weekly planning meetings setting the agenda for the week. Planning will establish the turn-around time for each item. It will also prioritize stories that reflect campus life, and determine which stories can be reduced to “briefs” or “shorts” (suggested addition to the website) that have no photo and are two- to three- sentence news items. Many of the bureaucratic meetings should be reduced to these briefs, as the reporting on them is nearly identical.

Setting an agenda will help the team to produce **at least one story every day**, which keeps the website fresh, while still allowing stories to be developed over a two- or three-day timeline.

There should be staff writers writing content in English that is translated into Arabic and visa versa. Having a two-way flow allows better representation in the source language and reduces the load on editors, who are currently essentially rewriting the text.

All content should go through a three-step quality review after completion: reviewed by an editor and by the communications manager who checks for basic standards established for the various communications items and posts/distributes the communications item. **No item should ever be posted without review.**

Auxiliary staff can include a communications consultant, design staff, website designers/programmers, etc. who can respond when additional support is needed.



The situation in which material is produced in sub par form, released or published, and then edited later should be avoided at all costs. The internet is not forgiving in this respect, and once something is released it will always exist as a representation of the university. It is better to wait one day to release an accurate press release or story then to get it wrong the first time and damage the university's representation. Doing this repeatedly degrades the university's representation over time.

## ANNEX B: BRANDING GUIDE

The following section presents the university's branding guidelines, which ensure a unified look and feel for all communications produced by the institution.

The Birzeit University brand includes, but is not exclusive to any logo, name, sign, stamp, background, design, symbol, colors, fonts, or any of these used collectively that indicates or relates to Birzeit University, the online portal "Ritaj" or any of Birzeit University's institutions or centers.



**BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY**



### Protecting the Birzeit University Brand

The Birzeit University brand must not be:

- Changed or altered
- Used with any other commercial brand or logo without permission
- Used in a way that discriminates against individuals or groups because of age, religion, ethnicity, race, disability, belief, gender or any other way that is against the university's policy of non-discrimination.
- Used in any advertisement or promotion for or featuring guns or weapons, alcohol or products containing it, cigarettes/tobacco and related products, drugs, sexual content, food products/drinks and their packaging (except those consumed at official university occasions), or any other products that are opposed to the university's mission and image.

- Used in any art or design, except by university affiliates.



### Rules for Using the Birzeit University Brand

Birzeit University owns its name and brand, and these and related items (including the university portal, Ritaj) are fully registered in Palestine.

- Any unauthorized usage of the Birzeit University brand is a crime subject to penalty based on the applicable laws in Palestine.
- To guarantee the protection of the Birzeit University brand, the university's administration will oversee and approve every use of the brand.
- Only the Public Relations Office may issue approvals for use of the Birzeit University brand.
- Each permission granted is specific to that request and does not apply for additional instances.
- Service and product providers must respect the agreements they have signed with Birzeit University or its agents regarding the use of the university brand.
- Internal use of the brand by active faculty members and employees to produce stationary and business cards does not require approval as long as it respects the above guidelines.
- No fee is required if the brand is used for non-commercial uses.
- The university has the right to charge fees for commercial uses of the brand through an agreement signed by the Public Relations Office.

## The Birzeit University Logo

### The Primary Logo

The Birzeit University logo consists of a green olive tree surrounded by the name of the university in Arabic calligraphy. Underneath this appears the name of the university in English in Arial font, capitalized.

This is the official logo that should be used in all documents or communications on or about Birzeit University. This includes print, web, individual and multi-media (video or photography) communications.

Guidelines for how to use this primary logo have been created to maintain consistency.

No faculty, department, institute, center, unit or organization at Birzeit University may create a new logo without approval from the Public Relations Department.

If you have any questions about the logo of the university, contact [pr@birzeit.edu](mailto:pr@birzeit.edu).

Approved versions of the logo can be found at [www.birzeit.edu/brand](http://www.birzeit.edu/brand).



### Logo Space Requirements

The x-height of the Birzeit University logo is based upon the distance between the top of the olive tree and the bottom of the English text. No design element, type or photos should come any closer to the logo than  $\frac{1}{4} x$ . Of course, the actual distance of x and, thus the required clear space, will change based on how large or small the logo is scaled.

### Logo Proportion

The image of the tree and the writing in the logo should always be kept in proportion to each other to maintain the unique design of the logo. To ensure the correct proportion, always use the vector files of the logo.

If you need to resize the logo, always make sure the height and width are scaled together so the proportions remain the same. In many computer programs, you may keep the proportions of the logo the same by selecting the “shift” key while dragging the corner of the logo to make it larger or smaller.

### Logo Size

The Birzeit University logo should never be smaller than 4 cm wide in any printed material, including business cards, and should not be less than 100 pixels wide on a computer screen.



## Logo Primary Color Options

The official university colors draw inspiration from the greenery of the natural landscape. The green of the Birzeit University logo represents the Palestinian people's connection to their land and the historic symbolism of the olive tree and agricultural in Palestinian heritage.

The official color codes of the Birzeit University logo are black (C91 M79 Y62 K97) and green (C80 M0 Y100 K56) and should be used whenever possible.



Black or white versions of the logo may be used in black and white publications, or when they will appear on a background that might obscure the full-color logo.



## Placement of the Logo

In English publications, the logo shall be placed on the upper, left-hand side, also ¼” to ¾” from the edge of the page. (Arabic publications place the logo on the upper right-hand side with similar margins.)

To avoid cropping or misrepresentation of the logo, it should not be put at the edge of a page.

The logo must appear on the first page of any piece of internal or external communication.

Certain types of media or publications may require that the location of the logo be moved. Please contact the Public Relations Office for permission to move the placement of the logo.

For letterhead and stationary placement, see “Other Publications.”



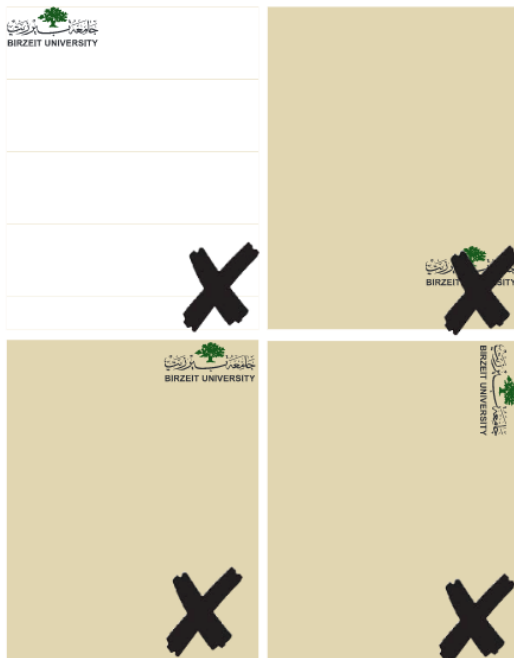


## Incorrect Placement of the Logo

The logo should not be placed in the far corner of any printed page and cannot be used in any of the ways shown on this page.

Also do not:

- Combine or block the logo with any photo or symbols
- Add shadows
- Change any of the elements of the logo, e.g. the font, wording or image
- Change the colors
- Use the official logo colors of black (C91 M79 Y62 A97) and green (C80 M0 Y100 K56) as a background for the color version of the logo
- Underline or outline the logo
- Add type to the logo to make a new logo



## Logos for Institutes and Centers

Currently, the institutes and centers of Birzeit University all have unique logos, some of which have incorporated the official University logo. All publications by institutes and centers must have their logo on any official documents.

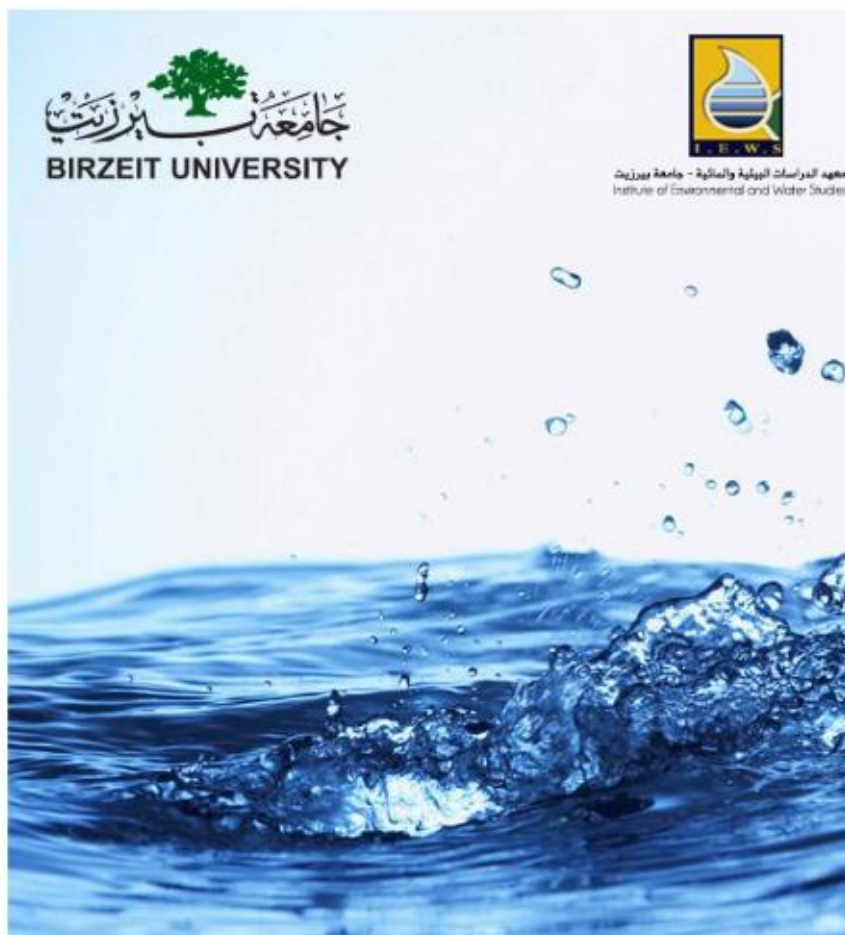
If the university logo is not part of the existing logo of the institute, it must be added as a separate image on the document.

While following the guidelines for the university logo that require its placement, the logo for the institute shall be placed on the opposite side of the document. All other guidelines must also be followed. See the example (right) of a document in English that uses the logo for the Institute of Environmental and Water Studies.

The two logos should be scaled so that they are the same size and create a balanced look on the document, while still being easy to read.

If using an institute logo that does not include the name of the institute, the name of the institute should be written in both English and Arabic under the institute logo (also see example).

If a new center or institute is being established, its logo should also include the Birzeit University logo and must be approved by the Public Relations Office.



## BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY STAMP

The official Birzeit University stamp is only to be used by the President's Office and main administrative offices (including Public Relations, Human Resources and Finance).

It must include the tree, the wording "Birzeit University" in Arabic and English and the year the university was founded.

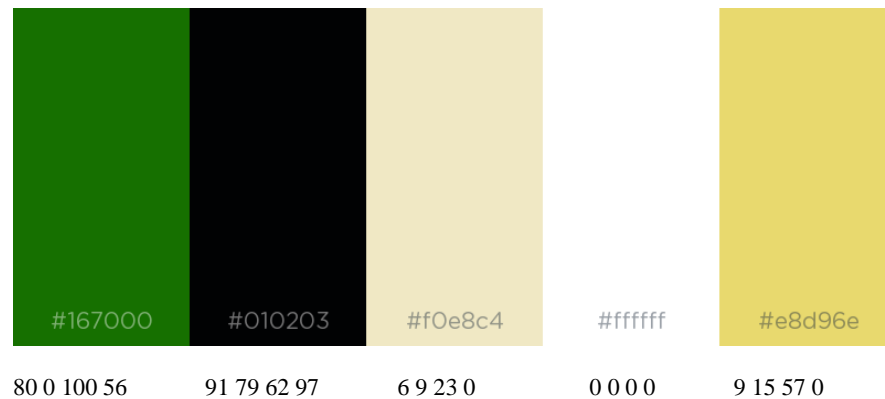
There is no electronic version of the stamp and thus, it must be created by hand.



## COLOR PALETTE

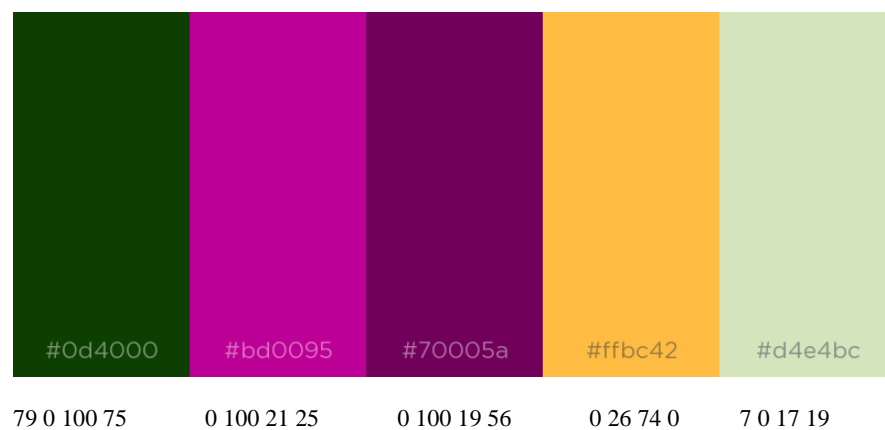
Birzeit University's color palette stays close to the earthy tones of the black and green of the logo, while incorporating some fresh bright tones that express the values of innovation and youth.

### Primary Palette



### Secondary Palette

Secondary colors can be used as accent tones in visual communications. **They should never be used inside the logo itself.**





## Colors of Faculties

Each faculty at Birzeit University has its own color combination. Generally, the colors of faculties will be used at graduation and for official publications, such as our brochure. The color, CMYK code and Pantone number for every faculty are listed below.

Faculty Name	Color	C	M	Y	K	Pantone
Faculty of Education	Light Blue	69	7	0	0	U 298
Faculty of Arts	Dark Blue	100	72	0	18	U 280
	White	0	0	0	0	
Faculty of Science	Yellow	0	24	94	0	U 123
	Orange	0	64	100	0	U 166
Faculty of Engineering	Orange	0	64	100	0	U 166
Faculty of Information Technology	Green	95	0	100	27	U 356
	Yellow	0	35	85	0	U 143
Faculty of Business and Economics Business Department	Burgundy	0	90	100	51	U 1815
	Beige	0	32	35	25	U 4725
Faculty of Law and Public Administration	Dark Purple	85	100	0	0	U 2597
	Light Purple	24	56	0	0	U 252
Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Professions	Apricot	0	35	85	0	143
Pharmacy	Olive Green	48	0	100	53	U 575
Graduate Studies	Purple	0	100	13	17	U 220
	Blue	35	9	0	0	U 283
Institutes and Centers	Green	80	0	100	56	U 357
	Beige	9	15	58	0	U 156

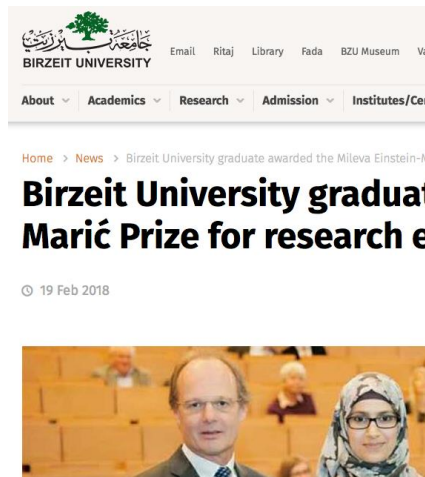
# FONTS

Using consistent fonts for communications not only unifies look and presentation, but projects a certain vision across all mediums.

**While the font used in the university logo is Arial, this is the only place where Arial should be used to give the logo distinction.**

## Web

In online presentations, the open source font “Fira sans” should be used, making use of its many variants (bold, semi-bold, etc. to provide different looks for headlines and body text.



## For Publication

In print, the following font combination should be used:

**TITLE FIRASANS LIGHT 28PT**

**HEADLINE FIRA SANS MEDIUM 18PT**

**Subhead Fira Sans 14pt (Title Case)**

**Subsubhead Fira Sans Extrabold 12pt (Title Case)**

The body of the document should be Open Source font PT Serif size 11pt. This provides a contrast that makes reading longer text easier for the viewer. This Communications Guide is using those same fonts.

## STATIONARY

All stationary (including letterhead, business cards, envelopes and email signatures) can be designed in-house as long as they meet the guidelines in this book.

Contact information for all stationary items shall be listed as follows with specific information to be changed depending on your personal information:

**Birzeit University PO Box XXX, Birzeit  
West Bank, Palestine**

**Telephone and Fax**

**Telephone: +970-2-XXX-XXXX,**

**Fax: +970-2-XXX-XXXX (from Arab countries) Telephone: +972-2-XXX-XXXX,**

**Fax: +972-2-XXX-XXXX (from other countries)**

**E-Mail Addresses XXXXX@birzeit.edu**

Examples of approved stationary formats can be found on this and subsequent pages.

### Letterhead Design



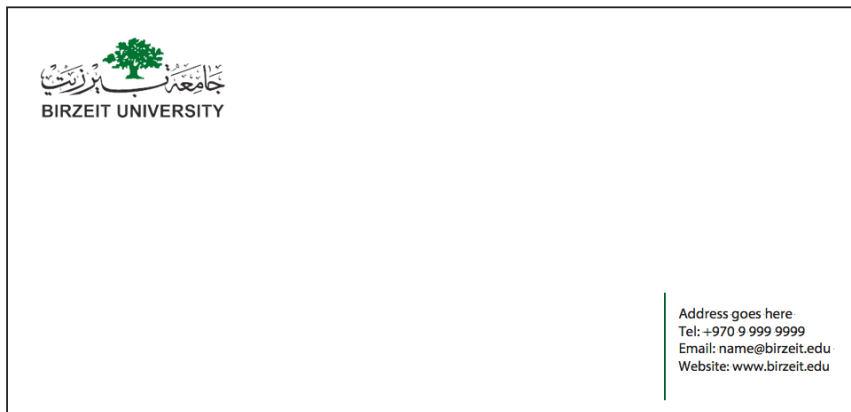


**Dept. Name**  
Address goes here  
Tel: +970 9 999 9999  
Email: name@birzeit.edu  
Website: www.birzeit.edu

## Business Card Design



## Envelope Design



## Email Signature

**Name Here**

**Position Here**

Dept. Name

Address goes here

Tel: +970 9 999 9999

Mob: +970 999 999999

Email: name@birzeit.edu



## Powerpoint Template



