

**British Council Occupied Palestinian
Territories (OPTs)**

Higher Education Scholarships for Palestinians (HESPAL)

13 November 2024

HESPAL INTRODUCTION

HESPAL – The Programme

HESPAL is a **unique scholarship scheme** supporting **capacity building** of academics and institutional development of higher education institutions in Palestine.

Developed in **partnership with Palestinian and UK universities**, HESPAL contributes to the advancement of the Palestinian Higher Education sector and caters for its needs and priorities.

HESPAL offers **scholarships for exceptional junior academic staff in the partner Palestinian universities** to pursue master's and PhD degrees at the UK's world class universities.



HESPAL – The Goal

Contributing to the creation of **Palestine's next generation** of senior academics and thought leaders

Developing **sustainable institutional links** between Palestinian and UK universities

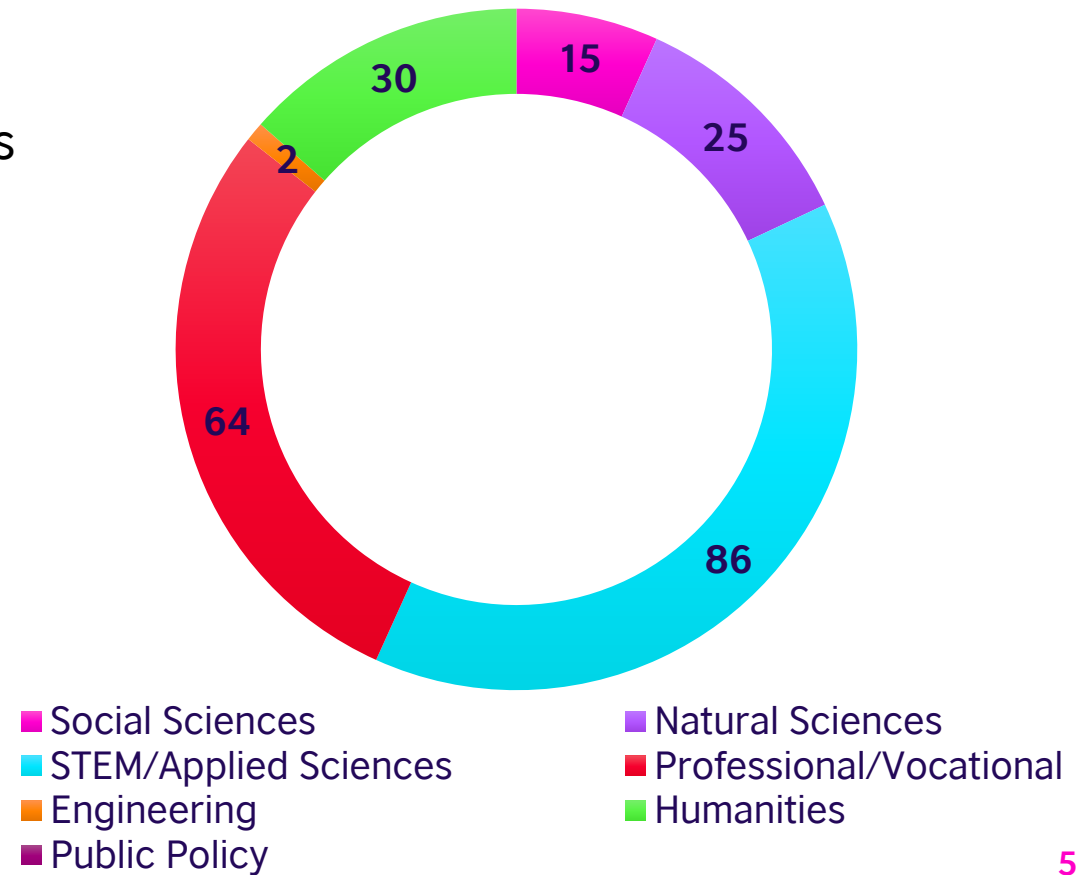
Supporting **professional networks** to sustain the scholar's longer-term career

14 Years of HESPAL – Connecting the UK and OTPs

Since 2010, HESPAL has supported:

- **241 Palestinian scholars:** 181 master's and 59 PhDs
- Over **55% of our scholars are women**

Academic areas of scholarship



HESPAL Partners

HESPAL – Partners

HESPAL is led by the British Council working in partnership with UK and Palestinian universities and funding partners, including:

Funding Partners

- The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
- Pears Foundation
- Amjad & Suha Bseisu Foundation
- The UK Department for Education



Current Palestinian Partner Universities

- Al-Azhar University
- Islamic University of Gaza
- Gaza University
- Al Quds Open University
- Palestine Ahliya University
- Al Istiqlal University
- Al Aqsa University
- University College of Applied Sciences
- University of Palestine
- Bethlehem University
- Palestine Polytechnic University
- Dar Al-Kalima University
- Birzeit University
- An-Najah National University
- Arab American University
- Hebron University
- Palestine Technical University Kadoorie





Current UK Partner Universities

- University of East Anglia
- Queen Margaret University
- York St John University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Brunel University London
- King's College London
- Liverpool Hope University
- St Mary's University London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Dundee
- University of Glasgow
- University of Roehampton
- University of Sussex
- University of Warwick
- University of Essex
- University of Cumbria
- University of Northumbria
- SOAS University of London*
- University of Exeter*
- University of Bolton*
- The University of Edinburgh*
- University College London*
- University of St Andrews*
- University of Stirling*
- Edinburgh Napier University*
- University of Leicester*
- Lancaster University*
- University of Oxford**
- University of Aberdeen**
- University of Bath**
- University of Bristol**
- University of Liverpool**
- University of York**

* MoU in process

** Negotiations in process



HESPAL – The Scholarship

Scholarships are based on a co-funding model which supports a framework of delivery to meet scholar needs and provide a holistic experience:

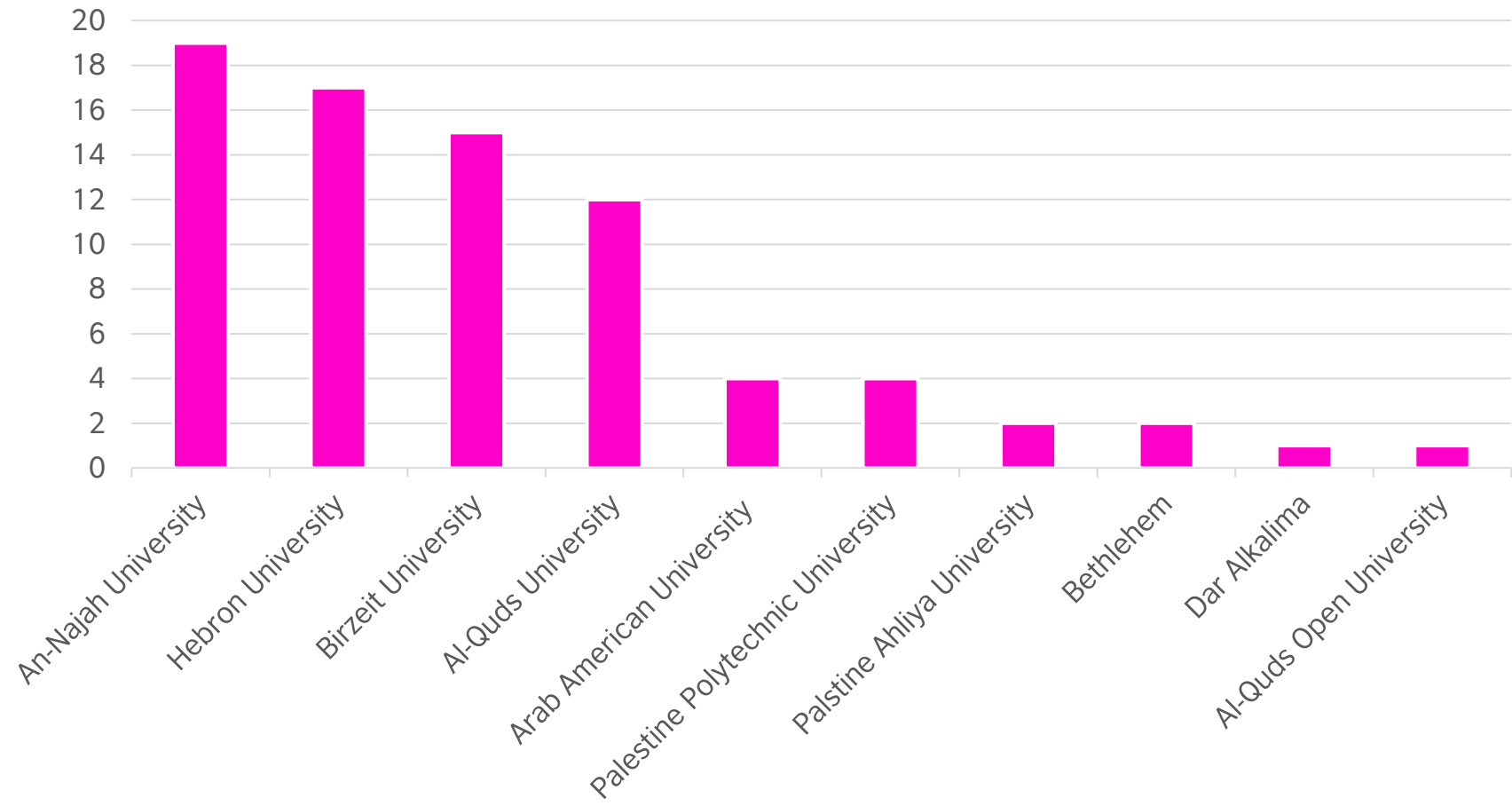
- UK universities fully waive their fees, contributing to half the scholarships costs OR pay for fully-funded scholarships
- Funding partners support scholars' living costs and programme costs
- HESPAL scholars contribute to their travel, English IELTS exam, visa and health insurance expenses

HESPAL 2024 – 2025

Overview and Statistics



Number of applications received: 82 (59 MA, 23 PhD)



Number of scholars awarded and started their 2024 academic year in the UK: 13 scholars (3 PhD and 10 MA)

Palestinian University	Degree	Field of study	UK University
Al-Quds University	PhD	Electronic & Electrical Engineering	Brunel University London
	PhD	Medicinal Chemistry (school of Pharmacy)	University of East Anglia
An-Najah University	MSc	Clinical Pharmacology	King`s College London
	MA	Clinical Pharmacology	University of Glasgow
	MA	Digital Media and Creative Industries	University of Birmingham
	MSc	Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation	University of Warwick
Bethlehem University	PhD	Global Health and Social Medicine	King`s College London
Birzeit University	MSc	Sustainable Automotive Electrification	University of Warwick
	MSc	Robotics & AI	University of Glasgow
	MSc	Advanced Computer Science	University of Essex
Hebron University	MA	Comparative Literature	SOAS
	MSc	Precision Medicine-Immunology Specialism	University of Glasgow
Polytechnic University	MA	Human & Applied Physiology	King`s College London

HESPAL – Responding to the Urgent Needs in Gaza

Additional Track for Gaza

Created in response to the ongoing war on Gaza and dedicated to Gazan University Academics and Scholars

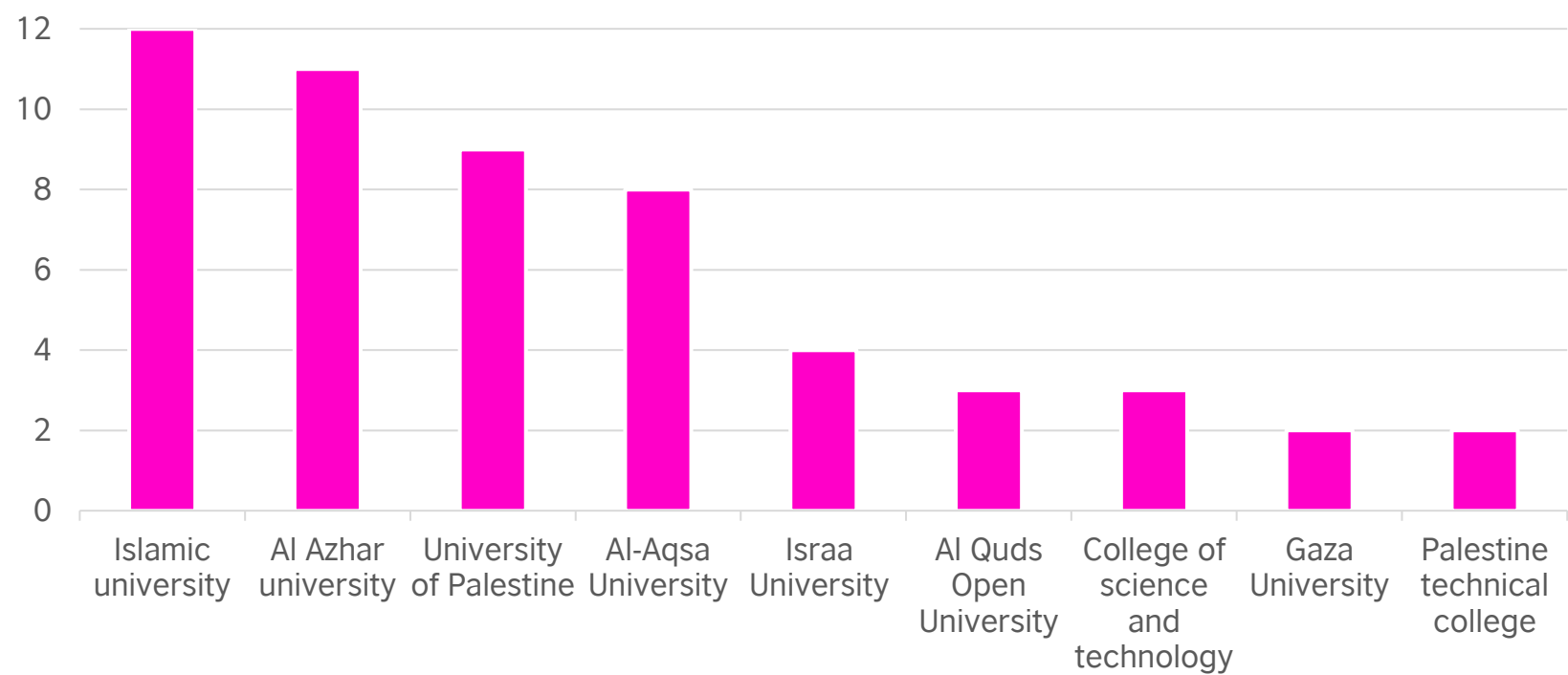
The programme:

- Provides opportunities for MA and PhD studies at UK partner universities
- Enhances capacity-building in the higher education sector and contribute to the socio-economic reconstruction of Gaza
- Focuses on revitalizing its severely damaged institutions.
- Commences in January or March 2025





Number of applications received: 81 (55 MA, 26 PhD)



Looking ahead HESPAL 2025- 2028

Looking ahead HESPAL 2025 - 2028

HESPAL scholars' contributions will have a substantial impact on teaching and learning experiences, bolster research capabilities, and foster greater institutional exchange with the UK.

Aims for the next 3 years:

- To **provide more than 60 scholarships** for promising Palestinian scholars to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK
- At least **half of these scholarships will go to scholars and academics from Gaza** (subject to our ability to secure placements and funds and to scholars' ability to exit Gaza)

Our primary objective is to empower these scholars to return to Palestine upon completing their studies, equipped with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the reconstruction of the higher education sector.



HESPAL 2025 - 2026 Cycle

HESPAL 25/26 Application Process - Roles & Responsibilities

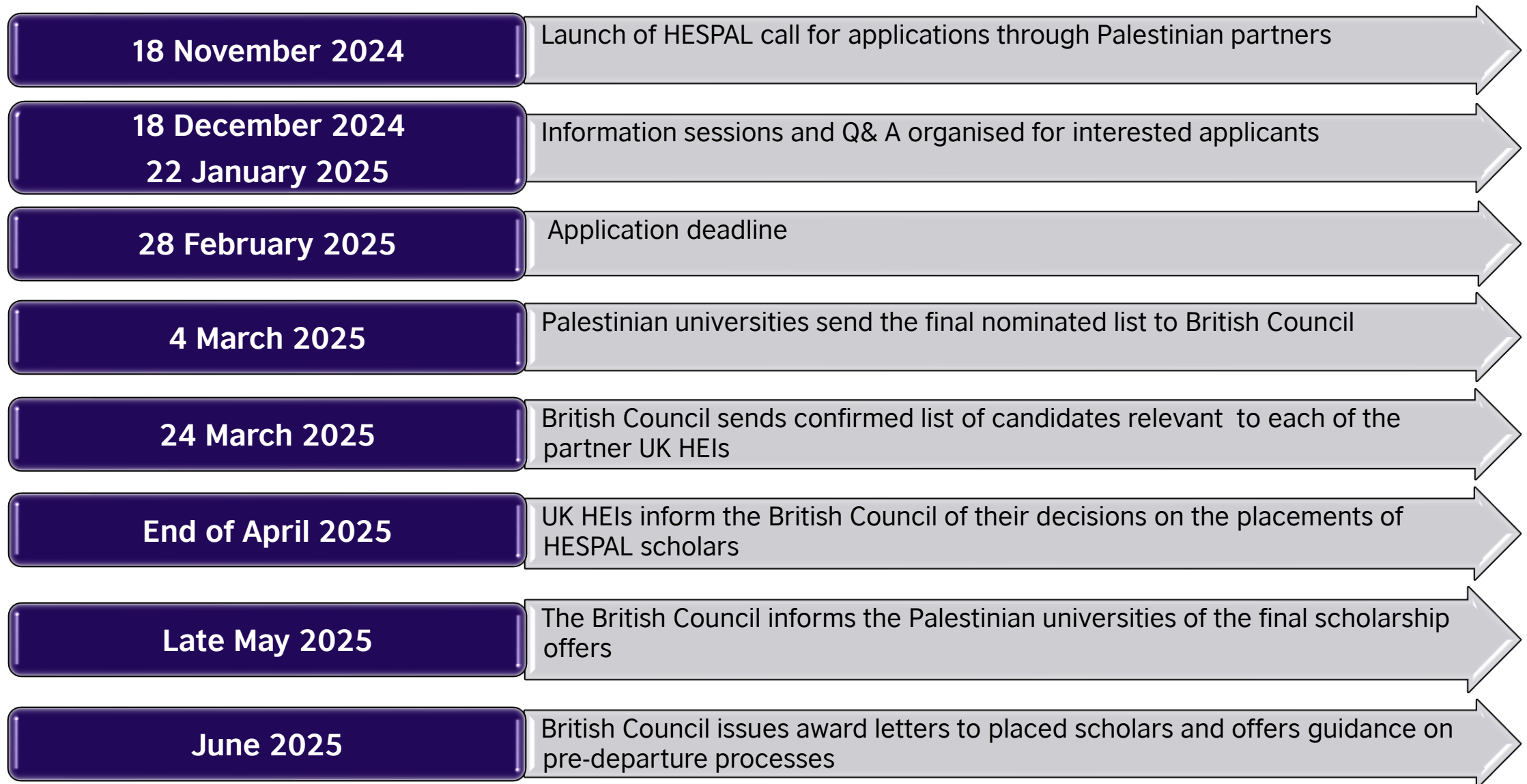
The application process is facilitated through our partner Palestinian Universities.

- Once the HESPAL call is open, Palestinian universities publicise the call across its academic faculties, departments and research centres before nominating their priority candidates from their applicants and share it with the British Council.
- Each Palestinian university nominates up to 5 primary and 5 reserve scholars and agrees with their nominees on the areas of study.
- Nominated scholars must follow the process outlined in the application guidance notes and submit their HESPAL application by the specified deadline. The process includes:
 1. Identifying the UK partner universities and preferred programme of study
 2. Applying directly to three programmes offered by UK partner universities.
 3. Submitting the HESPAL online application and uploading the required supporting documents.

HESPAL 25/26 Application Process - Roles & Responsibilities

- The British Council checks eligibility of candidates.
- The British Council sends confirmed list of candidates relevant to each of the partner UK university as defined by the scholar's applications.
- UK universities conduct their evaluation of applications and provide the British Council with a list of applicants they would be willing to accept and ranks the top three in order of preference.
- Final placements of scholarships are made based on the student's acceptance and ranking by the UK universities and HESPAL funding partners' priorities for scholar selection.

HESPAL 25/26 - timeline



Thank you

For enquiries, contact HESPAL team:

Rawan Sharaf, Head of HESPAL, Email: rawan.sharafkhatib@britishcouncil.org

Hiba Hammouri, HESPAL coordinator: hiba.hammouriadeeb@britishcouncil.org

www.britishcouncil.ps