

Update on Senate Motions: 5 June 2024

Senate (27 March 2024) calls on the University of Aberdeen to:

- *commit to supporting Palestinian academics and knowledge workers during this time of crisis, and in the aftermath, by promoting and extending scholarship arrangements for Palestinian students and arguing for financial support to rebuild Palestinian educational infrastructure.*
- *Investigate and commit to further ways of extending support to Palestinian students, academics and knowledge workers in Gaza including but not limited to possible partnerships with Gazan Universities.*

Context:

The key challenge is the immigration system, which require individuals currently resident in Palestine to meet the full financial independence tests of the student visa route. However, recent changes to legislation do provide that anyone recognised by the UK government as a refugee and ordinarily resident in the UK will qualify for Home student status with the same support as a local student. Would expect those students to qualify for Widening Access support.

Development of Existing Measures:

The University's At-Risk & Displaced Persons Scheme, introduced in February 2023, seeks to help students and scholars caught up in conflict across the world.

The Scheme comprises 5 'pillars':

- At-Risk (Postgraduate Student) Fellowship Scheme;
- Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) Staff Fellowship Scheme ;
- Undergraduate Scholarship for At-Risk & Displaced Students;
- The George and Lilian Adam Smith Scholarship (Postgraduate Taught Students); and
- Student Hardship Fund for At-Risk & Displaced Students

Our support is now promoted under the [Universities of Sanctuary initiative](#) in relation to guidance on responding to the Crisis in Palestine.

(Establishment of an endowment to support the ongoing development of these measures is included in the draft Campaign plan.)

Exploration of new measures:

The desire of Senate that the University contribute to the redevelopment of the educational infrastructure in Palestine is recognised. We are in discussion (Monday) with the British Council in relation to engagement with their [Higher Education Scholarships for Palestinians \(HESPAL\)](#) scheme.

HESPAL aims to create the next generation of senior academics who can maintain international quality standards at Palestinian universities and develop renewed and sustainable links between Palestinian and UK universities. The scheme will upgrade academic staff in Palestinian universities through a Masters or PhD Scholarship programme.