



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TEACHING LAW IN PALESTINIAN LAW SCHOOLS

**CURRICULUM REFORM REVIEW
(APRIL-DECEMBER 2005)**

SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Chemonics International, Inc. and MASSAR Associates.

TEACHING LAW IN PALESTINIAN LAW SCHOOLS

**CURRICULUM REFORM REVIEW
(APRIL-DECEMBER 2005)**

**Rule of Law IQC No. DFD-I-00-04-00171
Task Order No. DFD-I-800-04-00171-00**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Section I: Introduction	6
Section II: Participatory Needs Assessment – Methodology	8
Section III: Participatory Needs Assessment – Findings & Recommendations.....	10
A. Al Quds University Faculty of Law	11
B. Al- Azhar University Faculty of Law	16
C. Birzeit University Faculty of Law and Public Administration	22
D. An Najah National University Faculty of Law	25
E. The Arab American University of Jenin Faculty of Law	29

ACRONYMS

AAUJ	Arab American University of Jenin
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CSO	Civil Society Organization
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
PBA	Palestinian Bar Association
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States
WBG	West Bank and Gaza

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legal education systems are fundamental to the development of the rule of law and legal and judicial systems; they produce the legal professionals—judges, lawyers, prosecutors—that populate the law making, administrative, and enforcement bodies (courts, ministries, legislative bodies, legal agencies, and bars), academic establishments, civil society, and private sector organizations. Legal professionals play an integral role in the development and improvement of legal and judicial systems, and should serve as promoters for reform. While USAID has embarked on legal education reform in some of its rule of law reform initiatives in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, USAID’s Supporting Rule of Law Reform in the West Bank and Gaza project - *Arkan* is one of the few rule of law initiatives in the Middle East to integrate legal education reform.

Arkan is working with five Palestinian faculties of law at Al Azhar, Al Quds, An Najah, Arab American University at Jenin (AAUJ), and Birzeit universities to integrate interactive teaching methodologies, practical skills training, and legal research skills development in the classroom, engage law students in the development of their education, and increase law faculties’ involvement in the future of the Palestinian legal sector. Ultimately, *Arkan*’s work with the universities will lead to the development of legal professionals with the skills necessary to not only excel in their jobs, but to also make significant contributions to their society.

In May 2005, *Arkan*’s team began working on a collaborative assessment of each partner university’s curriculum needs to identify specific areas for improvement. Specifically, the *Arkan* team conducted a curriculum review of admission requirements, courses taught, resources available, teaching methodologies and law libraries, as well as the legal education system as a whole. At the time, *Arkan* was working with law faculties at four universities: Al Quds University, Al Azhar University, Birzeit University and An Najah University. It was not until early October 2005 that the Law Faculty of the Arab American University of Jenin was included in the assessment, which is when AAUJ had joined into the activities of *Arkan*. The field work at the AAUJ was completed in December 2005.

Arkan shared the review’s results and provided recommendations to each partner university to incorporate into their academic plans.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Teaching Law in Palestinian Law Faculties

In any country, universities serve as an indication of the development and advancement of a nation. Law faculties supply society with generations of citizens who are aware of their rights and capable of defending their communities, using the law. Learning about the rules, laws, and bases that helped build other societies and nations will be greatly beneficial to those who still endeavor to secure their future and build their state.

In the early 1990s, prior to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG), the first phase of Palestinian legal education began with the establishment of the Palestinian Faculty of Law in 1992. The Palestinian Faculty of Law was annexed to Al-Quds University in 1995. In the same year in Gaza, the Law and Islamic Shari'a Faculty was established; later this became the Faculty of Law at Al-Azhar University. In addition, in 1994, An Najah National University established a faculty of law and started offering law courses in 1995. The Faculty of Law of the Arab American University was established in 2002 and in 2004, Birzeit University began offering law courses through its Faculty of Law and Public Administration.

As the Palestinian legal education is rather new, it is imperative to think carefully and practically of ways to improve legal education within the Palestinian context. Being careful does not mean rejecting or refusing change or the experiences of other countries. Despite the differences in legal systems and education, many similarities exist from which the Palestinian legal education can benefit.

Arkan does not suggest direct adoption of the entire American, or other, system of legal education for use in Palestine; rather *Arkan* encourages the review and/or adaptation of different experiences, and adaptation of best practices and lessons learned in a way that makes the most sense for Palestine. This is not a new concept; Palestinian universities have traditionally been influenced by other countries' education experiences, academic programs, curricula, and instruments—especially neighboring Arab countries Jordan and Egypt.

Past research has shown that legal education in Palestine faces many obstacles—including financial, legal, legislative, and education policy challenges. The following represent the legal education sector's main challenges:

- Legal education in Palestine, in general, lacks any holistic planning;
- Lack of strategic experts and planners in legal education at the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE);
- Legal issues and legal education are not priorities on the agenda of MoEHE;
- MoEHE and concerned universities do not organize regular meetings or workshops to seek opportunities for cooperation and coordination among Palestinian law faculties, and

- Palestinian universities are independent entities; most of them are registered as civil society organizations (CSOs) or are privately owned¹: The Higher Educational Council as well as the MoEHE do not have significant influence on these universities. Notwithstanding the important and positive value of being independent from the formal sector, in the case of legal education reform, it makes universities both cautious and suspicious about any suggestions made by MoEHE. Furthermore, this situation does not help in facilitating networking among universities, thus depriving them from benefiting from each other's experiences.

There are other obstacles, including the absence of any legislative policy that can facilitate cooperation between law faculties and public authorities. This situation impedes the implementation of developmental plans and programs, when they exist. One such example is "clinical law teaching", in which implementation of the program requires a number of legal rules that would allow law students to plea before the justice system; however, this cannot be achieved without legislative intervention.

There is also an absence of any comprehensive vision for legal education in most Palestinian law faculties. The same applies to academic plans and curricula as well as development of skills, performance of teaching staff, or students' role.

Finally, financial and structural impediments include the universities' lack of a specific budget for law schools; law faculties are treated as part of the university's general budget framework. This hinders potential for development and progress because it limits the law faculties' ability to control and develop their resources. In some cases, universities allow for direct receipt of assistance or donations to the law faculties; however, this is the exception, not the rule.

¹ Of those universities that have law faculties, Al Azhar, Al Quds, An Najah and Birzeit universities are all registered as CSOs and The Arab American University at Jenin (AAUJ) is privately owned.

SECTION II: PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Methodology

Palestinian law faculties are all relatively new, making it difficult to compare their situations, plans, and achievements with other Middle Eastern, European, or American law faculties. Thus, *Arkan* did not apply a comparative approach to the assessment of Palestinian legal education. Instead, a methodology was adopted that focused on the uniqueness of the Palestinian legal system by attempting to answer a number of specific questions related to the system. Discussions revealed that the development of legal education in Palestine is high on the list of priorities for legal education practitioners and other stakeholders.

This study is comprised of information collected during a series of field visits and meetings *Arkan* conducted with deans, professors, law students², and librarians. Information was also collected through questionnaires designed and distributed by *Arkan*. Questions addressed issues related to academic plans, teaching methodologies, and the courses teaching staff envision important to be included in their curricula. *Arkan* also assessed the priority material needs of each of the law faculties to identify what was necessary to support the development of the teaching process.

The assessment examined the following:

- The purpose of legal education in Palestine;
- The goals of each university's academic plan;
- Graduation requirements;
- Legal skills and expertise that are being and should be provided by legal education in Palestine;
- Skills acquired through legal education;
- The extent that the university's academic plan reflects the practical situation in Palestine; and
- The extent that curricula and academic plans contribute to building the legal capacities of law students.

To answer these questions and assess areas for improvement for each partner law school, *Arkan*.³

- 1) Reviewed each partner law faculty's curricula and academic programs, including teaching methodologies, libraries and legal research capabilities, and available teaching aid resources;
- 2) Reviewed preliminary observations on the curricula and academic programs with the partner law faculties;

² In addition, *Arkan* met with law students to identify their views, opinions, expectations and suggestions regarding the legal education process. In preparing this report *Arkan* used opinions and suggestions of the students' focus groups and survey. Details covering students perceptions are provided in a separate report submitted to USAID, see *Developing Legal Education in Palestinian Universities – Students' Perspectives*.

³ Until the end of September 2005, *Arkan*'s partner law faculties in this effort were: the law faculties of Al Quds University, Al Azhar University, Birzeit University and An Najah University. In early October 2005, the Law Faculty of the Arab American University of Jenin joined this effort when it was incorporated into the activities of *Arkan*.

- 3) Provided recommendations for addressing deficiencies and devised preliminary academic/curricula interventions aimed at improving law faculty performance;
- 4) Discussed technical, financial and other assistance needed to achieve the aspired reforms; and
- 5) Worked closely with faculty deans and professors to encourage them to design and present a development plan for each faculty, taking into account the specific and varying considerations and circumstances of each law faculty, as well as the general plan for legal education in Palestine.

In order to achieve the goals aspired by this study, and to make a modest contribution to the development and upgrading of legal education in Palestine, *Arkan*, in collaboration with partner law faculties, will regularly review progress made in implementing the recommendations put forth in this study and will report on the course of its performance. It is envisioned that the study will serve as a useful tool for law faculties to use to actively update and modernize legal education in their faculties.

SECTION III: PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Findings and Recommendations

This section reviews the academic situation in the five partner Palestinian faculties of law: Al-Quds, Birzeit, An Najah, Al-Azhar and the Arab American University.⁴

As mentioned earlier in this report, this section is a compilation of data provided by partner faculties' staff (deans, management, professors, librarians, etc.) and observations made by students. The project organized a number of meetings and workshops to present relevant segments of the draft report to each faculty and staff members to receive their feedback, suggestions for amendments and to clarify some points that the project took into account when developing this final version.

This section discusses and provides recommendations for improvement for each law faculty in the following areas:

- Academic plans and curriculum;
- Management of legal education;
- Teaching staff;
- Teaching methods and course outlines;
- Library; and
- Students.

⁴ The part covering the faculties of law in the universities of Al-Quds, Al-Azhar, Birzeit and An-Najah describes the academic situation until the end of August 2005.

A. Al Quds University Faculty of Law

<http://www.alquds.edu>

Al Quds University Law Faculty, which is located in East Jerusalem, was established in 1992 under the name Palestinian Faculty of Law; it was incorporated into Al-Quds University structure in 1995. It offers both BA and MA degrees in law.

At the Faculty, law is taught in a traditional manner; it is similar to the teaching methods used in most Arab universities and law schools, such as in Jordan and Egypt. The legal education objectives of the law faculty, and the teaching methods employed, need to be refocused to equip future legal practitioners with the practical skills needed to meet their clients' needs and effectively communicate with their communities. Graduates of the law school should acquire practical skills that make them strong and efficient lawyers and members of the judicial system.

A1. Academic Plans and Curriculum

Academic planning. With the exception of some sporadic ideas that need a time framework and assessment of available human and material resources, Al Quds University Law Faculty does not have any general development plan for the next years.

Curriculum. Graduation in this faculty requires successful completion of 143 credit hours, of which 23 credit hours are dedicated to university requirements; the remaining hours are dedicated for law faculty, specialization, and support requirements. In addition to these courses, students must work a set number of hours with a legal practitioner in a court in order to graduate.

Most courses lack any focus on practical skills development. Notwithstanding the applied courses, like judicial applications, practical skills courses are offered as elective subjects. In addition, the law faculty and students do not benefit from the experiences of high-caliber judges because there is no plan for cooperation between the law faculty and the Supreme Judicial Council. Furthermore, judges are not allowed to teach.

Facilities. The law faculty is not housed in its own independent building and lacks adequate space and equipment for its students who share the small lecture rooms with students from other faculties.

Recommendation: Reduce the number of university required credit hours (currently 23 credit hours). Some of the credit hours can be shifted for new courses tailored to the needs of law students.

University course requirements (23 credit hours) are a heavy load for students, especially because there is no coordination between the university and law faculty. Coordination between the university and law faculty should focus on strengthening the practical skills of students, including their English and critical thinking skills.

Arkan discussed reducing the number of credit hours from 143 to 134; cutting the nine credit hours from the university requirements. Law faculty management and professors welcomed the suggestion.

A2. Management of Legal Education

The faculty of law enjoys a considerable amount of independence from university with noticeable freedom in decision-making. The President of the university encourages all initiatives by the Law Faculty Dean and professors alike. However, this freedom is not taken advantage of by faculty members.

Recommendations: To fully take advantage of this freedom, the faculty needs to take proactive initiatives for the future development of the law school. This could include working hand in hand with the University administration to outsource funding to cover technical and support resources needed to develop the law school.

A3. Teaching Staff

There are 12 full-time professors; eight with PhDs and the other four with master's degrees. Additionally, there are on average five part-time professors per semester. Only three professors are fluent in, and use, English in class and for research purposes, which makes it difficult to improve the skills of students. Moreover, most professors do not use email to communicate with their students and some of them do not use the Internet or computers at all. This makes their job more difficult, especially for those professors teaching at the post-graduate program.

Law professors teach 16 credit hours per semester on average --a heavy burden compared to the average of 12 credit hours at the Arab American University. Law professors also teach a wide variety of levels—undergraduate, post-graduate, and evening courses.

Recommendations: Develop faculty skills in English language,⁵ computer, and internet. Increase faculty members' interaction with the local and international communities so as to expose them to modern practices and to develop their legal community skills.

Professors will greatly benefit from enhanced computer and internet capabilities, and should, as they did with the English language courses, organize similar courses for basic computer skills. The development of computer and internet skills will help connect professors at Al Quds with other law professors regionally and internationally, which will facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge. It will also give professors access to greater research resources. Naturally, the benefits of these skills go beyond just the professors; students will greatly benefit as well.

It is also recommended that faculty members participate more in conferences, seminars and events in Palestine and abroad. Faculty members can also play a greater role in their communities. The Law Faculty can benefit from its location and standing as the only Palestinian university in Jerusalem to play a greater role in the community.

⁵ Al Quds has committed to developing its faculty's English language capabilities. Following discussions with *Arkan*, professors took the initiative and enrolled in an English language course.

There is agreement among Al Quds law faculty and the *Arkan* team that students will benefit from courses focused on English language for lawyers. The faculty also should consider developing students' legal research skills. This could be done by integrating legal research skills development into other courses. For example, Al Quds is proposing to add a legal and legislative drafting course to its curriculum. In order to make optimal use of this course, the course should be simplified and designed to develop basic skills that help students research and find legal data and not focus only on research theories and methodologies.

A4. Teaching Methods and Course Outlines

Most law professors working in the university were employed right after graduation and did not have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills, especially in terms of teaching methodologies. Some law professors were offered limited opportunities for professional development through exchange programs with American law schools through the USAID-funded Rule of Law Project⁶. The program's training was brief and aimed at introducing the law professors to new teaching methods rather than providing them with training to build their skills to become better teachers.

Consequently, most professors do not have a solid understanding of some of the teaching methods, and therefore, do not use them in the classroom. In addition, they have not received the training necessary to properly use new and interactive teaching methods, such as the Socratic Method, moot courts and simulations.

Some professors—especially those who previously visited the U.S. or other countries—do attempt to develop their students' legal research skills and stimulate debate. However, professors still heavily rely on textbooks and lectures as the main tool and method of teaching.

Recommendations: Increase the number of courses focusing on legal research and research techniques. Introduce new courses focused on practical skills development and applied subjects. Increase the number of credit hours in English language classes for legal professionals.

The law faculty agrees on the necessity of increasing the number of legal research and practical skills courses, as well as English language classes for lawyers in the law school. The faculty should also integrate legal research skills development into other courses.

Faculty management and professors showed commitment to introducing the following subjects in their plan:

- Intellectual property;
- Judiciary – theoretical and applied aspects;
- Rules of legal and legislative drafting;
- Professional ethics and practices (aspects related to judges and lawyers); and

⁶ This project was implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1999 – 2004.

- Computer and Internet crimes.

In addition, they are committed to incorporating logical thinking exercises into university courses that are especially tailored for the needs of the students and the faculty of law.

There is a clear desire among a large number of professors to participate in discussions on developing teaching methods. Technical assistance and training provided by *Arkan* is expected to improve the professors' teaching performances by building their skills. Professors are also encouraged to participate in the strategic planning that *Arkan* will organize with the law faculty management on curriculum development. Professors have seized the opportunity made available by *Arkan* to develop the teaching methods they apply, including use of applied or practical cases, case studies, and moot courts.

In addition, no supporting teaching aids are being used in the law faculty either because of the lack thereof or because professors are not accustomed to using them.

A5. Library

The law library is separate from the university's main library and located in a different location. The library is small and lacks sufficient space. The library has 4,500 books, including 3,300 in Arabic, 750 in English and 470 in French.

The library hall is also used as a meeting room for administration and faculty members because there is no other alternative given the lack in space. This is an important point as it constitutes an obstacle to optimal use of such resources.

Recommendations: Dedicate adequate space for the law library and improve its legal resources. In particular, the library needs to improve the quality and increase the quantity of its legal resources, such as books and legal periodicals, and to explore the feasibility of sharing resources with other law school libraries.

Library staff participated in legal librarian workshops organized by *Arkan*. In addition, an assessment of the law library was completed by *Arkan*. The assessment's recommendations included the development of a materials exchange and borrowing system between law libraries.⁷

The Dean, professors and librarians have repeatedly expressed the need for assistance in increasing the library's legal resources, including law texts and other literature.

A6. Students

471 students are enrolled in Al Quds University's law faculty with 45 registered in the MA program. The gender composition is 297 male students and 174 females.

There are some activities organized by students and supported by the faculty on an ad-hoc basis. Some CSOs occasionally organize or participate in university activities.

⁷ See *Arkan's*: "Legal Research and Law Library Review", *Arkan*, June 2005.

The law faculty does not have a law student association or any sort of body that looks after the students' affairs or contributes to their skills development.

Admission to the law school is based on the student's *tawjihi* (high school certificate) grade. The minimum grade acceptable is 65 percent. In addition to the *tawjihi* score, Al Quds also conducts personal interviews as part of its admission requirements.

Recommendations: Foster development of the law student's association. Develop clear admission criteria to the law school. Introduce advanced English language courses.

There are plans to establish a law students' association with assistance from *Arkan*. This association will aim to contribute to the improvement of communication between the students and dean, professors and the community at large.

Al Quds law faculty is the only law school that requires a personal interview as part of its admission criteria. However, it is still necessary to further develop admission criteria to be more specific, allowing the university to be more selective in its admission of students and select the best students for its faculty.

While the university does offer English courses, the current classes do not fulfill the needs of students. Students would benefit from advanced course offerings in the English language.

B. Al-Azhar University Faculty of Law

<http://www.alazhar.edu.ps>

In 1992 the Law and Islamic Shari'a Faculty was established at Al Azhar University; later on in 1993 it became the Faculty of Law at Al-Azhar University. It is located in Gaza city and offers a BA degree in law.

Al Azhar University's law education is mostly based on the traditional Egyptian model of teaching law. It is necessary to review the teaching methodologies applied in the faculty and develop a new academic plan that helps students acquire skills necessary to become capable lawyers able to effectively communicate with their communities. It is imperative that graduates acquire practical skills that improve their efficiency and performance in their practice as lawyers or as part of the justice system.

B1. Academic Plans and Curriculum

Academic Plan. Al Azhar University Law Faculty's academic plan is quite similar to those of Egyptian universities. A thorough analysis of the academic plan reveals that it has not changed much over the years; a few theoretical courses have been replaced by others.

The current plan includes 148 credit hours, which is a heavy course load for students--even excellent ones. So, if the course load is heavy for excellent students, what is the case for the average students or those students facing difficulties?

The academic plan is dominated by legal subject courses and lacks practical skills courses, including English language courses. Only three hours are dedicated to Arabic language, as part of the university requirements.

Facilities. Class sizes are large, despite efforts over the past two years to reduce the number of students in classes. On average, there are no less than 60 students in lectures—especially in first and second year law courses. The large class sizes hinder discussion and exchange of opinions and ideas. The large class sizes are largely due to insufficient number of available rooms and the lack of adequate number of professors. Additional space for lecture halls and hiring more professors would surely help solve the problem.

In addition, the resources and text books are obsolete and not being updated. For example, many of the books do not include new laws enacted by the PNA. Some professors, on the other hand, do make a personal effort to introduce new laws in the classroom and update the material as such. There are no standards or criteria applied to text books selected for and used by the law school. Generally, the selection of teaching materials is decided upon by each individual professor.

Recommendations: Reduce the number of credit hours. Include practical and applied subjects in the academic plan.

In discussions with former deans of the faculty of law and the current acting-dean, there was a clear agreement on the need to introduce new courses aimed at developing practical skills in the new academic plan.

It is necessary to reduce the number of credit hours in the academic plan; the current 148 credit hour requirement constitutes a heavy course load for students. Moreover, the plan generally includes "traditional" law courses, but lacks practical or applied subjects that would otherwise help students acquire skills for the practice of law. It is therefore recommended that a number of elective hours (6 – 9 hours) are dedicated for practical skills courses.

Some of the courses offered within the current plan should become electives, while students would benefit from the credit hours of other courses being reduced. For example, the theoretical course, "History of Law", could be reduced to one or two credit hours.

Credit hours assigned to classes are generally higher than the norm, and the courses, in general, are theoretical. For example, 21 credit hours are dedicated to the subject of penal law and procedures:

- Criminology and Penal codes 3 hours
- General penal codes (1) 3 hours
- General penal codes (2) 3 hours
- Special penal codes (1) 3 hours
- Special penal codes (2) 3 hours
- Criminal procedures (1) 3 hours
- Criminal procedures (2) 3 hours

Other courses, such as forced execution and private international law are also allocated several credit hours, despite the purely theoretical nature of the courses. *Arkan* suggests that the faculty reduce the number of these credit hours, or introduce more applied and practical aspects to the courses.

As can be seen in the criminal procedures courses listed above, many courses have been divided into two parts without any clear academic justification, except for the fact that subjects are presented the same way in Egyptian university academic plans. This was done pursuant to requests by professors; but this increases their academic burden.

B2. Management of Legal Education

Decision-making is highly centralized and, as a result, impedes the possibilities for professional, academic, and institutional development. Many professors reported the existence of external factors that impact on the whole academic process, including admission and exams. It is, therefore, essential that the faculty members enjoy independent administration and decision-making so that they can contribute more to school development.

The Law Faculty does not communicate with the Palestinian legal community, such as the judiciary, Palestinian Bar Association, the Ministry of Justice or non-

governmental organizations. This aspect needs to be vitalized. The Faculty, which is the only body providing legal education in the Gaza Strip, does not take advantage of its special place in Palestinian society by organizing legal events like conferences, workshops and others. Such activities could be quite beneficial for the law faculty's professors and students, as well as the community at large.

Recommendation: The Law School and faculty should have more weight and independence in administration and decision making. In particular, the University President and the University Council should explore the possibility of delegating more decision making authority to the Dean and Faculty Council in areas related to academic planning, hiring and firing of law professors as well as faculty development and exposure to modern practices and legal developments through participation in international conferences and symposia. For development efforts to succeed, faculty and school management, currently involved in efforts to upgrade faculty skills, diversify teachings methods and involve students in said efforts, should enjoy an increased degree of academic liberty to put acquired skills and reformed teaching techniques to test.

B3. Teaching Staff

The Faculty of Law employs 20 university professors; 14 have PhDs in law while the other four hold Masters degrees. All professors are full-time, which is unique among the Palestinian law schools and one of the most important strengths that Al Azhar has compared to other law faculties.

About 50% of the professors do not use computers and are not knowledgeable in the use of the Internet. This deprives them of the ability to be up-to-date on the latest legal developments. More than half of the professors do not know a second language. This hinders their ability to communicate with foreign universities and teaching staff, and deprives them from using and benefiting from reference materials in foreign languages. Thus, they, as well as their students, remain confined to the limited amount of materials available in Arabic.

Recommendation: Develop skills of professors in English language, computer, and teaching methodologies. Encourage professors to research and write.

Law professors are the pillars of their faculties; therefore, it is important to dedicate resources to the continuing education of professors and development of their skills. Developing the skills professor is important to the improvement of the overall performance of the law faculty and quality of graduates--therefore giving graduates better opportunities to succeed in the labor market.

The heavy teaching load at Al Azhar University does not allow law professors the time to write or publish their work. Professors should be encouraged to research and write. Original research by Palestinian professors on Palestinian laws will provide the university with teaching material relevant to Palestine. One way to encourage professors to perform research would be to promote joint-research projects with colleagues or professors from other Palestinian law faculties.

The law faculty should also consider recruiting young professors, including new graduates, to teach at the faculty. This will help share the burden of course loads and allow professors more time to research, write and develop other skills. New professors should be provided with training by their colleagues and others on interactive teaching methodologies and legal research.

Professors reported that faculty-community interaction and communication are weak. Improving communication between the faculty of law and the community—whether through workshops or legal awareness activities—would increase the public’s confidence in the law and legal institutions, as well as improve the status of the legal profession. Outreach activities may be organized by the faculty on its own or in collaboration with the PBA, Supreme Judicial Council, governmental and non-governmental organizations, or private sector organizations. Forming a law professors’ association would also foster such outreach activities and promote interaction with the community.

Additionally, Al Azhar University law professors have little opportunity to participate in international, regional and local conferences. Many such opportunities have been missed, although they could have contributed to building professors’ capacities, because of the lack of sufficient funding to secure participation therein. Active participation, as opposed to simply attending, in local and international legal conferences would help law professors keep up-to-date on the latest developments in law and teaching law.

B4. Teaching Methods and Course Outlines

In general, professors rely on the textbooks "approved" for each course as the core of their curricula without trying to develop or adding new ones. Professors deliver the information to their students through lecturing and, students are required to regurgitate what was said in lectures by their professors on their exams. This limits their ability to analyze and apply critical thinking, especially in the first two years. Discussions with professors and students revealed a limited variation of teaching methods and the absence of modern techniques.

Recommendations: Increase the number of courses focusing on legal research and research techniques. Introduce new courses focused on practical skills development and applied subjects.

The law faculty agrees on the necessity of increasing the number of legal research and practical skills courses in the law school.

Faculty management and professors showed commitment to introducing the following subjects in their plan:

- Intellectual property;
- Judiciary – theoretical and applied aspects;
- Rules of legal and legislative drafting;
- Professional ethics and practices (aspects related to judges and lawyers); and
- Computer and Internet crimes.

In addition, they are committed to incorporating logical thinking exercises into university courses that are especially tailored for the needs of law students and faculty members.

There is a clear desire among a large number of professors to participate in discussions on developing teaching methods. Technical assistance and training provided by *Arkan* is expected to improve the professors' teaching performances by building their skills. Professors are also encouraged to participate in the strategic planning that *Arkan* will organize with the law faculty management on curriculum development.

B5. Library

The law faculty's library is part of the university's general library. Law books are not separated into their own section, nor is the librarian specialized in legal librarianship. It is unclear as to how many legal books the faculty has; however, a brief assessment of the library showed that the library generally lacks modern reference materials, books, literature, and periodicals.

Recommendations: Dedicate adequate space for the law library. Improve skills of library staff. Improve legal resources available in library.

Library staff participated in legal librarian workshops organized by *Arkan*. In addition, an assessment of the law library was completed by *Arkan* Law Librarian and Legal Research Specialist. The assessment recommendations included the development of a materials exchange and borrowing system between law libraries.

The Dean, professors, and librarians have repeatedly expressed the need for assistance in increasing the library's legal resources, including law texts and other literature.

B6. Students

There are 1,150 students enrolled at the Faculty of Law: 915 males and 235 females. The Faculty does not provide any extra curricular academic activities that would contribute to serving students, developing their skills, and raising their legal awareness and knowledge. There is also an absence of socio-academic student bodies and unions.

There is not a clear criterion for admission into the law faculty. *Tawjihi* scores are used; the faculty reported that the minimum score required for admission is 60%.

Recommendations: Foster development of the law student's association. Develop clear admission criteria to the law school. Introduce advanced English language courses.

The establishment of a law students' association, with assistance from *Arkan*, has been planned. This association is supposed to contribute to the improvement of communication between the students and the dean, professors, and the community at large.

While the university does offer English courses, the classes currently offered do not fulfill the needs of students. Students would benefit from advanced course offerings in the English language.

C. Birzeit University Faculty of Law and Public Administration

<http://www.birzeit.edu/>

Birzeit University's Faculty of Law and Public Administration, which is located at Birzeit, began offering courses in the 2004-2005 scholastic year. For this reason, there is some reservation about the usefulness of assessing its performance at this early stage. That said, Birzeit University has benefited from the experiences of other faculties and the Institute of Law at Birzeit University. The Faculty of Law and Public Administration has also had access to a number of experts in legal and university education from local, regional, and international levels who have helped to design and develop its program and curriculum.

C1. Academic Plans and Curriculum

The faculty took a unique approach to legal education by providing two specializations--Law and Public Administration-- under one faculty. There are different opinions among Palestinian academics on the wisdom of providing two specializations in the same faculty. Some reject the idea because it has not been done in the Arab world. Is this preliminary rejection justified? Is it based on scientific criteria, logic, or clear academic reasons? Or is it just a refusal of new ideas? The coming years may help us answer these questions.

Academic plan and credit hours. Students in this faculty are required to complete 134 credit hours to graduate with a BA in law, including 21 credit hours of university requirements. In the academic plan, the Faculty included a number of practical courses and others that aim to develop different skills of students.

Recommendations: To revisit the academic plan after the first year of implementation and assess its effectiveness and usefulness.

The academic course load is reasonable for faculty and students, and not heavier than other undergraduate degrees. The academic plan also includes many practical courses that aim to improve students' skills. This is quite a new method in Palestine and the future will show how effective it is.

C2. Management of Legal Education

The university supports the independence of the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. The law faculty takes advantage of this freedom by initiating cooperation with the Palestinian community and other faculties of law. However, because the law faculty is still new, it is still too early to make an objective evaluation of the university's management of the law faculty.

C3. Teaching Staff

There is an insufficient number of teaching staff in the law department at the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. The faculty has only four full-time law professors and one professor for public administration. The gap is filled through a number of part-time professors, including Institute of Law staff.

Faculty members have computer and Internet skills in addition to being fluent in foreign languages. This opens up new opportunities for cooperation and communication with other universities nationally and abroad. The Faculty has the advantage of having a group of young professors and is expected to invest in its teaching staff.

Recommendations: Hire more full-time professors.

Language and computer skills. Most of the full and part-time professors in the faculty are fluent in English and capable of using computers. Students and teachers communicate using the Internet, including through the Ritaj inter-university network, which is used by all of the professors in the university.

C4. Teaching Methods and Course Outlines

Most professors try to apply modern techniques and diversified teaching methods. However, there are two major problems: professors, in general, are not trained to use diversified teaching methods like the Socratic Method, simulation, and moot courts. They need to build their capacities in this area. Moreover, the part time professors usually apply the techniques they utilize in other colleges and universities, which may need more diversity and updating.

Recommendations: Improve teaching methodologies. Introduce moot courts competitions.

Many of the professors in the faculty are new graduates, which is the strength of the law faculty in that the professors are open to new ideas and approaches to teaching. However, they lack experience in interactive teaching methods and need more opportunities to improve their skills in practical and applied subjects.

The faculty would benefit by using moot courts as part of its educational program. The faculty, however, does not have moot court equipment. Nevertheless, professors can still integrate moot courts into their courses.

As regards the academic plan, it includes diversified subjects including some of the course we recommended for other faculties, such as:

- Professional ethics;
- Applied and practical courses;
- English language;
- Legal research;
- Alternative dispute resolution methods; and
- Legal drafting.

C5. Library

Birzeit's law library (used by both the Institute of Law and Faculty of Law and Public Administration) is the largest law library in Palestine with 12,000 legal books in Arabic, English, and French. The library also has adequate space to host law students and students from other faculties.

The law library is also the most advanced library in Palestine in terms of services offered and technology. The library offers computers for students to use the Internet, check the library's index, read materials and use other applications. In addition, the library houses the *Al Muqtafi Database*, developed and produced by the Institute of Law. Through this database, students can search and access Palestinian legislation.

Recommendations: Continue to obtain updated legal books and periodicals.

The Faculty of Law's library is the one of the few specialized legal libraries in Palestine. It must continue to commit resources to keep the library's books and resources updated and current.

C6. Students

There is maximum limit of 135 students enrolled in the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. The faculty does not face any problems related to space or overcrowding, for the time being at least. However, the Institute of Law building, which currently provides lecturing space, cannot absorb new students. This can be solved by establishing a special building for the faculty of law and public administration.

Students also formed their first student body (a student club) prior to the creation of the Law students association, in cooperation with students from other universities; this was accomplished by first year students.

Like other law schools, students are admitted based on their *tawjihi* scores and grade average in secondary education. No other criteria are applied.

Recommendations: Form a law students' association. Develop additional admission criteria for students.

D. An Najah National University Faculty of Law

<http://www.najah.edu/>

In 1994, An Najah National University established its Faculty of Law, which began offering courses in 1995. The Faculty of Law is located in Nablus and offers both BA and MA degrees in law.

D1. Academic Plans and Curriculum

An Najah law students are required to complete 143 credit hours for graduation, 23 of which are university requirements. This is a heavy course load for law students.

The law faculty has made efforts to develop its program by introducing new courses into its curriculum. However, the new courses are still heavily focused on theory, and the academic plan still lacks courses that provide practical skills development and or expose students to new skills.

The faculty does not have a comprehensive academic plan that covers academic and administrative aspects. It is more of a list of courses. Organizing a workshop to review the current academic plan would be in the interest of the faculty, as it would also ensure participation of all faculty members in the plan's development.

Recommendations: Reduce the number of credit hours required. Introduce new courses focused on practical skills development.

The number of credit hours required to graduate from An Najah University is especially high. The plan requires 143 credit hours of coursework, including 23 hours of university requirements. At the same time, there is a need for more practical skills courses in the curriculum. Rather than adding more courses and credit hours, elective hours can be used to introduce the new courses.

D2. Management of Legal Education

The An Najah University is a firmly established university in Nablus, and has a centralized management tradition. This management style has reportedly contributed to limiting the potential of evolution and creativity of the law school; and, therefore, needs to be reconsidered.

The Faculty of Law rarely participates in or organizes legal conferences and seminars. On average, it holds two seminars in Nablus on public and legal issues. According to the faculty, they have limited resources to organize regular conferences and seminars. In addition, the travel restrictions in Nablus hinder law faculty and students from participating in events outside of Nablus, and for legal professionals from outside of Nablus to attend conferences in Nablus.

In addition, communication and outreach between the Law Faculty and academic and research centers and the Palestinian legal community (judiciary, PBA, MOJ, and CSOs) are poor.

Recommendations: Adequate degree of freedom in managing legal education is needed. In particular, the President and University Council should explore the possibility of decentralizing decision making and allowing the Law Faculty council to take action in areas related to academic planning, hiring and firing etc. In addition, the University Council should encourage the dean of the law school to communicate and network more local educational and civil society institutions.

D3. Teaching Staff

The Law Faculty employs 13 full-time law professors holding Masters or PhD degrees. On average, five part-time professors join the law faculty per semester to lecture on varying subjects as required by the law faculty.

Approximately 70 percent of the professors do not use computers and email to communicate with their students. Only about three professors are proficient in the English language. Lack of language proficiency in a second language hinders the potential for communication and work with universities and professors abroad.

Three members of the teaching staff publish legal research or write legal books. The Dean of the faculty explained this by citing the lack of rigorous legal publications in Palestine and insufficient space available in the University's journal to fulfill the considerable publication need of the faculty members.

On average, law professors at the An Najah University Law Faculty teach 17 credit hours, though some teach as many as 21 credit hours. This heavy workload is due to the fact that the teaching staff lectures in all graduate and bachelors of Arts programs. As a result, professors do not have sufficient time to dedicate effort to research or diversify their teaching.

Recommendations: Improve community outreach and participate in local and international conferences. Develop language, computer, and teaching skills.

The faculty has a number of professors with PhDs; however, approximately 70 percent of the professors do not use computers and email to communicate with their students. As explained above, developing language, computer, and interactive teaching skills is necessary to improve the level of legal education at the university.

Enhancing communication between the faculty members and the Palestinian community in Nablus, has several important benefits, including finding appropriate externship opportunities for their students, and ensuring teaching responds to community needs. Participation of professors in national and international conferences also has benefits, which include meeting other law professors and learning from their research and teaching experiences.

D4. Teaching Methods and Course Outlines

Generally, many professors do not diversify their teaching methods and techniques. No professors use interactive teaching methods, such as in-class simulations, moot courts, or Socratic methods in the classroom; though some try to vary their techniques by using different traditional methods, such as lecturing, research, and discussion. These professors, however, are still the exception. Nonetheless, these efforts are encouraging and could serve as the cornerstone for positive change in teaching methods that could be adopted by other professors as well.

Professors rely mainly on local university compiled textbooks and syllabi used by other faculties. There are not any clear criteria for the selection of university textbooks although the University and faculty administration show flexibility in this regard.

Recommendations: Integrate case studies, simulations, moot courts, and other interactive teaching methods into the classroom.

In order to improve the analytical and practical skills of law students and prepare them for the practice of law or to serve as judges, consultants, or legal researchers, An Najah University's law faculty should use interactive teaching methods such as moot courts, case studies, and simulations.

As for the content of the academic plan, as shown in the outline and taught subjects, there is a need to include in the curricula some of the following courses:

- Intellectual property;
- Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms including arbitration;
- Professional ethics and practices;
- Legal and legislative drafting; and
- Legal research.

D5. Library

The law library is included within the general library of An Najah University. It has about 4,480 legal books. A small library was set up in the new premises of the Faculty of Law with only 300 legal books.

Access to the library is problematic due to its location in the old campus of An Najah University (the Faculty of Law was moved to the new premises). Transportation is needed to move from the Faculty to the library, which limits students (and professors) access to and use of the library.

Recommendations: Create a separate law library with up-to-date legal resources.

One of the problems facing the faculty is the lack of its own library. Building its own library would be extremely beneficial for both the faculty and student body. In addition, the university should consider linking with other law libraries in Palestine in order to share resource through an inter-library borrowing arrangement.

D6. Students

The Faculty of Law has 420 students on its new campus, which is shared with the Faculty of Fine Arts. There were an average of 50 students per lecture last semester; the large class size makes it an unsuitable environment for active discussion and participation.

Like other faculties of law, An Najah Law Faculty does not have a student association that focuses on legal issues. The student associations on campus are usually concerned with political and general academic matters.

Admission to the Law Faculty is based on the *tawjihi* score. In order to enroll in the faculty, students must score at least 80 percent on the *tawjihi*—a competitive score. This is good, but it is necessary to consider other requirements for admission as well.

Recommendations: Develop language skills. Revise admission criteria for students. Encourage students to participate in legal and community activities.

Students should also develop their English skills. The university can assist in this by offering English courses tailored for law students as part of its electives package.

Personal interviews would strengthen An Najah University's law school admission criteria and make the faculty more competitive and selective.

E. The Arab American University of Jenin Faculty of Law

<http://www.aauj.edu>

The Arab American University of Jenin, which started offering courses in 2000, established its Faculty of Law in 2002. The faculty is located on the university campus, which is located near the village of Al Zababdeh nearing the district of Jenin. It offers a BA degree in Law.

E1. Academic Plans and Curriculum

Academic plans and course credits. The Law Faculty at AAUJ uses an academic plan which was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2005. According to this plan, students must successfully complete 135 credit hours to graduate, including 24 hours for university requirements, 30 credit hours of college requirements, 75 credit hours for specialization, and six credit hours for electives.

Most courses offered at the law faculty do not focus on practical skills development. The faculty does offer some applied courses, including judicial applications; however, these are offered only as elective subjects. Like other universities, the faculty cannot benefit from hosting judges as lecturers due to restrictions imposed by the Supreme Judicial Council on the ability of judges to teach.

Facilities. Unlike other faculties, this faculty does not face issues related to space or availability of lecture halls. Lectures are held in the same building that hosts the Faculty of Law and the dean's office as well.

AAUJ adopted an amended academic plan for the Faculty of Law in 2005. The revised plan focuses on teaching new subjects, such as public international law (in English) and private international law. The plan aims to equip students with the basic skills needed to practice law. That said, the plan should put more emphasis on introducing practical and applied skills to the curriculum. The freedom allowing the Dean to make decisions to improve the teaching process will undoubtedly serve as an important catalyst to achieving change.

Recommendations: Leave the current course credit requirement as is; however, adjust to include more practical and applied skills, and legal research courses.

The academic load is reasonable and not heavier than that of students in other undergraduate specializations. This gives the faculty more flexibility to amend, delete or add courses to respond to the need for more courses dedicated to practical and applied skills development and to focus on the use of modern techniques in legal teaching and research.

E2. Management of Legal Education

The faculty of law enjoys considerable freedom and liberty in decision-making related to its legal education. The university's president also encourages initiatives proposed by the law school dean and professors.

E3. Teaching Staff

The law faculty has an adequate number of full-time professors. This is an important factor in the consideration of planning and development of individual skills and knowledge of faculty members. The faculty of law has 11 full-time professors; five of whom hold PhD's and the other six hold master's degree. On average, it employs one additional part-time teacher per semester.

Professors have diverse language skills, including fluency in German, Russian, English, and French. Professors' language skill development should be encouraged as it also plays an important role in developing the language skills of students. All professors have computer skills and most (8 out of 11 professors) communicate with their students using the Internet and email. The remaining three professors do not use the internet at all.

Professors teach about 12 credit hours per semester, which is a moderate work load for professors.

Recommendations: Encourage additional language, Internet, and email training for professors lacking those skills.

Most AAUJ professors are fluent in a second language and in use of computers. In addition, most professors and students communicate by email. The three professors lacking internet and email skills should receive training.

E4. Teaching Methods and Course Outlines

Until recent activities with *Arkan*, AAUJ's professors did not have much exposure to interactive teaching methods. One third of the professors began teaching right after graduating, and therefore, did not have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills, especially those related to different methodologies. The remaining two-thirds of the professors did have some prior experience teaching at other universities; however, they have not been exposed to different teaching methods.

In addition, there is a lack of teaching tools, though some professors are familiar with them through their experience of using them at other universities.

E5. Library

The Law Faculty has its own section in the University's library. The Law Faculty's section is comprised of about 3,500 legal books, including 3,000 in Arabic and 500 in English. The Law Faculty also has access to computers located in the library where students can check and search the library index, browse, and read Internet pages. The faculty intends to have a separate library in the future, when an independent building is constructed for the law faculty.

Recommendations: To allocate a special space to the law school library when the new faculty building is designed and built.

The University has a plan to dedicate an independent space for the library of the Faculty of Law upon construction of the faculty's premises and with the objective of setting up one of the most specialized legal libraries in Palestine.

E6. Students

There are currently 328 law students at the AAUJ. 261 students are male, and 67 students are female.

Law students have a student club which is certified by the Student's Affairs Office. The club works with social, cultural, political and academic affairs on campus. Some students organize activities, which the faculty encourages; however, the participation of civil society organizations in university activities is rare.

Admission criteria are similar to those of other universities: students are required to have a minimum score of 65 percent in their secondary education marks.

Recommendations: Develop additional admission criteria for students.

The admission criteria for students are secondary school grades. This may not be enough as is the case in other faculties.

Students have expressed a strong willingness to participate in the different activities of the *Arkan* project. The project will hold more meetings and seminars to introduce students to different practical and other skills to prepare them well for their career. It will also work with students to devise legal awareness activities to be carried out by the students in the university and the community.