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PRESS RELEASE

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UNIGE and Al-Quds join forces for humanitarian medicine

UNIGE and Al-Quds University have formalised a five-year Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen scientific collaboration.

Stimulating exchanges between scientists and contributing to the redevelopment of a health education system in Gaza — largely devastated by war — are the core objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and Al-Quds University (AQU) in Jerusalem. The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration in public health, particularly in humanitarian contexts, and to promote the sharing of expertise, notably in view of Gaza’s future reconstruction plan.

Signed on 17 November 2025, the MoU links the [Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Studies](#) at UNIGE’s Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Public Health at AQU, one of the most important Palestinian universities (12,000 students). Building on their respective areas of expertise, the agreement will foster scientific cooperation — including joint research, data sharing and thematic analyses — and support the training of future leaders in humanitarian programmes and organisations. It also foresees the organisation of conferences and seminars, as well as access to scientific resources. This research-focused partnership does not include student mobility.

“By providing high-level academic expertise, this partnership aligns with what the University can offer in this context to contribute to current and future needs in Gaza,” says Stéphane Berthet, Vice-Rector of UNIGE, in charge of international and inter-institutional relations.

“As a centre of academic excellence, UNIGE’s Centre for Humanitarian Studies will contribute analytical and strategic public health expertise under this MoU, working closely with our colleagues at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem,” explains Professor Karl Blanchet, director of the centre. “In this context — and within the international [Gaza Health Initiative](#) consortium — we prioritise the leadership of Palestinian actors and stand ready to provide expertise wherever it can add value to discussions on rebuilding the health system in the Gaza Strip.”

For its part, AQU will share its in-depth knowledge of the field, for example by providing health data or offering insights into local social and political dynamics. “This partnership with UNIGE reinforces our mission to strengthen public health systems, support local expertise, and provide meaningful insights that improve the wellbeing of the communities we serve,” says Dr. Hazem Agha, Dean of the Faculty of Public Health at AQU.

“We will be able to combine efforts to help rebuild Gaza’s demolished health-care system and to promote public health education. We are proud of this endeavor and excited to put this agreement into action,” says Prof. Motasem Hamdan, faculty member of health policy and management, and former vice president for academic affairs at AQU.

Created in 1998, the UNIGE Centre for Humanitarian Studies offers modular, multidisciplinary training courses combining face-to-face and distance learning, enabling it to remain close to the field while providing academic expertise. In terms of research, the centre develops evidence-based work. Finally, it aims to raise its profile in international Geneva through events and debates, with the support of UNIGE, Swiss Development Cooperation, Médecins Sans Frontières and the ICRC.

The Faculty of Public Health at AQU was established in 1997 with two branches, in Jerusalem and Gaza City. It is one of the components of the university’s health complex, alongside the faculties of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and health professions. The faculty has nearly 400 graduate and undergraduate students and 12 permanent teaching staff across both branches. It offers an undergraduate, four master’s programs and a doctoral program in public health disciplines. The Faculty of Public Health has been a member of the Associations of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER) since 2013.

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