



**The Closing Statement of the Fourth Conference on
The Harmonization between PSUT's Academic Programs and Labor Market
Requirements
March 9, 2021**

At the invitation of the Career Guidance and Alumni Affairs Office of the Deanship of Admissions and Registration at Princess Sumaya University for Technology, the Fourth National Conference (held via audio-visual communication technology) was held on "The Harmonization between PSUT's Academic Programs and Labor Market Requirements". The focus of the conference, which took place on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, was "Skills Development to Support Graduation Certificates". 146 personalities and experts participated in the conference, representing 74 companies and institutions from the government and private labor market sector. A large number of university graduates, in addition to the PSUT's vice presidents, deans and heads of academic departments, also participated. The study plans for the University's specializations, in addition to the course descriptions for the academic courses were distributed to the invitees more than a month before the start of the conference, in order to give them the opportunity to study them and make their observations.

The conference was opened under the patronage of His Excellency Prof. Mashhoor Al-Refai, President of Princess Sumaya University for Technology. In a speech delivered on behalf of Prof. Al-Refai, the Vice President for Administrative Affairs Prof. Mohammad Sababbeh, affirmed that the University had been organizing this interactive conference with the labor market for some time, based on the belief in the importance of building bridges of cooperation with the public and private sectors. The aim of the conference is to develop and improve the University's educational outcomes, and to seek fruitful networking with local, regional and international institutions and companies. The University seeks to benefit from feedback to develop and amend study plans and training programs, to bridge the gap between the academic sector and the labor market, in order to graduate highly-qualified students possessed of the academic and practical skills that ease their entry into the labor market.

The conference saw the presentation of working papers, which were presented for discussion and in-depth remarks contributed by the participants:

The government sector: A working paper presented by the Director of the Ministry of Labor's Employment Department, Dr. Awn Al-Nahar, emphasized that the general employment policy links the needs of the labor market with the outputs of education in accordance with the principle of partnership between the public and private sectors, noting its success in reducing the gap between academic outputs and industry. The

representative of the Civil Service Bureau, Mr. Amjad Namoura, stressed the need to change the concept of traditional education and move toward technical and applied education. He pointed out the importance of graduates possessing the required skills, which are a major criterion for employers in recruiting manpower. He called on university graduates to enroll in training courses that serve to enhance their capabilities and hone their practical skills, stating the importance of adopting the concept of the productive university and the consolidation theory advocated by PSUT. The working paper of Dr. Laith Al-Atoum, representing the King Abdullah II Fund for Development, alluded to the importance of developing the competitive advantage of university graduates, and encouraging them to take part in practical training projects.

Industry, trade and labor market companies: In her working paper, the representative of Orange, Eng. Rana Dababneh renewed the company's commitment to the concept of training for employment by giving Jordanian men and women the opportunity to obtain specialized technical training in the areas most in demand in the labor market. She stated Orange's intent to continue its active partnerships with PSUT, as well as offering support to entrepreneurial projects in the field of digital solutions, pointing out the importance of studying sectors with a future in the Kingdom and guiding young people to excel in them. Dr. Ala'a Nsheiwat, Chairman of the ICT Industry Skills Council and General Manager of UWallet, called through his working paper to abandon traditional education and to deal with new skills and job requirements that had already been created by technological development, and have been accelerated by the Coronavirus pandemic. Eng. Abdel Kader Abu Sneinah, Executive Director of PwC, stated in his working paper the importance of the skills and practical training that he acquired during his studies at PSUT on his dealings with the labor market, and the need to focus on training and ongoing development. Mrs. Sabah Owais, Deputy Director of the Language Center, called in her presentation for the need to direct attention to language teaching as an important factor for communication and carrying out work in many jobs, especially in the international market.

Professional trade associations: A working paper from Abdul Basit Mahmoud Saleh, a member of the Engineers Association, focused on the study plans in the Jordanian schools of engineering comparing them to their international counterparts, some of which include approximately 25 additional credit hours, where we see the inclusion of one or more courses covering each of the following areas of competencies and skills: technical, supervisory, social participatory and lifelong learning competencies that would facilitate the engineers' smooth and easy access to fields of work at the local, regional and global levels. In some areas, the number of additional credit hours is near to 30, covering topics of professional practice, as well as courses in professional ethics, the system of accreditation and qualification of engineers. It is important that the study plans and implementation strategies include a greater presence of employers and practitioners working on their formulation and implementation. He concluded that there are now an increasing number of engineers, which exceed 174,000, with the number growing at a rate of 12,000 annually. We see these points as opportunities as much as they are challenges, which require placing our engineers on the global map and transforming them from job seekers to generators of jobs and job opportunities. The working paper of Eng. Haitham Al-Rawajbah, CEO of a number of IT companies and the representative of the communications and information technology sector in the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, focused on the importance of technical education and linking the theoretical side to work.

The Higher Education Sector: Dr. Haitham Al-Hunaiti, Head of the Entrepreneurship Department at Irbid National University, presented a working paper that included the importance of entrepreneurial skills in preparing students to enter the labor market.

Graduates who have established companies and assumed leadership positions in companies: The president of PSUT's Alumni Association, Eng. Khalil Wahhab, praised the University's role in supporting its students and alumni, calling on students to focus on and develop their personal skills in addition to strengthening their grasp on their specializations and working on improving their academic and practical capabilities. The working paper of Eng. Basil Al-Khatib, a PSUT graduate representing Huawei in Dubai, called for the need to focus on skills and training, especially in the field of artificial intelligence, robotics and digital products, to enhance the capabilities of university graduates, and to adapt to the jobs of the coming years and decades. Mr. Samer Al-Jabari, a graduate of PSUT and CEO of Focus Solutions, indicated during the presentation of his working paper on the importance of training and increasing the skills of graduates and not relying on the theoretical side, as well as the need to rehabilitate older graduates with the requirements of modern technology.

The participants discussed the conditions created by the Coronavirus pandemic, the reports of the World Bank and many international bodies about the economic recession and the difficult conditions that are resulting from it, and its reflection on the new developments caused by technological progress in all fields, the disappearance of jobs, and the emergence of the need for new jobs. After discussing the working papers and the in-depth remarks that were offered by the companies, experts and participating personalities, the conference confirmed a set of recommendations that stated:

1. Importance should be given to focusing on the applied and practical side, alongside the theoretical side, when drawing up the course descriptions and study plans for specializations, in line with the rapid development that is taking place in technology worldwide.
2. Attention should be paid to building the student's skills from the moment he/she enters the University. Alongside following the study plan in the specialization, students should be given training in life skills courses, entrepreneurship and innovation, social responsibility and digital culture, business skills, development and environment, digital culture, and language skills.
3. There is a need to prepare training programs that enable the student to deal with the labor market in general, and in his/her specialization in particular, and to provide these programs in various specializations, covering all levels of local and international certificates.
4. It is necessary to study the status of specializations, and review their construction to make them flexible, and able to adapt and deal with future jobs that focus on artificial intelligence, robotics, in addition to digital jobs.
5. Focus must be put on building the student's character to become somebody who creates jobs rather than waiting for them, by spreading the culture of training, company start-up skills, innovation and creativity, and supporting the student's leanings in this area.
6. Work needs to be done on enhancing skills in scientific research and methodology, methods of analysis, and writing reports through the courses that the student studies and his/her academic curriculum.

7. Students should be encouraged, throughout the academic courses, and especially graduation projects, to provide practical and applied examples that help the student obtain skills in solving the problems facing the labor market.
8. Students should be educated about the necessity of self-development and following up on knowledge, developments occurring in technology, the labor market, and their academic specializations in order to achieve cognitive competencies that enhance their methodological competencies.
9. Importance should be given to the existence of permanent committees and building bridges for cooperation, partnership and exchange of experiences between the University and the labor market companies. This would contribute to reducing the gap between them, enhance their capabilities and achieve appropriate outputs that meet the requirements of the labor market. In addition, a national team for education, training and employment should be created, and thought should be given to the future and ways to reduce unemployment.
10. There should be a regular review of the course descriptions, updating them by adding the applications consistent with the principles of science and academic curricula, in order to keep pace with the changes taking place in the world.
11. Encouragement should be given to the arrangement of field visits and academic trips to factories and labor market institutions, in addition to student exchange programs, which enhance the capabilities and skills of the student and strengthen his/her scientific and professional knowledge.
12. Work should be done on preparing students in terms of skills, study programs, digital and life culture, in addition to preparing them psychologically so that they are optimistic, prepared and able to enter jobs in the regional and global market, and not be limited to the jobs of the local market. Work needs to be done to prepare all the requirements of this goal.
13. Work should be done to provide professional and career counseling programs that contribute to preparing the students, and draw their orientations in line with their wishes, abilities, capabilities, and future aspirations.
14. As a result of the rapid technological development, the participants suggest preparing training courses for former university graduates for the purpose of rehabilitating them and increasing their expertise in the latest developments taking place in the world.

At the conclusion of the conference, the participants expressed their thanks and appreciation for the efforts of HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, Chair of the Board of Trustees, the President of the University, and its instructors, for their distinguished initiative, which contributed to strengthening joint cooperation relations with the labor market sector. They also expressed their pride and appreciation for the constructive discussions that took place and the results of the conference.