



**Committee for the Evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences
Studies**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Report

Department of Psychology

Evaluation Report

February 2009

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Chapter 1- Background

At its meeting on October 31, 2006 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences during the academic year 2006-2007.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as the Chair of the CHE, appointed a committee for the evaluation of the academic quality of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences studies on April 29, 2008. On October 7 the committee was expanded and it currently comprises the following members¹:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen, Department of Psychology, New York University-Committee Chair, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Victor Azarya, The Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University (emeritus), Israel**
- **Prof. Yinon Cohen, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Avishai Henik, Department of Psychology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel**
- **Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Canada**
- **Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Department of Psychology, Indiana University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Sidney Strauss - Chief Scientist at the Israeli Ministry of Education (previously- Department of Psychology and School of Education, Tel Aviv University), Israel**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, U.S.A**

Ms. Alisa Elon- Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

¹ Due to the fact that there were 12 departments undergoing evaluation, committee members divided the visits amongst themselves.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to submit the following documents to the CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions which would include an evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences study programs, the Committee's findings and recommendations.
2.
 - 2.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study in Israeli institutions of higher education.
 - 2.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The first stage of the quality assessment process consisted of self-evaluation, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the institutions under evaluation. This process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's guidelines as specified in the document entitled "The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines" (December 2006).

Chapter 2-Committee Procedures

During May – June 2008 Committee members conducted full-day visits to five of the twelve institutions whose Psychology and Behavioral Science study programs it was requested to examine.

During these visits, the Committee met with the relevant officials at each institution, as well as with faculty members, students and alumni, and also conducted a tour of the campus.

This report deals with the Department of Psychology at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

The Committee's visit to Ben-Gurion University took place on June 5, 2008.

The following members of the committee participated in the visit to Ben-Gurion University:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen- Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham**
- **Prof. Seymour Spilerman**
- **Prof. Sidney Strauss**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky**

The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The members of the committee thank the management of the institution and the Department of Psychology for the self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit.

Chapter 3- Evaluation of the Department of Psychology at Ben-Gurion University

Background

Ben-Gurion University was established in 1970 and formally accredited by the CHE in 1973. The University comprises five faculties.

During the academic year 2005-6 there were approximately 18,000 students of whom 12,790 were studying for a BA degree, 4,100 for an MA degree and 990 were studying for a Ph.D. degree.

The Department of Behavioral Sciences was one of the first departments to be established at BGU. In 1978 this department was granted the right to award a BA degree in Behavioral Sciences. In 1985 it was granted the right to award an MA degree in Psychology. In 1996 the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, of which the Department of Behavioral Sciences was a part, was granted the right to award a PhD degree.

The self evaluation report states that from the mid-nineties, it became clear that the sociologists and anthropologists in the Behavioral Sciences Department were becoming more and more academically oriented toward political science and history, while the psychologists increasingly preferred to view themselves as part of the natural sciences. This eventually led to the division of behavioral sciences into two independent departments as of the academic year of 2007-2008; Sociology-Anthropology and Psychology.

The Department of Psychology offers a BA in Psychology, as well as an MA degree, which is conferred in three specialty areas of psychology: Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology; Social Psychology, Brain and Cognition; and Developmental Psychology. The BA Psychology program, which was established in 2006, is a dual major program which offers students the option of integrating psychology with other fields. The Behavioral Sciences BA degree is a single major program, which requires students to obtain approximately half of the credits in Psychology and the other half in Anthropology and Sociology.

The former Department of Behavioral Sciences and the current Psychology Department offer an MA degree in Psychology in Clinical, Developmental, Cognitive, Social and Neuropsychology programs. In 2006-2007 the Clinical and Neuropsychology MA tracks were merged into a single Clinical Psychology-Neuropsychology track. Similarly, the Brain and Cognition track and the Social Psychology track were merged into a single Social Psychology, Brain-Cognition track.

Mission, Goals, and Goal Attainment

The newly developed Department of Psychology at Ben Gurion University is truly a 21st c department. Its vision is based on the unity of mind and body, brain and behavior. This cutting edge approach is expressed in the undergraduate and graduate programs and in the integrative research of department members. It is also expressed in extensive collaborative research by the psychology faculty with members of other departments. The department is housed in a new building that provides an appropriate home for this vision, with up-to-date laboratories and classrooms.

The department is committed to its vision of psychology as a basic science and to maintaining an interdisciplinary orientation at the intersection of psychology and other biological and social sciences. The mission includes clinical training that is well-grounded in science, and an in-house clinic being implemented that will serve training and research needs, as well as the community. Fitting with this mission are the intentionally low barriers among the various graduate programs.

In the committee's estimation, the department has been highly successful in implementing its programmatic goals thus far and the committee supports these goals.

The Program of Study

The Department of Psychology was previously organized as a Department of Behavioral Science that combined psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and it is only recently that the University implemented the change (long planned) to separate from sociology and anthropology, creating a full-fledged Department of Psychology. The Department of Psychology offers a BA in Psychology (from 2006) as a dual major with any other related major at Ben Gurion University. The university continues to offer a BA in Behavioral Science as well, a longstanding major at the university which has not changed since the BA in psychology was implemented. The program seems to function well across behavioral science disciplines with behavioral science in practice a double major in psychology and sociology-anthropology, according to the department. Indeed, it seems to the committee that implementing the Behavioral Science program as a double major is what makes most sense. Retaining the behavioral science name for such a double major is done because the double major has the needed the course coverage and, as the department indicates, because of the good reputation of behavioral science at Ben Gurion. The undergraduate program in psychology offers a traditional program of study in psychology, and of sufficient scope and depth to prepare students for advanced studies or other endeavors with a solid psychology major. In addition, the psychology major can be taken only as a double major, for example, with sociology-anthropology or with any other major including a discipline in the sciences. Although classes are large, the program provides opportunities for some BA students to engage in research activities and to thus begin to get research training, preparing them for advanced studies up close and allowing

them to approach psychological issues in empirical terms. Since this is crucial for BA-level education in psychology, it is worth noting that it is done.

The department also offers an MA and Ph.D. in three areas of study: (a) Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology, (b) Social Psychology, Brain and Cognition, and (c) Developmental Psychology. These MA and Ph.D. programs are geared toward research excellence in each respective subfield, while also building on the strengths of the department and responding to the needs of the country. In terms of the latter, two of the MA programs, clinical and developmental, train practitioners.

The model for the clinical program is exemplary in that its training is rooted in evidence-based therapeutic techniques and in the social and biological bases of disorders. It is also especially suited for common disorders in Israeli society, including PTSD and brain injury. The faculty coverage in the program is good, and forward-looking changes are being undertaken to strengthen and solidify the program as well, as indicated in the self-evaluation document and seen in the committee's meetings. In particular, the science-based training model is fully shared among the faculty and the department is planning to establish an in-house training clinic as well in which science and practice can be fully integrated. This will enhance training, research, and service in the clinical program. Such a clinic will allow faculty to supervise students in treatment modalities that match the clinical disorders that they are examining scientifically and have clinical expertise, a cutting edge training approach. The committee commends the department for pursuing this and recommends that it is implemented in the near future.

The developmental program is also aimed toward much-needed practice expertise in early childhood education. Given the imminent retirement of the director of this program, the program will need amplification and this is being planned. Ideally, the program will parallel the clinical program in integrating research and training. Given the department's overall mission, it is well positioned to achieve this. At the same time, based on the self-evaluation report and meetings with the department committees, the exact aims and requirements of the program as it stands, are less clearly specified than needed for fostering excellence in the program and for successful student recruitment.

The social, cognitive, and brain area focuses on pure research programs at the MA and PhD levels, and is in transition. At this point, based on the self-evaluation document, faculty CVs, and our meetings in the department, the committee's view is that research productivity in the program is excellent, but the program would benefit from more coherence and depth in its focus, as well as more breadth, notably in social psychology. Based on the faculty list provided to the committee, faculty with these specialties is lacking, despite the existing name of the program. The self-evaluation document indicates that a new position in social psychology was recently approved (and the committee was informed that this search was ongoing at the time of the visit). In addition, the committee learned during its visit that the department had just made an offer in social psychology. Together, two new faculty in social psychology may be joining the program. These are positive, proactive steps. Nonetheless, the committee's view is that an additional new hire or two are required in social psychology to solidify the strength of this developing area. If this is

not done, the committee's view is that it would do a disservice to the quality of the program and the department. An expert in social cognition or social neuroscience would be especially well-suited to the current program, and an expert in cultural psychology, intergroup bias, and prejudice would be a particularly valuable addition as well as one that might take special advantage of the location of Ben Gurion in the Negev where Bedouin and Jewish populations are more likely to live side by side than elsewhere in Israel. This could thus contribute to the community, a stated goal of the University.

Overall, the Ben Gurion University faculty in psychology have a distinguished track record in the discipline and are poised to bring the department to the cutting edge in the field internationally and in Israel. The committee was impressed with the leadership and the forward-looking, sensible decision-making of the department's senior faculty and the administration targeted toward increasing the excellence and international visibility of the department. The faculty and students seem excited about their work, as well as productive and engaged in the department. The department and university also appear to be very well regarded by faculty and students who feel invested in the department, in the surrounding community, and in the Negev region. Finally, students and faculty alike regard the department as open, welcoming, and collaborative. The broad research collaborations include undergraduates as well as graduate students, involve other departments on campus, and the hospital as well.

Faculty and Teaching

Faculty. The department's core faculty consists of active and distinguished scientists with very strong publication records and with high visibility nationally and internationally in the field of psychology. They publish their research in top-tier journals, often with their graduate students, several have intramural and extramural grants, and they have strong credentials as evidenced by awards they have received and their elections or appointments to offices in professional organizations. The work style of the tenured faculty is highly collegial and this extends to mentoring younger, non-tenured faculty by advising them as they progress to the tenure review.

Students report that the faculty members are highly accessible and supportive, in addition to being role models of high caliber researchers and clinical scientists who are at the cutting edge of the profession, thus demonstrating considerable professional integrity and commitment to science-based training.

The small size of the faculty combined with mounting demands on faculty time is worrisome, as achievements can be short-lived if the faculty is spread too thin. The administration is aware of this. Hence, although the entire university received only seven new tenure-track faculty positions, two went to the psychology department. These positions, along with forthcoming retirements have allowed the department to search for four new faculty, two developmental psychologists, one social psychologist, and one expert in psychobiology with emphasis on animal-based research. This increase of almost 25% in faculty positions is essential for the continued excellence of this outstanding

psychology department, and it attests to the respect that the higher administration has for the department.

These searches will enable helpful additions. Nonetheless, as detailed above, one area that seems to be in acute need of one or more faculty hires is social psychology. Although the current searches are crucial to build critical mass in the area, one or more positions will still be needed to strengthen and solidify the area.

According to the faculty list provided by the department, the department's teaching is augmented by a set of adjunct faculty, mostly in the clinical and developmental programs. The committee's view is that there is a mismatch between the orientation and training philosophy of the core faculty, especially in the clinical program, and those of the adjunct faculty. Although the students do not seem confused by this, the perspective of the clinical program as science-based does not come through when talking to the adjunct faculty.

Expectations and procedures for promotion and tenure are clear and the department takes steps to minimize young faculty stress as they go through the process, as made clear in our meetings with faculty. Tenured faculty serve as mentors to the untenured faculty and support them through the process. Although the wait for the university-level decision can sometimes be long, the department keeps candidates informed of the progress. Moreover, junior faculty get some course reduction in their first year of teaching, and generous start-up funds.

Teaching. The curriculum on all levels (BA, MA, and Ph.D.) appears comprehensive, sequential, and logical. Courses are taught by senior and junior faculty members with substantial expertise in their respective areas, and clinical training is augmented by a group of adjunct faculty. BA students have opportunities to participate in research.

As is common in clinical programs, the course requirements are heavier than those of other departmental programs, in this case due to the program's wise decision to teach research-based clinical courses as well as those mandated by the law, many of which lack scientific validity. Some of the courses mandated by law overburden the curriculum with materials unnecessary for students to become competent clinicians, and take precious training time away from teaching empirically supported assessment and treatment methods, and from students' own research training. The committee commends the clinical program for designing a curriculum that is forward-looking and responsive to international developments in clinical science and practice, and for seeking to minimize the toll exacted by the certification requirements of the Ministry of Health's Council of Psychologists while maximizing training in evidence-based practice. As noted, the development of an in-house training clinic will further enhance excellence in science-based clinical training. In the committee's view, this would be best accomplished, in addition, by better integrating adjunct teachers within the clinic – to enable a better conceptual fit between the goals of the program and the adjunct's training orientation, while continuing to fully engage full-time faculty as is currently done. The committee also commends the program's faculty for their willingness to serve on the Council of Psychologists so that changes in the law can be informed by recent advances in clinical science.

The developmental program is designed to focus on young children, ages 0-6. Licensure requirements introduce challenges similar to those of the clinical program. The program is in the process of hiring two new faculty, which is needed to strengthen the program and replace the retiring head. At the same time, the committee notes that the precise aims and objectives of this program, as well as the substance of its research training and its practice training are unfocused. Its exact aims and curriculum thus need to be better specified in in-house documents and those used for student recruitment. The current faculty search in this area offers an opportunity for establishing a strategic plan for the program as well as a more specific definition of the program's aims and how it goes about implementing them. Such a strategic plan should also be directed toward fostering and demonstrating the program's excellence in both science and practice. To achieve these aims, the department should consider opening a pre-school that, like the in-house clinic, can serve to enhance both training and research, as well as service to the community.

The social, cognitive, and brain program is currently in the process of hiring an additional faculty member in mainstream social psychology with the hope of eventually reaching a critical mass to create a state-of-the-science social psychology graduate program. The rest of the program's faculty members are cognitive psychologists (with an emphasis on the brain) who engage in cutting edge research and produce first-rate publications. The program's curriculum is on par with that of other cognitive psychology programs, with minimal course requirements and heavy reliance on research within a mentoring system. The products of this method of teaching are excellent, as evident in the number of first-rate publications by students. This approach is ideal for social psychology as well, but, as noted, this program does not yet have the presence in social psychology that it would need for real strength in the latter area as well as to justify the program's name and aims. The expertise of this program's faculty adds substantially to the training of graduate students in all programs and enable the clinical program to maintain its emphasis on clinical neuropsychological rehabilitation.

Students

Admissions standards are high for both the BA and MA degrees. The cutoffs for both matriculation and psychometric are high. In the past two years, the average number of applicants to the program was approximately 1,100 from which approximately 150 were admitted; almost all those admitted enter the program. Of the master's programs, the clinical program has the most applicants, and is the most selective, accepting about 10% of 200 applicants. About half of those accepted choose to attend the program. Fewer students apply to the other programs and a higher percentage is accepted. The PhD program has had from 5 to 15 applicants in the past 5 years; all were accepted and all joined the program.

The committee met with 15 undergraduates, 13 graduate students, and 4 Teaching Assistants who were MA students. All were frank and forthcoming in both praise and criticism. The students like the university and the campus, and spend time on it aside from classes. The students uniformly hold the faculty in high regard praising them for their

teaching and research, for their accessibility, and for creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. They especially noted statistics, the research seminars, and experimental psychology as valuable and exciting courses. With that, some felt that some of the introductory courses (social, abnormal) were too easy, too much fluff. They would like those courses enriched with more substantial textbooks and would like all courses, even introductory ones, supplemented with original articles in English. They also indicated that the lower level courses were too large and they want the library to have more current journals and books. They commented that they found the research opportunities they had exciting and would welcome more.

The graduate students also said that the department is a warm and welcoming place. They share the high regard for the faculty, the research, and the atmosphere in which faculty, graduates, and undergraduates readily collaborate. Students feel the faculty is invested in them and in their success. They are encouraged to do research and publish, even among themselves without faculty. They feel highly regarded in the country; and enjoy being situated in Beer Sheva, not isolated from the problems of the society.

Most students welcomed the changes in the clinical program as well as those in the department (splitting the major). Others in the middle of their studies were uneasy with the large number of changes in the direction of clinical science. Some wanted more practical field work in Beer Sheva. Some were pleased but others dissatisfied. In addition, some dissatisfaction was noted with the social, cognitive, and brain program, i.e., that it was not cognitive enough, that it lacked cultural approaches, and in one case, that it lacked sufficient training in qualitative methodologies.

Although students realize they are funded better than at other places, they felt funding needs to be increased and expanded.

Research

Faculty. Faculty research is first-rate, substantive, and visible, published in some of the best peer-reviewed journals in the field, and very frequently funded. There is considerable research collaboration among faculty members in the department and with those in other departments at BGU. Productivity is very high overall and, because the department places strong emphasis on evidence-based clinical training, research is central to the clinical program as well, a sign of a first-rate university. The ability of faculty to engage graduate students in the research enterprise and to excite them about it is also very high indeed.

Undergraduates. There is good contact with actual research among undergraduates in psychology studying at the BA level, including a compulsory BA research seminar and a mentoring program involving faculty and PhD students. Excellence in BA-level training in psychology requires that undergraduates are exposed to research as a central means of training them in psychology – in hands-on experience with the nuts and bolts of research – and Ben Gurion University appears to do this well.

Graduate students. Both MA and PhD students are fully engaged in research. However, there is far less than ideal funding for PhD students. Doctoral students often do not teach, which they would like to do, a win-win situation that would both provide income and valuable career development.

Infrastructure

There are quite significant funds for equipment to set up laboratories for new faculty members. Research use of the fMRI at the Soroka Hospital is plentiful. It is available 24 hours per week and there is not a long wait to use it. Faculty in clinical-neuropsychology aim to set up a laboratory for clinical training and research, a goal that the committee commends. The committee notes, however, the library lacks a full complement of e-journals and this can compromise faculty and student research and also teaching.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The committee is highly impressed by the program. Together with that, many important improvements have recently been implemented or are in progress. Thus, our recommendations largely emphasize staying the course and most concern the graduate programs. They are raised below an order of their priority that is approximate given that many recommendations are about equally important to fostering excellence in the department. Overall, we suggest a 12 to 24 month window for completing the improvements we recommend, possibly with a follow up at 36 months.

1. Expanding the presence of research in mainstream social psychology within the social, brain and cognitive area is important for solidifying this strength within the program, for the undergraduate program as well as the graduate program. Hence, the committee recommends that the dean and the department protect the existing social positions: i.e., the ongoing search as well as the offered position. Some thought needs to be given as well to enhancing the theoretical and empirical expertise in social psychology in the program even beyond these searches and certainly in these searches. The program needs greater depth and breadth in social psychology and the committee recommends that the department thus develop a plan for making one or more hires in social psychology.

(a) The committee recommends that the existing search in social psychology as well as the position for which an offer was made in this area before the committee's visit, are protected and the hires completed within one year, if not sooner.

(b) The committee further recommends that the department secure an additional position or two so for an additional search (or two) in mainstream social psychology in the subsequent few years, The recommendation is to develop a strategic plan for further strengthening this excellent program accordingly and securing the position(s) (within one year). The new search(es) should be conducted in the second year.

2. The committee strongly recommends that the department follow up on its plan to establish an in-house training clinic where science and practice are integrated.

(a) Because an in-house clinic will help those in need while providing training opportunities for graduate students, and will at the same time enable cutting-edge research by students and faculty, it is likely to make a major contribution to the field and to the country. Hence, the committee strongly recommends that the program continue on this course with the support of the university administration, and fully implement the plan within two years.

(b) The committee further suggests that both the clinical and developmental programs take the opportunity presented by the in-house training capability to plan for the hiring of adjunct faculty whose theoretical orientation and approach fits more coherently with the program's model and philosophy of training, i.e., who clearly understand and respect the value of clinical science.

3. The developmental program is geared toward offering much-needed professional training in early childhood education. Given the imminent retirement of the director, this program will clearly need amplification. The committee recommends that a strategic plan be developed to revamp this program, better specifying its training model and curriculum to ensure that it offers cutting-edge training informed by developmental science. As noted, the precise aims and objectives of the program are unfocused and need to be better specified. The relevance of research to practice in graduate training in the program should also be more clear. The aims and curriculum, overall, need to be better specified in program documents, including those used for student recruitment. The strategic plan recommended should focus on how to foster and demonstrate the program's excellence in both science and practice, and of course, also effectiveness in assessing and treating children. The strategic plan recommended should also encompass current and future hiring, ensuring that those positions are protected and that the hires fit with the plan, also engaging newly hired faculty as they are hired in planning. In addition, it is the committee's view that the program should manifest the scientist-practitioner training model both in faculty recruitment and in its program for training students.

(a) The committee recommends that a strategic plan is developed within one year that includes emphasis on a scientist-practitioner training model.

(b) The committee suggests that the department consider further augment the scientist-practitioner model for developmental training by establishing a pre-school in which such training can effectively occur.

4. Given the university's location in Beer Sheva, the committee noticed the absence of faculty representation in cross-cultural psychology, a timely area of study that combines social psychology, developmental, personality, and cognitive. The area is likely to be of value to students and would advance the mission of the department to contribute to the surrounding community. This report notes that cultural psychology would be a way of strengthening social psychology, but it could just as readily complement another existing program instead. Hence the committee suggests that the department take this under consideration.

5. More generally, the committee recommends that the department make concerted efforts to obtain more funding for PhD students, both from the university administration (or creative projects within Ben Gurion University) and from outside donors. Specifically, a plan for increasing student funding in the department should be formulated within two years.

6. The committee also recommends that the library systematically increase the number of e-journals it has available in the library and ensure that these are up-to-date and not a year or more behind. This should be completed within two years. If there are obstacles to doing this, the committee suggests that they are resolved, perhaps by forming a consortium of universities that can jointly purchase a multiple-site license.

7. The committee recommends that the department follow up on the alumni contacts they have made thus far, expanding these efforts, in particular, by doing alumni surveys regularly. As is evident from the survey already conducted, such surveys can provide valuable information about graduates, most notably about jobs placement after graduation and subsequent education, allowing both to be tracked over time, which is crucial for planning purposes.

(a) The committee thus recommends that the department develop a strategic plan for conducting another alumni survey in the second year, implementing this plan in the third year.

8. Finally, given that higher education in Israel has relatively little in the way of an alumni culture, the committee encourages the department to reach out to alumni beyond future surveys to include other outreach initiatives. Keeping students involved with the department and university, such as by newsletter and by content-area or geographic groups can be valuable. Alumni groups often help secure employment for other alumni and for graduating students, and they often provide financial support to their alma maters as well. Establishing ongoing relations with alumni can build an alumni culture in the department and at the university.

Signed By:



**Prof. Susan Andersen
Committee Chair**



Prof. Varda Shoham



Prof. Seymour Spilerman



Prof. Sidney Strauss



Prof. Barbara Tversky

APPENDIX 1



18/11/2008
14612824

Professor Susan M. Andersen
Professor of Psychology
Director, Doctoral Program in Social Psychology
Department of Psychology
New York University
USA

Dear Professor Andersen,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential, particularly as our nation reaches maturity in its 60th year.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21st century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor. It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as the Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Studies.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Susan Andersen - Chair, Prof. Victor Azarya, Prof. Yinon Cohen, Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Prof. Avishai Henik, Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Prof. Varda Shoham, Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Prof. Sidney Strauss and Prof. Barbara Tversky.

Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.



In your capacity as a member of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Professor YuK-Tamir
Minister of Education

and Chairperson of the Council for Higher Education

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Riki Mendelzvaig, Secretary of the Council for Higher Education
Ms. Michal Neumann, Head of the Quality Assessment Unit
Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator

Appendix to the Letter of Appointment for Evaluation Committees (Study Programs)

1. General

On June 3, 2003 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to establish a system for quality assessment and assurance in Israeli higher education. Within this framework, study-programs are to be evaluated every six years and institutions every eight years. The quality assessment system came into effect in the academic year of 2004-2005.

The main objectives of the quality assessment activity are:

- To enhance the quality of higher education in Israel;
- To create an awareness within institutions of higher education in Israel of the importance of quality evaluation and to develop internal self-evaluation mechanisms on a regular basis;
- To provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel;
- To ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

It is not the CHE's intention to rank the institutions of higher education according to the results of the quality assessment processes. The evaluation committee should refrain from formal comparisons.

2. The Work of the Evaluation Committee

- 2.1 The committee shall hold meetings, as needed, before visiting the institution, in order to evaluate the material received.
- 2.2 The committee shall visit the institution and the academic unit being evaluated – if possible - within 3-4 months of receiving the self-evaluation report. The purpose of the visit is to verify and update the information submitted in the self-evaluation report, clarify matters where necessary, inspect the educational environment and facilities first hand, etc. During the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution, faculty members, students, the administrative staff, and any other persons it considers necessary.
- 2.3 In a meeting at the beginning of the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution (president/rector, dean), the heads of the academic unit and the study-programs, in order to explain the purpose of the visit. At the end

of the visit, the committee will summarize its findings, and formulate its recommendations.

- 2.4 The duration of the visits (at least one full day) will be coordinated with the chairperson of the committee.
- 2.5 Following the visit, the committee will write its final report, including its recommendations, which will be delivered to the institution and the academic unit for their response.
- 2.6 In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member in an institution being evaluated, he will not take part in discussions regarding that institution.

3. The Individual Reports

- 3.1 The final reports of the evaluation committee shall address every institution separately.
- 3.2 The final reports shall include recommendations on topics listed in the guidelines for self-evaluation, such as:
 - The goals and aims of the evaluated academic unit and study programs.
 - The study program.
 - The academic staff.
 - The students.
 - The organizational structure.
 - The broader organizational structure (school/faculty) in which the academic unit and study program operate.
 - The infrastructure (both physical and administrative) available to the study program.
 - Internal mechanisms for quality assessment.
 - Other topics to be decided upon by the evaluation committee.

4. The structure of the reports

4.1 Part A – General background and an executive summary:

- 4.1.1 General background concerning the evaluation process, the names of the members of the committee, a general description of the institution and the academic unit being assessed, and the committee's work.
- 4.1.2 An executive summary that will include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit and program being evaluated.

4.2 Part B – In-depth description of subjects examined:

- 4.2.1 This part will be composed according to the topics examined by the evaluation committee, and based on the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution.
- 4.2.2 For each topic examined the report will present a summary of the findings, the relevant information and analysis.

4.3 Part C –Recommendations:

- 4.3.1 Comprehensive conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluated academic unit and the study program according to the topics in part B.
- 4.3.2 Recommendations may be classified according to the following categories:
 - ***Congratulatory remarks and minimal changes recommended, if any.***

- ***Desirable changes recommended*** at the institution's convenience and follow-up in the next cycle of evaluations.
- ***Important/needed changes requested for ensuring appropriate academic quality*** within a reasonable time, in coordination with the institution (1-3 years)
- ***Essential and urgent changes required, on which continued authorization will be contingent*** (immediately or up to one year).
- ***A combination of any of the above.***

4.4 Part D - Appendices:

The appendices shall contain the committee's letter of appointment and the schedule of the on-site visit.

5. The General report

In addition to the individual reports concerning each study program, the committee shall submit to the CHE the following documents:

- 5.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.
- 5.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

We urge the committee to clearly list its specific recommendations for each one of the topics (both in the individual reports and in the general report) and to prioritize these recommendations, in order to ease the eventual monitoring of their implementation.

APPENDIX 2



**THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV**

Schedule for the On-site visit

5 June, 2008

Evaluation Committee meeting, room 302, 3th, Building 98.

Time	Subject	Participants
09:00-10:00	Opening session: The heads of the institution	Head of Quality Assessment System Prof. Yael Edan Dean Prof. Moshe Justman
10:00-10:30	Department Chair person	Prof. Nachshon Meiran
10:30-11:00	Meeting with the School's/department's academic leadership	Department Chair person Prof. Nachshon Meiran Head of BA, Prof. Golan Shahar -responsible for acceptance of new BA students. Heads of MA and PhD programs Prof. Judy Auerbach – <i>Head of The MA program in Developmental Psychology, member of PhD committee,</i> member of Resources, Hiring and Promotion Committee Dr. Gary Diamond – <i>Head of The Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology MA program, Chair, PhD committee</i> Dr. Yoella Bereby-Meyer – <i>Head of The Social Psychology Brain-Cognition MA program, member of PhD committee</i>
11:00-11:45	Meeting with senior faculty and committees' representatives	Dr. Tzvi Ganel , member of BA Committee and responsible for BA curriculum Dr. Galia Avidan , member of BA Committee and

		responsible for individual student's concerns Dr. Naama Atzaba-Poria , member of BA Committee and responsible for ethical standards Prof. Joseph Tzelgov , member of Resources, Hiring and Promotion Committee
11:45-12:30	Meeting with junior faculty	Or Dvsek, Uri J. Ivneh, Gill Maharik, Limor Gertner, Noa Gueron
12:30-13:00	Meeting with adjuncts	Dr. Ruth Sifon, Ms. Sari Meisels, Mr. Meir Nadav, Dr. Uri Bibi
13:00-13:30	Closed lunch of committee members	
13:30-14:15	Meeting with undergraduate students	1 st year – Ad Lanan, Anat Karmon, David Mesika, 2 nd year-Anat Golan, Oryan Bechler, Tzur Sheleg, 3 rd year- Asaf Shai, Daniela Aisenberg, Gilad Kremer, Hila Gil, Michal Tanzer
14:15-15:00	Meeting with graduate students	Post Doc.: Yoav Kessler PhD: Alison Golub, Daniel Rochman, Gabriel Tzur, Givva Cohen-Hertz, Sara Abu-Kaf, Shai Gabay, Uri Alyagon, Yael Barak-Levy MA: Dalia-Lorena Szejnworcel, Eliran Halali, Idan Weisman, Maayan Katzir
15:00-15:45	Tour at the institution	Classrooms, library, faculty facilities
15:45-16:00	Closed meeting of the Committee	
16:00-16:30	Summation meeting with heads of the institution	Head of Quality Assessment System Prof. Yael Edan Dean Prof. Moshe Justman Department Chair person Prof. Nachshon Meiran Head of Administration Ms. Rachel Damry