



**School of Communication
Sapir College**

Report of the External Evaluation Team

for

The Council on Higher Education

November, 2009

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I. General Background and Executive Summary

I.1 General Background

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate the study programs in the field of communication in Israel in the academic year 2008-2009. Following the decision by the CHE, the Minister of Education appointed the following members of the evaluation committee:

- Professor Joseph Cappella, University of Pennsylvania (Chair)
- Professor emerita Hanna Adoni, Hebrew University (Sapir College and Netanya College)
- Professor Wolfgang Donsbach, University of Dresden
- Professor Mordechai Kremnitzer, Hebrew University
- Professor Karen Ross, University of Liverpool (College of Management, Tel Aviv University, Haifa University, and Ben-Gurion University)
- Professor Esther Thorson, University of Missouri (College of Management, Tel Aviv University, Haifa University, and Ben-Gurion University)

Ms. Michal Kabatznik coordinated the committee

The committee's work in the first phase suffered from two cancellations by previous members of the committee, one coming in shortly before the committee's work began. This, as well as time constraints on the side of the two Israeli members, led to the fact that at least in the beginning the committee lacked the breadth of perspectives and the distribution of labor that is required for such an important task.

The committee's work also was affected by the military situation in Israel and the Gaza strip that escalated shortly before the first field trip. This had basically three consequences: It was the reason for one of the above mentioned cancellations, it made it impossible for the committee to conduct its site visit to Sapir College (because the college had to be closed down), and it made it difficult for CHE to find additional committee members from abroad who would replace the cancellations..

I.2 Executive Summary

The School of Communication at Sapir College is one of the College's "flagship" programs. The School has a strong mission statement and takes many efforts to put this into practice by providing students with professional training in an atmosphere of excellent teaching. Overall, content and structure of the curriculum, the relationship between students and faculty, as well as the human and other resources enable the School to meet its goals. The positive student atmosphere attracting also many students from the north of Israel, the improving quality of students over the last years, and the obvious professional success of the alumni are indicators of this achievement.

The curriculum needs, however, some closer attention by the School's leadership in terms of formal structure and content. In its current form it offers too few opportunities for students to acquire general knowledge in specific fields outside the communication program. We think that the room for such a broadening can be gained by revamping the program, particularly by abandoning "Visual Communication" as a mandatory unit. This area is important but it can adequately be dealt with in the core courses of communication and/or in making Visual Communication an additional elective unit. We also suggest that the School should invest more in new models that reflect in its curricula the ongoing convergence among different media. The clear separation of the professional tracks seems no longer appropriate for the developments in the media industry and the long term developments in media convergence.

We also suggest broadening the epistemological and topical perspectives on the communication field offered within the department's selections. We found several important areas not adequately represented. While the faculty members show an impressive overall commitment to their profession and expertise in their specific field of interest, the School lacks this interest and expertise in other areas, particularly in areas of empirical research. This is a point to keep in the forefront in future new faculty hires.

Faculty in the Israeli college system are not expected and do not have the resources to make research a first priority. Nevertheless, we were impressed that several faculty members present at national and international conferences and publish their research in books and journal articles. Again, faculty members could enhance their visibility in the scientific community by broadening their epistemological and topical perspectives.

The quality and consistency of teaching is another issue that will need additional attention by the School's leaders. With more than 100 adjuncts and many junior faculty members this quality and consistency will always be a challenge. We make some suggestions how this can be attained, including the addition of new senior faculty.

The vast majority of student hours is taught by adjuncts, including those with professional training only, academic training (with and with PhD). Far less of the teaching is done by more permanent faculty. Coupled with the fact that many adjunct faculty have heavy teaching loads – sometimes across more than one campus – exacerbates the potential for problems in teaching and learning. This structural reality at Sapir College (and elsewhere) raises real challenges for maintaining and upgrading the quality of instruction even in the presence of a highly motivated and committed group of adjuncts.

We found evidence for successful career paths of the School's alumni. However, systematic evidence on this is scarce. We therefore suggest tracking alumni by means of regular and

standardized surveys. Staying in touch with the alumni will also help the School to gain continuous support, potential lecturers, and more internship possibilities for its current students.

II. Committee Procedures

In the fall of 2008 the committee was invited to evaluate the undergraduate programs of seven departments of communication at colleges and universities in Israel. As one department (Hebrew University) had just undergone an evaluation by its own university this was dropped from the list. The other units were:

- Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- The University of Haifa
- Tel Aviv University
- The College of Management Academic Studies
- Netanya Academic College
- Sapir Academic College

The committee's work spanned the time between December 2008 (preparatory work) through June 2009 (completion of the final reports). Visits to Israel by the committee members from abroad took place January 3 to 9, March 7 to 11, and May 10 to 15.

The site visit to the campus of Sapir College, scheduled for January, had to be cancelled due to security issues. Instead, faculty, students, and administrators came to meet the committee in Tel Aviv on January 5, 2009. According to the arrangements between CHE and the School of Communication the committee met in consecutive meetings with

- The head of school
- The academic heads of the program's tracks
- Members of relevant committees
- Senior faculty members
- Adjunct lecturers
- Students
- Alumni
- Chair of the college's academic council and head of academic affairs

(See complete list in appendix)

III. The School of Communication

** This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.*

III.1 Goals and General Situation

The leadership of Sapir College made it clear to the external review team that the School of Communication is one of the “flagship” programs of the College. The College has invested substantially in the physical plant available to students of the School and expects to provide resources for the School into the future. The School’s stated mission is balanced, clear and important. They seek to provide students with professional training, in an atmosphere of excellent teaching, while influencing their surrounding community in positive ways. The content and structure of the curriculum as well as the projects supported are selected to meet these goals.

III.2 Curriculum

Basic Structure and Statistics

The curriculum exhibits a balance between more theory-driven and more professionally relevant coursework showing a commitment to the conceptual and historical roots of the field. The School offers sufficient training to qualify students for careers in the communication industries.

The program is conceptualized as a single major in communications with seven different tracks: print, radio, television, digital communication, photography, communication marketing, and theory. Students apply for a certain track and can reconsider their choice after the first year. According to faculty members, about 10 percent of the students take advantage of this option.

The most popular track is “Communication Marketing”. Over the last five years, about four in ten students have chosen this track which includes studies in public relations, marketing, and advertising. Radio and Digital Communication both have constantly enrolled about 15 percent. While the proportion of students who have chosen one of these three tracks is rather stable, the Newspaper Track has lost about half of its students and now enrolls six percent of all students in communication. This change certainly reflects changes in the industry. A similar trend can be observed for the Photography Track (now at 8 percent). The only track that has gained students is the Theoretical Track. However, this also includes students of the School of Practical Engineering and Technology, who complete their studies for B.A. in the School of Communication (these students are exempted from the communication vocal track, which they already took in the School of Practical Engineering and Technology, see Table).

Table: SAPIR College: Student Statistics by Track

2003/4		2004/5		2005/6		2006/7		2007/8		Total by track		
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	1,25	2	2	21	10,10	25	8,56	38	11,95	87	8,72	Theoretical
15	18,75	12	12	36	17,31	46	15,75	55	17,30	152	15,23	Radio
11	13,75	16	16	26	12,50	27	9,25	20	6,29	100	10,02	Newspaper Journalism
13	16,25	14	14	29	13,94	51	17,47	51	16,04	158	15,83	Digital Comm.
27	33,75	41	41	78	37,50	122	41,78	128	40,25	396	39,68	Comm. Marketing
13	16,25	15	15	18	8,65	21	7,19	26	8,18	93	9,32	Photography
80	100	100	100	208	100	292	100,00	318	100,00	998	98,80	ALL

The program requires students to take a total of 124 academic credits points of which 72 are allocated to communication core studies (including 16 in professionally oriented courses), 18 in the area of Visual Culture, 18 in an additional unit and 14 in General Studies (including 4 in “Introduction to the History of Western Culture”).

Role of the Unit “Visual Communication”

The unit Visual Communication used to be called “Arts” and is still heavily loaded with arts-related content such as art history, museum, or art and politics besides more general visual communication content such as photography or “gaze”. As one faculty member described it, the unit is basically meant to convey to students “the art of seeing”. The unit Visual Communication consists of 18 credits. By making Visual Communication a mandatory unit with 18 credit points the program allocates more credit points to it than to the professional courses that are the program’s primary focus. Also, and as mentioned above, the program offers one track in “photography” where some of the content reappears.

The role of this mandatory unit was discussed with some controversy. The students with whom the committee spoke think they have to allocate too much of their time to this area. Certainly teachers but also alumni (all of whom were on an academic track though) held that the real value of this unit’s content could only be estimated ‘in the years after graduation’.

Some of the courses in this unit certainly are important for communication students in all tracks including the theoretical track. However, we question the appropriateness of allocating so much weight to visual communication in the program and whether or not some of the heavy course load should not be assigned to content more relevant for the different tracks. One could argue persuasively that content from other units--such as the logic of argumentation from Rhetorical Studies or the logic of the scientific method from Philosophy--are just as crucial epistemologies to know and understand human communication. We do not make this specific argument but rather suggest each of these plus other content could be seen to have equal importance in a Communications curriculum to that of visual communication. Thus, the choice of visual culture as a mandatory unit is less convincing. We would recommend building some of its content into the mandatory communication core courses and to add the unit to the additional elective units that already exist.

Revamping the Program

Dropping the requirement of 18 credit points in the unit Visual Communication and adding it as one of several options of an elective unit would make room in the program to offer students the possibility of choosing other substantive training within and especially outside the School of Communication. The possible elective units are now Rhetoric, Children’s Literature and

Culture, Management and Human Resources, Business Management, Sociology and Anthropology; Philosophy; Jewish Thought. However, according to faculty the majority of students opt either for Rhetoric or Children's Literature and Culture which means that they take no courses outside the School of Communication except for their general studies.

The School should encourage students -- in particular those with aspirations for professional careers in the communication industries -- to acquire knowledge in other disciplines than communication. This would convey to them at least some object-related knowledge in a specific subject or professional area. On the basis of Sapir College's programs, candidates for such additional units might be other disciplines within the departments of Administration and Public Policy, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics, or—based on existing cooperation with other academic institutions--Literature (Ben-Gurion-University) or Biotechnology (School of Practical Engineers & Technology).

Revamping the program in this direction would enable students to get an even broader education in the humanities and liberal arts on one side and offer them the possibility for acquiring substantive knowledge relevant to their future jobs on the other.

Convergence Across Tracks

As students must select one applied (or "professional") track and stay with that track after the first year this means that someone studying in the radio track will not be able to avail themselves readily of training in journalistic practice; or those specializing in journalism will not easily take courses in the growing digital media track. With the obvious convergence across media that we are seeing in the modern world of communication, the proliferation of independent tracks of study is at cross purposes with long term trend toward media convergence. The professional world certainly will welcome those trained in depth in a particular profession but with convergence and the movement of the work force across domains of media practice, having practical training that applies across media is desirable. We encourage the School to work as hard in finding convergence across tracks of study as they have in developing high quality tracks themselves.

III.3 Teaching and Learning

General Atmosphere

The School of Communication currently enrolls 873 students in this single-major program. It is the School's policy (see below) to have a considerable portion of the curriculum taught by adjuncts. A total of 185 teachers, employed and adjunct, senior and junior, run the classes. These numbers raise questions about the quality of the student-teacher relationship and the overall atmosphere in the School. Data provided by staff from CHE from the self-study indicates a senior faculty to student ratio of 1 to 73 and a senior faculty to adjunct ratio of 1 to 11. These data are based on a head count of 12 senior faculty, 135 adjuncts, and 873 students (FTEs are not employed in this calculation).

The committee was very pleasantly surprised to hear testimony that the School manages to maintain a special atmosphere and a very personal relationship between teaching staff and students. All spoke unanimously about "open doors" by faculty members and a personal caring that extends to the time after graduation. The growing number of students certainly is a challenge to maintaining this special atmosphere and one of the senior faculty members con-

ceded that the “human touch has declined a bit” over the last years. The special atmosphere seems, however, still part of the branding of the School of Communication at Sapir College.

Despite the School’s policy and the good relationship that appears to exist between students and their teachers (permanent and otherwise), the committee remains concerned that the large preponderance of student hours is being taught by teachers who are not permanent faculty and who lack extensive advanced training. We recognize the commitment and expertise already in place but want to make clear that the structures in place here (and elsewhere) create challenges to the quality of the teaching-learning environment.

Geographical Distribution of Students

The School attracts about half of its students and a considerable proportion of the faculty (permanent and adjunct) from northern and central Israel and thus outside the Sderot region – despite the severe security issues. The security issues have been prevalent long before the military action that took place during the committee’s planned site visit in January 2009. These numbers indicate that the School, as probably the whole Sapir College, has reached a good reputation across the whole of Israel. And indeed the overall atmosphere at the School may very well be an important factor as the strong education despite security concerns.

Evidence on Student Employment Post Graduation

The committee received information from several groups about successful careers of the School’s graduates in the communication industry, particularly in the media. The School’s emphasis on practical courses in the curriculum, the high level of technological facilities, and the manifold relationships to the industry through a plethora of adjunct professors from this area are certainly contributors to this success.

However, the information was more anecdotal than systematic and therefore limited in its validity. The School might be able to “brand” its position within the Israeli institutions of higher education even better if it could demonstrate in a more systematic way which careers their students take in the communication industry as well as in academia. We therefore encourage the School’s leadership to conduct regular surveys among its graduates.

A first step in this direction was taken by the Head of the School when recently she distributed a questionnaire among the alumni who came back to the School to receive their final documents. The fact that, in her view, she “did not get any new information about the program” might not be a valid reason not to continue this initiative. Fresh input from the teaching committee and from students into the questionnaire might enrich the results of this survey. As many graduates will find jobs only some time after graduation and many others will continue their careers in different positions it will be worthwhile to repeat these standardized surveys on a regular basis among all alumni on a yearly basis.

Evidence and data from such a systematic tracking of the alumni’s careers could also allow the School to build up a database that might help it to start an alumni association – which the School currently does not have. The committee understands that alumni associations are not as much part of the Israeli academic culture as they are in the US and in parts of Europe. Since the department prides itself on training for the practical arena, acquiring systematic evidence about its success and using those data to refine and re-direct the program would seem sensible.

Breadth of Content of Current Courses

The content of the existing courses at Sapir College is narrower in focus than the field of communication has become. Although no curriculum can reflect fully the range of modern studies in communication, we were surprised to find areas directly pertinent to communication practice including, for instance, public opinion, persuasion, news decision theories, audience research, social communication, strategic communication, health communication, media institutions, and experimental research underrepresented in the program. We have no doubts that some if not all of this content will somehow be the subject of single or even several teaching units. We do not see, however, that it has the weight that one would expect it to have in a full fledged communications program that reflects the several subfields of the discipline as they have developed over time.

Broadening the underrepresented areas of study, if redressed, will also broaden the research epistemologies represented on the faculty and those offered to the students.

Quality and Consistency of Teaching by Adjuncts

The School of Communication employs no less than 135 external teachers (adjuncts) who offer courses in all fields of the program, particularly in the practical courses. This large number of externals who are not permanent members of the School's faculty requires extra efforts on the part of the School's leadership to assure the quality and consistency of teaching.

The assessment of teaching quality is currently conducted in two ways: (1) through checks of syllabi and (2) through standardized questionnaires to students. The first way of assessment pertains only to all mandatory courses in the program while the latter is compulsory for all courses (following a college policy). The teaching committee gets involved only in assessing the syllabi of the mandatory courses. The committee has just completed a survey of the syllabi and, as a consequence, has re-arranged them for the purpose of more coherence and clarity. There seems to be no formal procedure in place, however, relevant to the elective courses.

The results of the standardized questionnaire go first only to the Head of the School and the respective lecturer. The teaching committee does not receive the results of the student evaluations. In cases where the ratings fall below a certain level lecturers are invited for a clarification talk (which might involve the head of the respective track in which an external lecturer is teaching). However, it seems difficult for any head of school to be able to maintain an overview of the quality of teaching of 135 external (plus the internal) teachers.

We encourage the School to consider enhancing its evaluation policies for the external lecturers. As the program depends so heavily on these (about 70 percent of the overall teaching by our rough calculations), their quality of teaching and the coherence and stability of teaching the courses is crucial to the overall success of the program. We charge the teaching committee with an examination of all syllabi (and not only of those who are teaching mandatory courses) and to consider classroom visits by senior faculty members.

We reiterate here a concern voiced earlier in this report: Despite the School's policy and the good relationship that appears to exist between students and their teachers (permanent and otherwise), the committee remains concerned that the large preponderance of student hours is being taught by teachers who are not permanent faculty and who lack extensive advanced

training. We recognize the commitment and expertise already in place but want to make clear that the structures in place here (and elsewhere) create challenges to the quality of the teaching-learning environment.

System of Internships

As suggested above we encourage the School to acquire information on its graduates on a yearly basis. This will not only allow the School to evaluate its goals of training media professionals and thus measure its primary success but also to maintain contacts with graduates. The graduates can in turn (1) assist recent graduates in locating and securing employment and (2) provide internship opportunities for current students.

Such internships can offer current students the initial experience and on the job training that will make it easier for them to find employment after graduation. We encourage the School to expand the internship program both by dedicating some resources to the program and by using the School's base of alumni in various media industries. Internships are not always useful and so it is imperative that any substantial increase in the use of internships be accompanied by evaluation of those where students can get real training versus those where the students are treated less as professional colleagues and more like secretarial assistants.

III.4 Students.

Data presented in the self-study indicates that for both applicants and admitted students, psychometric scores and school grades have increased in the past five years. Thus, the School is getting an increasingly qualified pool of students and a more qualified student body. These positive changes over time testify to the School's success in the mind of its potential body of students. Having data on psychometric scores and grades for all applicants and admitted students is a very useful component of the self-study and should be a part of ongoing self-evaluation into the next round.

III.5 Human Resources

According to the chair of the college's academic council and the head of academic affairs about 70 percent of all courses at Sapir College are taught by adjuncts. One reason for this is financial considerations at the College level. Another reason for this high ratio is the College's policy is to bring on to the faculty roles university researchers as adjuncts. The College thus addresses restrictions that follow from the differentiation between universities and colleges. In the Israeli system faculty in colleges have less time (due to higher teaching loads) and less material resources for research of their own.

The College's policy thus tries to beat to a certain extent this educational system. While it is in the best interest of students to have highly qualified teachers with their own research experience it also creates problems. One is the above mentioned issue of securing quality and consistency of teaching. Another problem is the availability of teaching staff for students and their commitment to the program, the department and the whole college. As a consequence Sapir was recently forced by CHE to hire more permanent faculty after they had arrived at a ratio of 1 permanent faculty to 300 students. The current ratio of 1 to 73 still seems very low.

The case of the School of Communication is somewhat peculiar to the overall situation at Sapir because the many of the adjuncts come from the practical field of journalism, PR or other areas. Professionals in the field of communication will always be a necessity for applied departments such as the one at Sapir. Nevertheless, maintaining high quality teaching from professionals as well as non academic adjuncts is the very highest priority for every department. This will involve at a minimum student evaluations of all courses, regular evaluation of syllabi, and occasional classroom visits.

III.6 Infrastructure

As mentioned above the committee's visit to the campus of Sapir College had to be canceled due to the military situation in the region in January. However, we were able to visit the campus in May of 2009 as a part of our stay in Israel during that time. We were impressed by the quality of the media facilities available to students confirming reports that we had received from students, alumni and adjuncts earlier.

The School owns, among many other facilities, currently 10 digital cameras and 8 editing rooms for broadcast journalism training. While it will be a financial challenge to maintain this technological edge, Sapir College seems ready to commit the needed resources for practical training. In fact, it will be necessary that the School – together with the College's leadership – continues to invest in these resources in order to maintain its position among other units in the country.

III.7 Research and Publications

According to the School's mission statement and its practices, excellent teaching is a top priority (12 hours per semester is common). Nevertheless there is some evidence of research productivity and support for these activities by the College. For example, College/school allows for one conference visit abroad per year.

The majority of the employed faculty is involved in research and publishing despite of the time constraints and limited resources made available by the College. However, much of this research is local and topical as is consistent with the School's focus. Yet, an increase of the School's reputation and of the faculty level of expertise goes hand in hand with broader questions about the communication process to broader audiences and with greater frequency.

VI. Recommendations:

VI. 1 Short-term Recommendations

Teaching and Learning

- Conduct regular, i.e. yearly surveys of the School's alumni in order to proof success of the program.
- Re-introduce the survey of last year's alumni after revising the questionnaire that already exists.
- Use the alumni data base for seeking continuing material and immaterial support of the School, as well as for soliciting adjuncts and internship positions.
- Enhance evaluation policies for external lecturers and junior faculty by evaluating on a regular basis all course syllabi (and not only those of mandatory courses).
- Consider regular classroom visits by senior faculty members to classes of junior faculty and adjunct teachers.
- Expand the internship program both by dedicating some resources to the program and by using the School's base of alumni in various media industries.
- Evaluate students' internships on a regular basis using a standardized questionnaire and short reports on experiences during the internship.
- Increase the ratio of permanent faculty to students by adding senior, permanent faculty positions,

VI. 2 Middle- and Long-term Recommendations

Curriculum

- Seriously consider options to Visual Communication as a mandatory unit.
- Build some of the content of Visual Communication into the mandatory communication core courses.
- Add the unit Visual Communication to the elective units.
- Use the 18 gained credit points from Visual Communication to offer more options in other disciplines than communication in order to broaden the general education and/or the object-related knowledge of students.
- Negotiate, for this purpose, courses with departments in other Schools and other academic institutions already related to Sapir College that would add to the substantive knowledge students need to execute their communication skills.

- Identify possibilities for more convergence across the professional, particularly the journalism tracks, in order to prepare students for the ongoing cross-media convergence in the industry.

Teaching and Learning

- Broaden the content of the courses in terms of their epistemological and theoretical access to the field of communication in order to reflect standard, established approaches in the field.
- Methods such as experimental design, survey research, or quantitative content analysis, and subjects such as public opinion, persuasion, news decision theories, audience research, health communication, or media institutions are candidates for such a broader perspective.
- Consider this goal of broadening the perspective when hiring new faculty.

Research and Publication

- Following from the above point: Broaden the research foci of the School's faculty.

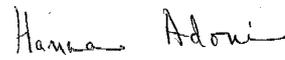
Human Resources

- Develop strategies to integrate the huge number of adjuncts into the School's professional and academic life. This might take the form of interest groups focused on research or support groups focused on teaching and balancing family, academic and work demands.

Signed by:



Prof. Joseph N. Capella, Chair



Prof. Hanna Adoni



Prof. Wolfgang Donsbach



Prof. Mordechai Kremnitzer



Prof. Karen Ross



Prof. Esther Thorson

V. Appendices:

Letter of Appointment (Sample)



February 11th, 2009

Professor Wolfgang Donsbach, Planning & Budgeting Committee | הועדה לתכנון ולתקצוב
Director, Department of Communication
Dresden University of Technology
Germany

Dear Professor Donsbach,

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.

This most important initiative reaches out to scholars and experts in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher education system today. The formation 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 and professionals 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 a member of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Communication Studies. The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Joseph Cappella - Chair, Prof. Hanna Adoni, Prof. Wolfgang Donsbach, Prof. Mordechai Kremnitzer, Prof. Karen Ross, and Prof. Esther Thorson. Ms. Michal Kabatznik 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 Yuli Tamir
Minister of Education, Culture and Sport
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. Michal Kabatznik, Committee Coordinator

October 07

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/she 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.

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: Schedule

**THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
SAPIR COLLEGE
Schedule of Site Visit
5th January 2009
Alexander Hotel Suite 103, Tel Aviv**

Communications – tentative schedule of site visit

Monday January 5th, 2009:

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/ Location
09:30-10:00	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment ***	Dr. Nachmi Paz, General Manager and Vice President Prof. Uri Regev, Chair, Academic Council Dr. Ariel Feldestein, Head of Academic Affairs	Suite 103 [^]
10:00-10:30	Meeting with the Head of the School of Communication	Prof. Na'ama Sheffi, Head of School of Communication	
10:30-11:30	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the School of Communication	Prof. Na'ama Sheffi, Head of School of Communication Dr. Nimrod Bar-Am, Head of Rhetoric Unit Dr. Yael Darr, Head of Children's Literature and Culture Unit Dr. Naomi Meiri-Dann, Head of Visual Culture Unit Dr. Chanan Naveh, Head of Radio Track Dr. Hagar Lahav, Head of Newspaper Journalism Track Mr. Yuval Gozansky, Head of Television Journalism Track Mr. Amir Earon, Head of Marketing Communication Track Dr. Atara Frenkel-Faran, Co-Head of Digital Communication Track Mr. Yakov Eisenmann, Co-Head of Digital Communication Track Ms. Yehudit Guetta, Head of Photography Track Ms. Hagit Krief, School Coordinator	
11:30-12:15	Meeting with representatives of relevant committees *	Dr. Chanan Naveh – Teaching Committee Dr. Einat Lachover – Teacher-Student Committee Dr. Naomi Meiri-Dann – Discipline Committee	
12:15-13:00	Meeting with Senior academic faculty*	Dr. Meir Wigoder, Dr. Orly Soker, Dr. Tammy Razi, Dr. Arik Taib	
13:00-13:30	Lunch	Dr. Meir Wigoder, Dr. Orly Soker, Dr. Tammy Razi, Dr. Arik Taib, Prof. Na'ama Sheffi	
13:30-14:15	Meeting with adjunct lecturers*	Dr. Chaim Noy, Dr. Zvi Barel, Dr. Inbal Ben Asher Gitler, Ms. Ines Gabel	
14:15-15:00	Meeting with B.A. Students	Third Year: Mr. Tomer Brand, Ms. Ella Siman, Ms. Keren Solomon, Ms. Limor Stern Second Year: Ms. Chen Katchevich, Mr. Ofer Lavi, Mr. Tomer Marziano, Ms. Ella Menashe First Year: Ms. Dana Drori, Ms. Karin Chazan, Mr. Idan Benisho, Ms. Yeela Rytsfeld	

15:00-15:30	Meeting with Alumni	Mr. Kobi Ben-Simhon (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Haifa/Haaretz Newspaper) Mr. Yossi Zilberman (Channel 2 TV) Mr. Avi Marciano (M.A. candidate, university of Haifa, Hammer Scholarship winner) Ms. Sharon Ringel (Teaching Assistant/M.A. candidate, Tel Aviv University) Ms. Maya Mazor-Tregerman (Teaching Assistant, on leave/M.A. candidate, University of Haifa) Ms. Lea Solomon (Teaching Assistant/M.A. candidate, Ben Gurion University)	
15:30-16:00	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee		
16:00-16:30	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the School of Comm.	Dr. Nachmi Paz, General Manager and Vice President Prof. Uri Regev, Chair, Academic Council Dr. Ariel Feldestein, Head of Academic Affairs Prof. Na'ama Sheffi, Head of School of Communication	

^All meetings will be held in Suite 103 of the Alexander Hotel

** The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.

** The visit will be conducted in English with the exception of students who may speak in Hebrew and anyone else who feels unable to converse in English.