

**Self Evaluation by the Department of Hebrew Language –
Responses to the Committee's Recommendations Appearing in the Specific Report**

Department's general response: We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the **Committee for the Evaluation of Hebrew Language Programmes** for their thorough, thoughtful and helpful report. We find it extremely significant that the Committee emphasizes the importance of the Hebrew Language on the national level and consequently recommends that such departments should have a special status in the universities and should maintain their integrity and be further strengthened. We are also very pleased that the Committee has commended the level of research carried within our Department, and that it was highly impressed by the way in which academic faculty are meeting the challenges of teaching students from different backgrounds and finding the right balance between academic education and the preparing of students for professional careers. Finally, we are extremely pleased about the Committee's commending the special blend of linguists and philologists unique to our Department.

Committee's recommendations	University's (U) / Department's (D) responses
1. The university should commit itself to replacing the current tenured positions in the department on the retirement of staff.	(D) The Department fully agrees with this recommendation. One staff member, Prof. Ilan Eldar, will be on sabbatical next year and then retire the year after. We strongly hope that his position will be replaced by another tenure-track staff member. Also, see our responses to Recommendations 2 and 3.
2. One additional tenured position should be allocated to the department in the field of Hebrew language in order to supply teaching for a wider range of subjects.	(D) The Department has identified an excellent candidate for such a position. The candidate specializes in Biblical Hebrew (and especially, the poetry of Biblical Hebrew, a research area that is currently lacking in our Department) and Northwest Semitic languages. We have approached the Dean concerning the possibility of hiring this person for a tenure-track position as of the academic year of 2013-2014. We hope that the Rector will approve and grant the Department with the position. (U) The University Administration undertakes a thorough and methodical process of evaluation before recruiting young faculty members. This process is based on an international search for potential candidates and on a careful examination of the academic excellence of potential candidates as well as on specific priorities of the University.

Committee's recommendations	University's (U) / Department's (D) responses
3. The University should encourage and give priority to the applications to the Alon scholarship by the department of Hebrew studies.	(D) The Department submitted a candidate for the Alon Fellowship last year, and we are very pleased to report that our candidate, Dr. Dalit Assouline, was awarded the fellowship and joined our Department in October 2012. Dr. Assouline is an expert in the field of Haredi Yiddish, and she strengthens our Department in the domains of Jewish languages, sociolinguistics and language contact, as well as in the Hebrew of the Enlightenment (a research domain that was not previously represented in our Department).
4. The university should make a slight increase in the threshold for admission and make available additional resources for tutorial coaching in the department.	(D) In line with the University's policy to slightly increase the admission threshold, the 'sechem' threshold for this academic year was raised from 490 to 500. We hope to be able to increase it even more in the coming years.
5. Efforts should be made to create a research centre in the department.	(D) We fully agree with this recommendation and are trying to find funds to establish research centres related to research projects of the faculty members. Prof. Yael Maschler was recently awarded a research grant by the Israel Science Foundation for a project entitled "The emergent grammar of Hebrew clause-combing" in the field of spoken Hebrew discourse and syntax. She is employing several students in our Department (from all degrees) as research assistants, as well as a student from the Department of Computer Science (who is guided also by a computational and corpus linguist from that department). We hope that this research group will grow into a research lab or centre. We are also exploring possibilities for establishing a centre for Jewish Languages. The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities recently asked Prof. Tamar Zewi to establish a chair for the study of the Jewish community in Egypt (the University has received a donation for this purpose). This chair will be dedicated to the study of the Jewish community in Egypt through the ages from its foundation in the first millennium BCE to the modern era, and will support study and teaching of all relevant areas. We hope to be able to make this chair the basis for the establishment of a centre for Jewish languages, and we are currently seeking funding for this purpose.