Comments of TAU Hebrew as regards the report of the committee for the evaluation of the Hebrew programme, appointed by the Council for Higher Education.

The comments, written in boldface, will follow the summary and each of the recommendations that appear in the report:

Summary

The Hebrew Language programme is a centre of international excellence in a field that is of national importance in the State of Israel. The standard of teaching and research is very high. There is no concentration of excellence outside of Israel as is found in this programme in Tel-Aviv University and in departments of Hebrew language in other Israeli universities. The Evaluation Committee commends the staff of the programme in particular for their impressive efforts to adapt to the difficult circumstances over the last few years. It is essential to allow the staff members to work in the atmosphere of confidence that their work will continue in future years.

The head of the department of Hebrew Culture Studies, Prof. Moshe Florentin, being a member of the Hebrew Language programme, as well as all other members of staff at our programme, are very pleased of the report written by the international committee appointed by the Council for Higher Education. We are all very much obliged to the members of the international committee for their thorough and meticulous work and for their endeavours in compiling the present report. We are proud to have been portrayed so favourably by the committee and to have gained the following recommendation, on which we comment herewith. We should like to add that some of our recent actions taken by the programme concur with the committees's recommendations,

The specific recommendations of the Evaluation Committee are as follows:

1. It is essential for the current tenured positions of the programme to be maintained after the retirement of staff in the next few years ahead and to be further consolidated by an additional tenured position.[1]

Indeed, in May 2012 we published an advertisement for a post at Hebrew Language programme, TAU. The advertisement specified next academic year, starting in October

[1] Since the site visit and the drafting of the report the Evaluation Committee received the welcome news that such an additional tenured position has indeed been assigned to the programme.

2013, as the year when the post was to be staffed. Rather shortly afterwards we have completed the process of screening the candidates. The final decision concerning the post and the person who won it will be made in the beginning of the second semester this year, namely around March 2013.

2. The allocation of replacement posts after the retirement of staff from the programme should be made directly to the Hebrew Language Programme.

TAU is keenly aware of the fact that within 5 years the programme is about to lose 4 out of 4.5 of its posts due to retirements and therefore granted it an eagerly awaited post, which is supposed to be in effect as of next academic year.

3. The unique identity of the Hebrew Language programme must be robustly protected and not allowed to become dissipated within the broader unit of the Department of Hebrew Culture.

The staff at TAU Hebrew programme is doing its very utmost to maintain disciplinary uniqueness in the framework of the Department of Hebrew Culture Studies into which the programme is incorporated. Despite this incorporation, its own curriculum has remained intact and unscathed. Furthermore, the downplay and poor representation of this programme on the website of the TAU Registration and Admission Centre has been remedied, and its online visibility is now very much improved there and elsewhere on TAU webpages.

4. Further attempts should be made to collaborate with other programmes without administrative restructuring, especially the Linguistics Department, in both teaching provision and research. These efforts should be mutual, with the Linguistics Department also being more open to collaboration.

Several research students have recently been admitted to a joint supervision by members of staff of the Hebrew programme and of the Department of Linguistics, and we deem this a most desirable and fruitful cooperation. This cooperation is further enhanced by the addition of general linguistic oriented courses to the curriculum.

5. A greater extent of the core teaching of the programme should be taken over by tenured staff consequent upon the programme being allocated an additional tenured position.

This is indeed what we aspire. We shall approach the fulfillment of this desideratum once the new post will be staffed.

6. A course introducing students to a wider range of medieval texts should be introduced into the programme.

In our decision concerning the candidate who won the post at our programme we have taken into consideration the scholarly competence of this candidate as, *inter alia,* a future instructor of a philological course dealing with Medieval Hebrew.

7. Additional resources should be allocated to the programme that would allow an increase in hours for small group tutorials, especially at the level of BA.

The Hebrew Language programme staff is directing some of the students to courses in other programmes, thereby allowing its own staff some more possibilities towards fulfilling this cause.

8. Attempts should be made to offer more flexibility in timetabling of classes to make it easier for students with day jobs to attend.

We spare no effort to adapt our curriculum to the requirements and timetables of our students. Indeed, the MA studies are mostly concentrated on one single day, the editing studies stretch over two days only, and we have permanent days for other specific studies as well, such as complimentary studies for MA. All these efforts force some of our teachers to inconveniently disperse their teaching hours over different days, and all this for the sake of our students' convenience.

9. The possibility should be explored of setting up a research institute for support of research in the Hebrew language programme.

The head of the Department of Hebrew Culture Studies is doing his utmost for obtaining funds required for such a research institute.