



**Committee for the Evaluation of Sociology and Anthropology Study Programs**

**University of Haifa**

**Faculty of Social Sciences**

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Evaluation Report**

**August 2012**

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## **Chapter 1- Background**

At its meeting on July 14, 2009, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Sociology and Anthropology.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as a Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- Prof. Seymour Spilerman – Department of Sociology, Columbia University, USA, Committee Chair
- Prof. Arne Kalleberg - Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina, USA
- Prof. Herbert Lewis - Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, USA
- Prof. Leslie McCall - Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, USA\*
- Prof. Yitzhak Samuel - Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Haifa, Israel
- Prof. Moshe Shokeid - Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Israel
- Prof. Florencia Torche - Department of Sociology, NYU, USA†.

***Ms. Yael Franks*** - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to‡:

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Civil Engineering, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2009).

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\* Prof. Leslie McCall did not take part in the evaluation of OUI, TAU, BIU and AUC

† Prof. Florencia Torche joined the committee at a later stage, after the first round of visits in January 2012, thus did not take part in the evaluation of BGU, HUJI, Academic College Emek Yezreel and University of Haifa

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

## **Chapter 2-Committee Procedures**

The Committee held its first meetings on January 02, 2012 during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Sociology and Anthropology Study programs.

In January 2012, the Committee held its first cycle of evaluation, and visited Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, University of Haifa, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Academic College of Emek Yezreel. In May 2012 the Committee conducted its second evaluation cycle, and visited The Open University, Tel Aviv University, Bar Ilan University and Ariel University Center of Samaria. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students, and toured the visited departments.

This report deals with the **Department of Sociology and Anthropology at University of Haifa.**

The Committee's visit to University of Haifa took place on January 05<sup>th</sup>, 2012<sup>§</sup>.

The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2.**

The Committee thanks the management of University of Haifa and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit at the institution.

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<sup>§</sup>In accordance with the CHE's policy, Prof. Yitzhak Samuel did not participate in the evaluation of Sociology-Anthropology studies at University of Haifa in order to prevent the appearance of a conflict of interests

### **Chapter 3: Evaluation of Sociology and Anthropology Studies Program at University of Haifa**

*This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. 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.*

#### **Background**

The University of Haifa was established in 1963 under the joint sponsorship of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Haifa Municipality. The university attained independence in 1970 and was fully accredited by the Council for Higher Education in 1972. The university's widely recognized traditional strengths lie in the humanities and social sciences, but it is now expanding to establish a comprehensive curriculum with faculties in the natural sciences as well as in the social sciences and humanities. The university is also endeavoring to augment its research and graduate programs relative to undergraduate study and to attract growing numbers of international students in English language programs at the graduate school.

The university is divided into six Faculties, including the Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences and Science Education, Law, Social Welfare and Health Studies, and Education. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology is located within the Faculty of Social Sciences but several sociologists and anthropologists are also on the faculties of Education, and of Social Welfare and Health Studies. Much of the Faculty of Social Sciences is housed in the impressive Rabin Complex and Jacobs Buildings. While the Faculty seeks excellence in research and teaching, it also maintains a commitment to social responsibility through various programs that support minority students, nontraditional students (e.g., in evening programs), and public servants.

#### **Mission and Goals of the Department**

At about the time that the university attained independent status in the early 1970s, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was established as an independent program of study offering both first and second degrees. In 1990, a full service department was created, with the approval of a Ph.D. program by the Council for Higher Education. Since that point the department has enjoyed an excellent reputation in both national and international circles, particularly in the areas of ethnic and race relations, social stratification, Arab and Israeli society, and criminology. The senior faculty are highly regarded international experts in these fields, and have served in top administrative positions in the department as well as at the university level. Several of them have retired and their exodus will continue over the next few years. In addition, some faculty have been lured to other universities. Taken together, these losses have precipitated a critical period of transition for the department.

At this juncture, the principal concern of the department is to maintain its research excellence and international stature by reinforcing and rebuilding in some fields of longstanding strength, while forging a new identity by venturing into different areas of specialization. Building on the strengths of existing faculty, the department is crafting programs in economic sociology and in technology and society. Finally, the department is committed to redesigning its Ph.D. curriculum and to providing training and workshops in cutting edge statistical techniques that are open to all graduate students.

In line with trends at the university, the department is devoting a larger share of its teaching and training resources to the graduate program. Enrollments are declining at the undergraduate level but rapidly expanding at the MA level. Given the evolving shift in the enrollment distribution, the department is seeking to maintain its faculty at a size that will protect the high caliber of instruction and research. Also, part of its articulated mission is to provide educational opportunity to Arab minority students and to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and these efforts are intensive of faculty time and resources. The department appears to be successful in these endeavors but will require support from the university to maintain its research and pedagogical excellence.

## **Study Programs and Students**

### **BA program**

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has two tracks leading to a BA degree: a single major track in Sociology and Anthropology; and a double major track in which Sociology and Anthropology is combined with another department.

The number of BA students has declined in recent years, from 755 (in 2007) to 417 (in 2011). This decline is in part attributable to the growing interest of students in more "practical" fields, and this is noted in the Self-Evaluation Report. Many students wish to choose a major that can directly assist them in securing employment upon completion of the BA degree, and the field of sociology/anthropology is not seen as a discipline that is linked to a profession. It should be noted that this enrollment decline has also occurred in other sociology/anthropology departments in Israel.

This preference by students is expressed in two developments. First, within the department there is a fairly high drop out rate after one year in the BA program. This appears to be largely a result of Arab women transferring to the Faculty of Social Welfare after their first year of study in the department. Social work is the desired destination of these students but there is a minimum age for acceptance into that school, and minority women, not serving in the army, usually are too young to enter directly. Thus, the department serves as a way station for them until the entry age is reached.

A second factor responsible for the decline in enrollment is the growth of the colleges. In the past, many students enrolled in sociology/anthropology because they could not secure

entrance into departments such as economics or psychology at the university--fields believed to offer better employment prospects but which have very high entrance requirements. But with the advent of the colleges, students who cannot enter into these disciplines at Haifa University now have a choice: study sociology/anthropology at the university or enroll in their preferred specialty at one of the colleges. Clearly, many students are choosing the latter.

It is not evident that the department can influence this trend, except to provide job skills at the BA level. However, the department does not see the preparation of BA students for the labor force as an essential mission, and the Committee concurs with this assessment. Hence, it is probably necessary for the department--and the university--to accept the loss of the more practical-oriented students to other departments and to the colleges, and concentrate on the smaller number of academically-oriented BA students and on the graduate programs.

Students in the BA program must take coursework in both sociology and anthropology. There seems to be a reasonable balance of classes between these two disciplines. The array of courses in sociology seems adequate. However, the committee is concerned that the variety of electives in anthropology is too limited. In particular, there should be more coverage of ethnographic work, including, but not restricted to, the Israeli experience with immigration and ethnic cultures.

### **MA study**

The Department offers the MA degree in six areas of specialization: Sociological Theory; Applied Social Research; Applied Organization Studies; Anthropology; Technology and Society; and Economic Sociology. Until recently there was a specialization in Criminology and Law, which has been closed because of the retirement of key personnel in this field and the creation of a new school of criminology within the university. The concentrations in Technology and Society and in Economic Sociology are new MA programs. In general, the Committee was impressed by the diversity of the specialties, which offer students a variety of study options.

Enrollment at the MA level has increased substantially in recent years as the labor market has increasingly rewarded higher level educational credentials. It is also the case that the CHE provides an incentive to the university in the form of more generous funding for MA students than for BA students.

The enrollment increase in the department is due largely to the attractiveness of the organizational sociology specialty, especially the non-thesis option, which leads directly to job placements. While the University of Haifa tends to be regional in its draw of students, mainly from the north of the country, the organizational sociology specialty attracts students from all over the country. Because of its visibility this program is very selective, typically admitting 20 out of 120 applicants, so the students are very good. They seem well satisfied, though the Committee did get the impression that more statistical training would

be welcomed by the students in this concentration. That program, however, is losing some of its key personnel, which must be replaced.

The other MA specialties also show strong enrollments and well crafted programs of study. The Committee takes particular note of the concentration in Applied Social Research. This specialty has attractions for students seeking a terminal MA that will provide them with labor market skills in the areas of data analysis, survey design, and program evaluation. But these skills also equip students for advanced graduate study in fields such as stratification, educational sociology, and migration. Moreover, this program has become a vehicle for bringing faculty from outside Israel to give short courses in advanced methodological topics that are then open to all students in the department.

Most of the areas of specialization offer both thesis and non-thesis tracks. The non-thesis MA is relatively new. Since its introduction the distribution of enrollment in the thesis versus non-thesis track has shifted from 2:1 to 1:2. The increasing emphasis by the department on attracting non-thesis students is largely due to the incentive structure established by the university: the department is reimbursed only modestly more for each MA student in the thesis tracks. MA students on non-thesis tracks are less demanding of faculty resources and can be graduated more quickly.

A drawback of the non-thesis track is that it has a more applied focus and leads to a terminal MA degree. Thus, non-thesis track students do not contribute much to the research focus of the department. In part, the department is attempting to adapt by encouraging students to delay making a track choice until late in their first year of MA study, then encouraging the more qualified students to enroll in the thesis track.

A challenge for the department is to make an effective transition from a focus on BAs students to MA students. One difficulty confronted by the faculty is the relatively meager amount of fellowship and teaching assistant funds for MA students. As a result, the department feels that it is not able to compete with other Israeli universities in attracting the best students in the country. Apparently, this is a problem throughout the social sciences at the University of Haifa, and will have to be solved at the university level. It was suggested that this matter, along with other constraints on funding, derives in part from the decision by the university to establish new departments in the life sciences. While the wisdom of such an undertaking is not a matter to be addressed by this committee, we do point out that the university would be well advised to protect the quality of its existing departments when committing resources to new undertakings.

#### **Ph.D. program**

Enrollment in the Ph.D. program has remained fairly stable in recent years, averaging about 24 students. The lack of financial support for these students is a great concern to the faculty. There are very few fellowships and the level of support in the available awards is modest. All of the students interviewed by the committee had extra jobs, which slows their progress in completing the degree. Again, as with the MA program, lack of financial support weakens the department in its competition for the best students in Israel.

Nonetheless, the department is committed to doctoral training. It has added mandatory courses for PhD students in theory construction and in the preparation of research proposals and journal articles, and offers several workshops each year on different topics. It is the committee's understanding that the assistance with proposal and journal writing is oriented to Hebrew language outlets; if so, it is our suggestion that guidance also be offered with the preparation of articles for English language publications.

We are impressed that the department has joined the European program in Socio-Economic and Statistical Studies. Students accepted to this program receive training at a European University as well as at Haifa, and receive the degree of Doctor Europeus as well as a PhD from the University of Haifa. We see participation in this program as an expansion of the training available to PhD students in the department as well as an extension of the opportunity set available to graduates from the Haifa department.

## **Faculty**

The faculty is well balanced, with multiple specialties, a strong research agenda in both qualitative and quantitative work, and strengths in both sociology and anthropology. They have degrees from the best schools in the U.S. and U.K., as well as from Israeli universities. The faculty is productive with many publications and research grants, and is well regarded by its international peers.

However, the reputation of the department is in danger of being eroded. This is because of a steep decline in faculty size--a reduction from 24 FTE's in the recent past to 17 FTE's at the current time, which, in turn, is a consequence of the recent retirement of some prominent faculty and of the difficulty the department appears to have in recruiting candidates with the particular specialties that fit with its program.

The reduction in size leaves the faculty spread thin in trying to staff an active training program in multiple specialties, which is a strength of the department. Equally important, this handicaps the ability of the department to maintain a robust research agenda. In empirical areas, especially, it is common for several faculty to collaborate on a research project; in stratification research--one of the strengths of the department--the lessening of collaboration possibilities is a special handicap since the analysis of large and complex data sets has become the norm in this field. While the Committee does not consider it vital that the department be regrown to its former size, we recommend that the university permit the department to increase to 19-20 FTE's over the next few years.

The department clearly needs to add a faculty member in organization studies. Political sociology and stratification studies are also areas in need of bolstering, in light of recent and impending retirements. Further, because of the small size of the anthropology unit, consideration should be given to adding an anthropologist, especially one with relatively broad comparative experience. In the main, however, the Committee felt that the department was well-managed and capable of making intelligent decisions about its

composition so our comments here are more in the nature of suggestions than compelling recommendations.

The looming retirements in the next few years provide the department with an opportunity to rethink where it wants to be in the future. It needs to address the question of how it wants to be distinctive in the Israeli context, as well as its role internationally. The Committee recognizes that the composition of the faculty will be shaped by the specializations of the best candidates that are available on the market. At the same time it is necessary for the department to be able to make coherent decisions in terms of the areas that it would like to build and strengthen. This necessitates the preparation of a development plan by the department, indicating the subfields that it would like to build. In turn, this requires the university to give special consideration to a recommended candidate that fits into the department's vision of its future, beyond the university's proper insistence on excellence.

## **Research**

The department has a distinguished record of producing high quality research of national and international acclaim in the fields of stratification, ethnic relations in Arab and Israeli society, criminology, and organizational studies. Each year, faculty members publish in internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals within their fields of specialization, as well as in the top general interest journals in sociology and anthropology. An impressive share of the publications involve joint authorship among members of the faculty, sometimes combining diverse fields such as social stratification and culture, youth studies and network analysis, anthropology and the sociology of markets, and gender studies and family demography.

The faculty is active in obtaining external research grants. In the past five years the Israel Science Foundation supported over two dozen research projects, with total funds awarded in excess of 3,500,000 NIS. An equivalent amount over this period came from a number of national and international agencies, including several grants from the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and the German Federal Ministry of Education. The majority of submissions were for competitive grants. The topics ranged across a variety of specialties (e.g., criminal justice, labor market dynamics, ethnic inequalities, health outcomes, the psychology of organizations, culture and consumption), with a portion encompassing comparative studies of Israel and other societies.

The faculty is impressively embedded in the international social networks of their scholarly peers. Faculty members are energetic in presenting their research at international conferences and as invited scholars at universities within and outside of Israel. Many are core members of the International Sociological Association's Research Section on Social Stratification (RC 28) and the European Sociological Association, as well as the Israel Sociological Association and the Israel Anthropological Association. In addition, several faculty serve on the editorial boards of internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals located in Europe and the United States.

## **Infrastructure**

The department is located in the handsome Rabin complex along with most of the other departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Faculty offices are of good size; there is a modern conference room and offices for teaching assistants and Ph.D. students. Wireless internet service is available throughout the complex. The department is in close proximity to the library, which has an extensive collection of books, documents, and electronic databases for the social sciences and humanities. The faculty appear to be satisfied with the library's responsiveness to their requests for the purchase of books and journals. Finally, the library seems to be a comfortable and popular meeting place for students.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

The Committee sees the Department of Sociology and Anthropology as a locus of past excellence, with a deserved reputation for the quality of its research. The department is now in a period of transition and vulnerable to a decline in the caliber of its scholarship and training. Our recommendations are intended to ensure that our appraisal of its past excellence will continue to characterize its future.

1. The department should formulate a strategic plan for where it would like to be in the near future, how it wishes to situate itself in the Israeli context and internationally. This should be expressed as a 5-year proposal, submitted to the university administration, and indicating the program areas in which it wishes to invest. The university, in turn, should assist the department in this endeavor by giving special consideration to faculty candidates who are both excellent in promise and fit with the vision. This plan should be submitted within a year.
2. The committee recommends that the university permit the department to expand to 19-20 FTE's, which is still well below its previous size of 24 FTE's. This increase is necessary in order to maintain excellence in research in several subfields, to support the growth in graduate training, and to continue the department's commitment to a diverse undergraduate student body. The expansion should be completed within 4 years.
3. As part of the expansion and the replacement of retiring faculty, the department has identified a need for an organizational sociologist and an anthropologist. The Committee concurs with this assessment. These positions should be filled within 3 years.
4. A different consideration in maintaining excellence is the ability to compete for the best graduate students in the country. In this regard, the department is handicapped by having very few fellowships and assistantships available for MA and PhD students. It is recommended that the department be allotted a greater level of support from the university administration for this purpose.

**Signed by:**

*Sy Spilerman*

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Prof. Seymour Spilerman,  
Chair

*Arne Kalleberg*

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Prof. Arne Kalleberg

*Herbert A. Lewis*

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Prof. Herbert Lewis

*Leslie McCall*

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Prof. Leslie McCall

*M. Shokeid*

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Prof. Moshe Shokeid

## Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment -



February, 2012

שר החינוך  
**Minister of Education**  
وزير التربية والتعليم

Prof. Seymour Spilerman  
Department of Sociology  
Columbia University  
USA

Dear Professor Spilerman,

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 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Sociology - Anthropology Studies.

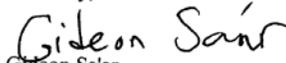
The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Seymour Spilerman (Chair), Prof. Arne Kalleberg, Prof. Herbert Lewis, Prof. Leslie McCall, Prof. Yitzhak Samuel Prof. Moshe Shokeid and Prof. Florencia Torche.

Ms. Yael Franks will coordinate the Committee's activities.

In your capacity as Chair 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 Chair of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

  
Gideon Sa'ar

Minister of Education,  
Chairperson, The Council for Higher Education

*Enclosures:* Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Michal Neumann, The Quality Assessment Division  
Ms. Yael Franks, Committee Coordinator

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כתובת אתר ממשל זמין: <http://gov.il>

כתובת אתר המשרד: <http://www.education.gov.il>

**Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule**

**The Department of Sociology & Anthropology - Schedule of site visit -  
University of Haifa**

**Thursday, January 5, 2012**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>
08:45-09:15	Opening session with The heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	<b>Prof. David Faraggi</b> , Rector <b>Prof. Perla Werner</b> , Vice Rector <b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the faculty of Social Sciences <b>Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum</b> , Manager, Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector <b>Ms. Noi Snir</b> , Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector
09:15-09:45	Meeting with head of Faculty of Social Sciences	<b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences
09:45-10:30	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology	<b>Dr. Meir Yaish</b> , Head of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology <b>Prof. Gustavo Mesh</b> , Former Head of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology <b>Prof. Arye Rattner</b> , Editor-in-Chief of the Self-Evaluation Report <b>Ms. Klara Prokopetz</b> , Administrative Assistant to Head of the Department
10:30-11:15	Meeting with senior academic staff and representatives of relevant committees*	Dr. Uri Ben-Eliezer (Head of the BA Committee) Prof. Nurit Bird-David Dr. Asaf Darr Dr. Tsipy Ivry Dr. Tally Katz-Gerro Prof. Vered Kraus Dr. Asaf Levanon Dr. Alisa Lewin Prof. Rebeca Raijman (Head of the MA Committee) Prof. Ilan Talmud (Head of the PhD Committee)
11:15-12:00	Meeting with Junior academic staff*	Mr. Robert Cserni Ms. Rena Kessem Ms. Ariane Ofhir Mr. Guy Paikowsky
12:00-12:45	Meeting with Adjunct academic staff *	Prof. Michael Saltman (Emeritus) Dr. Hila Hofstetter Mr. Yoram Melamed Mr. Roni Polonsky

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>
12:45-13:30	Lunch <b>(in the same room)</b>	Closed-door meeting of the committee
13:30-14:15	Meeting with BA students**	Up to 8 students
14:15-15:00	Meeting with MA students**	Up to 8 students
15:00-15:45	Tour of facilities: classrooms, library, offices	Visit in the library accompanied by <b>Dr. Tsipy Ivry</b> (Department staff member in charge of the University library and archives) and <b>Ms. Cecilia Harel</b> (Library staff).
15:45-16:30	Meeting with PhD students**	
16:30-17:15	Meeting with Alumni**	<b>BA Graduates</b> Double Track Ms. Yevgenya Blum Single Track Ms. Dana Skol <b>MA Graduates</b> <b>Program in Theoretical Sociology</b> Ms. Victoria Brat Ms. Tahel Dahan <b>Program in Applied Organizational Sociology</b> Ms. Vered Alon Mr. Yaron Josseph <b>PhD Graduates</b> Dr. Nohad Ali Dr. Yael Keshet Dr. Dan Nave Dr. Dalit Simchai (tentative)
17:15-18:00	Closed-door working meeting of the committee	
18:00-18:45	Summation meeting with heads of department and institution	<b>Prof. David Faraggi</b> , Rector <b>Prof. Perla Werner</b> , Vice Rector <b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the faculty of Social Sciences <b>Dr. Meir Yaish</b> , head of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology <b>Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum</b> , Manager, Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector <b>Ms. Noi Snir</b> , Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector

\* 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.