



**Committee for the Evaluation of Economics Study Programs**

**College of Management Academic Studies**

**The School of Economics**

Evaluation Report

**May 2017**

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## **Chapter 1: Background**

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Economics during the academic year of 2015-2016.

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

- **Prof. Georg Winckler** - former Rector of the University of Vienna, Austria - committee chair (Emeritus).
- **Prof. Russell Cooper**<sup>1</sup> - Department of Economics, Penn State University, USA.
- **Prof. David Dillenberger** - Department of Economics, University of Pennsylvania, USA.
- **Prof. Philippe Weil** - Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium.
- **Prof. Eyal Winter**<sup>2</sup> - Department of Economics, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

Ms. Maria Levinson-Or served as the Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:<sup>3</sup>

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Economics, 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 September 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> Due to scheduling constraints, Prof. Russell Cooper did not participate in the site visits to the University of Haifa, Ben-Gurion University and Bar-Ilan University.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the CHE's policy, Prof. Eyal Winter did not participate in the evaluation of the Economics department at the Hebrew University to prevent the appearance of a conflict of interests.

<sup>3</sup> The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## **Chapter 2: Committee Procedures**

The Committee held its first meetings on 18.12.2016, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Economics Study programs in Israel.

In December 2016, the Committee held its visits of evaluation, and visited the Academic College Tel-Aviv Yaffo, the College of Management Academic Studies, Tel-Aviv University, Ruppin Academic Center, the Open University, Tel-Hai Academic College, the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel, the Hebrew University, University of Haifa, Bar-Ilan University and Ben-Gurion University. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

During its visit to Israel, the committee divided into two sub-committees for conducting parallel visits. The members who visited the institution are prof. Georg Winckler, prof. Phillip Weil and prof. Eyal Winter. However, all committee members were part of the following discussion and contributed to drafting the report.

This report deals with the School of Economics at the College of Management. The Committee's visit to the College of Management took place on December 19, 2016.

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

The Committee thanks the management of the College of Management and the School of Economics for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit at the institution.

## **Chapter 3: Evaluation of Economics Study Program at the College of Management**

*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.*

The committee was impressed with the School of Economics at the College of Management. We encourage the initiatives of the new president and the new Dean of the School and their attempts to advance the college and the economics program. The new ideas of the School of Economics with respect to internships, interdisciplinary center for innovation and entrepreneurship, internationalization, student clubs and collaboration with relevant industries will help strengthen the BA program.

The committee explicitly welcomes the efforts of the School to internationalize the BA program. Given that the labor market for which the school wants to prepare its students is becoming more globalized, an increase in English courses and an enhancement of writing skills in English is necessary.

The school of Economics has a heterogeneous student body, stemming from the fact that it also accepts students with relatively low grades in the matriculation exams and psychometric test. While this within itself does not pose a specific issue, and the committee appreciates the School's outreach to students with a weaker academic background, we did find it to cause difficulties in teaching. The School should conduct an analysis on how students with lower entry grades perform during the BA studies. Such an analysis could lead to a set of measures by the School on how to better integrate these students into the study program.

The Administration wishes to strengthen the academic level of the School by changing the balance between quality and quantity of the students accepted to its study programs. While this is an important shift that will assist in improving and strengthening the BA program, the implementation is critical in order to ensure it does not harm the diversity of the student body.

The committee learned that the level of research is not sufficient (in terms of publications and grants). The new administration wishes to support and enhance research by recruiting research-oriented faculty, by eventually reducing the teaching load and by attracting additional funding for research. The implementation

of this new policy, as the president explained, needs time. Currently, a research center on regulation with 10 million NIS over 10 years has already been established. We support this new approach and vision, and would like to see it advance further, exploring various initiatives.

The M.A. program in applied economics does not meet standards. The program does not provide the students with the conceptual and analytical tools, and the statistical methods, required for in depth applied economic analysis. The current design of the M.A. program does not meet the requirements such a program should have. The current MA program should not be awarded full accreditation.

Based on the meetings the committee held at the school, we concluded that a more appropriate focus of the MA program could be economic policy making rather than applied economics. Given the new research center on regulation, a re-oriented M.A. program (policy orientated) makes sense.

## **Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations**

### **Essential:**

1. The MA program in its current form should not be awarded full accreditation.

### **Important:**

1. The college should articulate and communicate its mission and vision in terms of the balance between research and teaching.
2. The new policy to enhance and strengthen research should be implemented. If research is sufficiently strengthened, an MA program is conceivable.
3. The committee appreciates the School's outreach to students with a weaker academic background. An analysis of the resulting heterogeneity of the student body and its specific consequences for teaching should be carried out. It should lead to the implementation of an institutional policy regarding this issue.
4. More English courses and an enhancement of writing skills in English should be added to the study program.

**Signed by:**



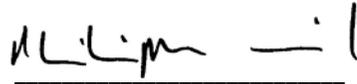
Prof. Georg Winckler - Chair



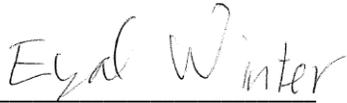
Prof. Russell Cooper



Prof. David Dillenberger



Prof. Philippe Weil



Prof. Eyal Winter

## Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



June 2016

Prof. Georg Winckler  
University of Vienna  
Austria

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: 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.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

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 the study programs in **Economics**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Russell Cooper, Prof. David Dillenberger, Prof. Oded Galor, Prof. Philippe Weil, and Prof. Eyal Winter. Ms. Maria Levinson-Or will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as the chair of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Rivka Wadmany  
Vice Chair,  
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

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

cc: Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul, Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE  
Ms. Maria Levinson-Or, Committee Coordinator

**Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule**

<u>Economics - Schedule of site visit</u> <u>The College of Management Academic Studies</u>		
<b>Monday, December 19, 2016, Room 262, Building D</b>		
09:00-09:30	Opening session with the heads of the institution	Prof. Asher Tishler, President Prof. Shmuel Ellis, VP for Academic Affairs Prof. Dan Elnathan, Director, QA
09:30-10:15	Meeting with the Head of the School of Economics	Dr. Itamar Shabtai, Dean Prof. Itzhak Zilcha, Former Dean, Director, QA
10:15-10:55	Meeting with senior academic staff *	Prof. Avi Ben-Bassat, Prof. Erez Siniver( Head, MA Program), Dr. Dalit Gafni (Associate Dean), Dr. Haim Shapira, Dr. Yevgeny Mugerma, Dr. Einat Neuman, Dr. Shahar Sansani, Mr. Gil Greshler, ( Head, Finance Dept.), Mr. Arik Horovitz
<b>10:55-11:05</b>	<b>Break</b>	
11:05-11:45	Meeting with Adjunct academic staff *	Prof. Gil S. Epstein, Dr. Odila Rosin, Mr. Gili Cohen, Mr. Nir Gabbay, Mr. Yossef Bahir, Mr. Nir Coval, Mr. Yigal Ronay, Mr. Shoham Cohen,
11:45-12:15	Open slot	<b>Presentation of the latest developments at the School of Economics, Dr. Itamar Shabtai, Dean</b>
12:15-13:00	Lunch (in the same room)	<b>Closed-door meeting of the committee</b>
13:00-13:45	Meeting with BA students**	
13:45-14:30	Meeting with MA students**	
14:30-15:15	Meeting with Alumni**	
<b>15:15-15:35</b>	<b>Closed-door meeting of the committee</b>	
15:35-16:00	Closing meeting with heads of institution and the Head of the School of Economics	Prof. Asher Tishler, Prof. Shmuel Ellis, Dr. Itamar Shabtai, Prof. Itzhak Zilcha, Prof. Dan Elnathan