



סגן הנשיאה לעניינים אקדמיים

February 19, 2018

Dr. Varda Ben Shaul
Deputy Director General for Quality Assessment
Council for Higher Education
Jerusalem

Dear Dr. Ben Shaul,

I am pleased to submit Beit Berl College's comments on the evaluation report of the International Committee on the English teacher education study programs.

The President of the College and myself wish to thank the members of the International Committee who visited the College in June 2017. The Committee's comprehensive report is both thorough and fair, expressing the major strengths and weaknesses of the English teacher training programs at the College. Its conclusions are in line with the College's strategy for academic development.

The report, which we received in November 2017, was distributed to the Deans of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Society and Culture, to the Head of the Arab Academic Institute of Education, to the Head of Teacher Education at the Faculty of Education and to the Heads of the English Departments. Our comments (in table format, as you requested) represent an integration of their separate comments and suggestions.

As you will see from our comments, we generally adopt the Committee's recommendations and plan to implement most of them immediately. We will continue to emphasize cooperation between the Jewish and Arab populations on campus, particularly in their disciplinary studies (literature and linguistics). At the same time, we will provide enough space for each population to develop its unique needs.

Best regards,

Prof. Amos Hofman
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Cc: Prof. Tamar Ariav, President
Prof. Bracha Alpert, Dean, Faculty of Education
Prof. Nurit Buchweitz, Dean, Faculty of Society and Culture
Dr. Ali Watad, Head, Arab Academic Institute of Education
Dr. Ilana Milstein, Head of Teacher Training, Faculty of Education
Dr. Susie Russak, Chairperson, English Track (Teacher Training Unit)
Dr. Rim Bshara, Chairperson, English Track (Arab Academic Institute)
Dr. Daniella Schonker, Head, Quality Assurance Unit

Comments on the Evaluation Report of the English Teacher Education Study Programs

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Overall Curriculum	
Essential recommendations	
Provision of support to students with diverse backgrounds and different levels of familiarity with English cultures.	Students of both the Jewish and Arab populations are regularly exposed to English language and culture through a variety of media sources. In addition, we often invite lecturers from English speaking countries to deliver guest lectures to the students. Some courses (e.g., Multilingualism, Pragmatics) include multicultural content.
Important recommendations	
Promote English as an <i>international</i> language orientation rather than English as a <i>foreign</i> language	This recommendation will be considered at faculty meetings. Modules viewing English as an international language will possibly be included in a number of courses.
Courses	
Essential recommendations	
More systematic and consistent review of individual courses based on student feedback and departmental observation	Department heads will meet regularly with groups of student representatives. New faculty members will be observed 1-2 times a year. Student feedbacks are taken into consideration in tenure and promotion procedures.
Important recommendations	
Review of effectiveness of online courses. Emphasize preference of courses that permit interaction among the participants.	Online courses are important for working students, who wish to study at times that are convenient for them. However, based on the Committee's recommendation, all online courses at the English departments will be reviewed before the next academic year in order to decide which of them will be replaced by face-to-face or hybrid courses.
Syllabi	
Essential recommendations	
Provide uniform format to all syllabi, including learning outcomes and updated bibliography	All syllabi have been reviewed, and each teacher received a list of changes that have to be made in order to adhere to the course syllabi template from the Council for Higher Education, which follows a format similar to the Evaluation Committee's suggestions.

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Course titles of syllabi should clearly correspond with course content	Teachers are required to make necessary adjustments to their syllabi, beginning Spring semester, 2018.
Literature	
Essential recommendations	
Mandatory literature courses should address different approaches to text interpretation, including emphasis on the multicultural dimension of Anglophone literatures	Effective next academic year, a new mandatory course will be offered on literary theory ("Approaches and Movements in Literary Critique") that will provide tools for the analysis of all literary forms. We will also offer an "Introduction to Drama" course, and a new course on minor literature.
Curriculum should provide a balance between broad overview courses and specialized, in depth, elective ones.	In addition to the points above, a few elective courses will be added, e.g., "World Literature", "Literature and Globalization", "Post-humanism in Literature".
Linguistics	
Desirable recommendations	
Courses in linguistics, including sociolinguistics, should be taught to mixed populations	Most linguistics courses are already taught to mixed populations of students. In the next academic year, we will strive to make all linguistics courses mixed. Exceptions will be minor and temporary.
Proficiency	
Essential recommendations	
Extra proficiency courses should be provided in the first year to students needing them	The College provides 2 extra proficiency courses for students admitted to the English program with the lowest level of proficiency. The College is aware of the specific needs of the Arab students, for whom English is third (or even fourth) language. In some cases we will allow 2 extra proficiency courses at the expense of 2 elective disciplinary courses.

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Important recommendations	
At most levels, Arabic and Hebrew speaking students should take proficiency courses together	<p>Proficiency courses are separated for Arab and Jewish students only in the first year of studies. From the second year up, these courses are taken together by both populations.</p> <p>In this context, it is important to note that there are substantial cultural differences between Arab and Jewish students and these must be taken into consideration. Studying proficiency courses separately is a unique opportunity to help the Arab students develop self-confidence and to reach higher achievements in the disciplinary courses. We do want Jewish and Arab students to study together, but we must take into account specific needs of different populations, in order to ensure academic success.</p>
Students with high oral and written proficiency should be exempted from the relevant proficiency courses	<p>As of the next academic year, all students (Jewish and Arab alike) will be required to take placement texts. In addition, at the end of each course, they will take a test, similar to the placement test. Students with advanced proficiency achievements will be exempt from taking the next level proficiency course.</p>
Desirable recommendations	
Arab and Jewish students should study most courses together, but in the final seminars it may be advisable to study separately if there are substantial differences in proficiency	<p>Seminars are studied separately.</p>
Culture and heritage courses	
Desirable recommendations	
Jewish students should have opportunities to study Arabic and Arab cultures	<p>Jewish students study Arab culture in sociolinguistics courses which are taught to both populations together. In addition, the College provides many opportunities for both populations to meet and learn about their specific cultures (e.g., activities of the Center for the Advancement of Shared Society). This is not specific to the English departments.</p>

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Pedagogical courses	
Essential recommendations	
Methodology courses should include guidance on practical teaching strategies	The methodology course includes a component of guided presentation of case studies, with emphasis on practice and teaching strategies. A new simulation center, to be opened at the College next year, will provide more opportunities in this respect.
Course on classroom management should be mandatory	The course is now mandatory to all students.
Important recommendations	
Methodology classes should be taught to mixed populations, while including components that address specific needs of Jewish and Arab schools	The linguistic and cultural needs of both populations, as well as Arab and Jewish school cultures, are different. That has significant influence on methodology, which is part of the practicum at schools. However, we are trying, in a number of courses or shared units of study, to bridge the differences between the populations and enable joint studies of Arab and Jewish students with the same pedagogical advisors and mentor teachers. This is still at the experimental stage, and we are not certain about the viability of combined methodology classes.
Program should ensure a balance of pedagogy in elementary and secondary school contexts	The new practicum model requires students of both populations practice teaching in elementary contexts in the second year, and secondary school contexts in the third year. At this point the teaching certificate we provide is up to 10 th grade, and does not include practice in matriculation classes. When this changes (probably with the introduction of an M.Teach. degree in English) we will provide practice teaching for matriculation as well.
Content and use of national curriculum should be included in pedagogical courses	Knowledge of the national curriculum is an integral part of our teacher training program. Moreover, several faculty members participate in Ministry of Education committees, and provide updates at staff meetings, which are later incorporated into course content.

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Teaching practice	
Essential recommendations	
Pedagogical instructors should have substantial teaching experience	All pedagogical advisors have substantial experience in the Israeli state school system.
Pedagogical advisors should be able to place their students with teachers who are good models for effective English language teaching	Every effort is made in order to ensure that students are placed at good schools with good mentor teachers.
Important recommendations	
Faculty members involved in the didactic and practicum spheres must hold, at minimum, a Master's degree, teacher certification and/or experience in the education system	All faculty members involved in didactics and practicum have at least MA degrees, teacher certification and broad experience in the educational system
Efforts should be made in order to maintain ties between pedagogical advisors and disciplinary teachers	Despite the restructuring of English studies at the College, we emphasize close cooperation between pedagogy and disciplinary studies. Some faculty members teach in both units.
Desirable recommendations	
The program should enable students to gain experience teaching in schools nor from their sector, if they wish	This option is provided for Arab students at their fourth year of studies, during their internship period.
Human resources/Faculty	
Important recommendations	
Apply a systematic and consistent process of induction for new faculty, including provision of a mentor and observation of Department Head	Support and induction for new teachers is provided on a voluntary basis. The College is now implementing a more structured guidance for new faculty members, at all departments. This is handled by the Center for the Advancement of Teaching. The department heads are expected to observe and provide regular feedback for new teachers during the first 3 years.
Desirable recommendations	
Faculty development seminars should extend beyond IT-associated workshops	The departments provide workshops for teacher development extending beyond IT application. At staff meetings and at annual conferences research interests are discussed.

Committee recommendation	Steps towards implementation
Professional development opportunities should accommodate the needs of as many teachers as possible, including adjunct faculty	See above.
Infrastructure	
Important recommendations	
Update online subscriptions to major English-teacher journals	The library will renew subscriptions to e-journals for which access to patrons is readily available through Primo discovery tool. The e-journal <i>Language Teaching</i> is currently subscribed to.
Key linguistics and English language teaching texts should be updated to the latest editions	The library will update the language teaching texts to the latest editions.
Merger of the two English programs	
Essential recommendations	
Number of students in oral proficiency course, practical pedagogical courses, and seminars should not exceed 20	This is dependent on budgetary considerations. We do our best to keep classes small, but it is not always possible not to exceed 20 students in these courses.
Representatives of students and possibly alumni should be informed about merger plans and included in the planning process	The disciplinary studies in linguistics and literature are by now merged, and all students are aware of this change.