



**Committee for the Evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences  
Studies**

**Bar-Ilan Report  
Department of Psychology**

**Evaluation Report**

**May 2009**

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## **Chapter 1- Background**

At its meeting on October 31, 2006 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences during the academic year 2006-2007.

Following this decision, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as the Chair of the CHE, appointed a committee for the evaluation of the academic quality of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences studies on April 29, 2008. On October 7 the committee was expanded and it currently comprises the following members<sup>1</sup>:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen, Department of Psychology, New York University- Committee Chair, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Victor Azarya, The Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University (emeritus), Israel**
- **Prof. Yinon Cohen, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Avishai Henik, Department of Psychology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel**
- **Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Canada**
- **Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Department of Psychology, Indiana University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Sidney Strauss - Chief Scientist at the Israeli Ministry of Education (previously- Department of Psychology, Tel Aviv University), Israel**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, U.S.A**

**Ms. Alisa Elon- Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.**

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the fact that there were 12 departments undergoing evaluation, committee members divided the visits amongst themselves.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to submit the following documents to the CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions which would include an evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences study programs, the Committee's findings and recommendations.
2.
  - 2.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study in Israeli institutions of higher education.
  - 2.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

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

The first stage of the quality assessment process consisted of self-evaluation, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the institutions under evaluation. This process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's guidelines as specified in the document entitled "The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines" (December 2006).

## **Chapter 2-Committee Procedures**

During May – June 2008 Committee members conducted a full-day visit to five of the twelve institutions whose Psychology and Behavioral Science study programs the committee was requested to examine.

During these meetings, the Committee met with the relevant officials at each institution, as well as with faculty members, students and alumni, and also conducted a tour of the campus.

***This report deals with the Department of Psychology at Bar-Ilan University.***

The Committee's visit to Bar-Ilan University took place on June 1, 2008.

The following members of the committee participated in the visit to Bar-Ilan University:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen- Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham**
- **Prof. Seymour Spilerman**
- **Prof. Sidney Strauss**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky**

The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The members of the committee thank the management of the institution and the Department of Psychology for the self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit.

## **Chapter 3- Evaluation of the Department of Psychology at Bar-Ilan University**

### **Background**

Bar-Ilan University opened in 1955-6 and was officially recognized by the CHE in 1969.

The University comprises six faculties.

The self-evaluation report states that in the academic year 2006-7 there were approximately 18,000 students on the Ramat-Gan campus (the university's primary campus) of which about 11,000 were studying towards a BA, 5,900 towards an MA and 1,700 were doctoral students.

The department at BIU was one of the first to be established at the university, in 1956. Bar-Ilan University's self-evaluation report stated that it has seven programs in the department, one BA program, five MA tracks and a PhD program. According to the self-evaluation report, the number of students in these programs during the academic year 2006-7 was 474 BA students, 193 MA students and 170 PhD students.

### **Mission, Goals, and Goal Attainment**

The department specifies its mission as one of research, teaching, and the training of clinical and research professionals. The mission also emphasizes service to the community, especially the provision of psychological therapy, rehabilitation, and consultation. Separate mission statements are also offered for each academic degree program. At the BA level, the mission is to introduce students to the primary areas of psychology, both theoretical and practical. At the level of the MA, the clinical tracks emphasize a practitioner-scientist model as their goal, while the social-organizational track seeks to combine theoretical and methodological knowledge with practical training, and the experimental-research track aims to prepare academic psychologists who have the skills to contribute to knowledge in the field. At the PhD level, the goal is to train investigators who are capable of conducting state-of-the-art research.

The committee's assessment is that the overall vision and the individual program visions are appropriate for a top tier department in the field of psychology. It is also commendable that the department has assumed a special commitment to its community and to the nation. Achieving these goals should be facilitated by the new interdisciplinary Brain Sciences Research Center, by the new Psychology Building, and by the creation of the Community Psychological Services Clinic. Consistent with this, the department seems to produce graduates of high quality at the BA level. However, based on the committee's meetings in the department and its examination of thesis papers provided, the committee's impression is that the work of the graduates at the MA and PhD levels is not always of the high quality that it should be, due perhaps to the unusually high student-professor ratio (the latter noted in the self-evaluation report), but also perhaps to the specific programs of study. Problems with the programs of study include lack of definition (and an unhelpful program name) of the experimental program, no social psychology program even though

top tier departments have such a program, and instead, a highly applied social organizational program that aims to become even more applied by focusing on business consulting. These problems present obstacles to departmental excellence, in addition to those mentioned in the self-evaluation, including insufficient integration of clinical training with research; lack of adequate laboratory space in the Psychology Building; limited access to e-journals, and an unusually large PhD program.

## **The Program of Study**

**BA Program.** The Department of Psychology includes several programs, and its curricular activities fit with their general mission and goals. It offers study toward a BA in Psychology in a traditional program that gives students grounding in the discipline – with sufficient scope and depth to enable pursuit of advanced studies or other endeavors. At the same time, excellence in the undergraduate program is limited by the fact that the department lacks faculty in core areas of the discipline of psychology (cognition, cognitive neuroscience, and social psychology), which restricts course offerings at the undergraduate level and deprives undergraduates of exposure to top-flight full-time faculty with research expertise in these core areas.

**Graduate Programs.** The department also offers study toward MA and Ph.D. degrees in five specific areas: Adult Clinical, Child Clinical, Rehabilitation, Social-Organizational, and Experimental Psychology. All the programs require research training, and this is as it should be. Overall, these programs offer a useful breadth of coverage in the department. However, both the internal coherence and substantive focus of some programs (experimental, and social organizational) are weak, and critical areas at the core of the discipline of psychology are entirely absent, such as cognitive and brain processes (despite the new Brain Sciences Research Center), basic research in social psychology (i.e., experimental social psychology), and developmental psychology. This does not make sense for a department that aspires to excellence.

Virtually all programs (with the exception of the experimental program) emphasize application at the expense of research, far more so than top research universities generally do. This is especially so for the social-organization program, which includes no basic research in social psychology. It leans strongly toward the applied area of human resources, and aims to move still further toward organizational consulting. Systematically establishing a robust presence of basic research in the department in areas at the core of the discipline, such as cognitive psychology, cognitive neuroscience, developmental, and experimental social psychology, is strongly recommended.

The experimental program includes a number of active, productive researchers. This program, however, lacks a content focus, and thus seems incoherent. Minimally, the area should be revamped, perhaps focused on cognition and brain science and renamed. This core area of the discipline of psychology is absolutely essential to any top-tier department. The department simply cannot be truly competitive, let alone reach the top ranks of research universities, without having such a program and making suitable faculty hires to establish it.

As noted, the social-organizational program currently emphasizes field work rather than basic research in social psychology and organization processes. The committee's view is that coverage of social psychology is weak, notably experimental social psychology corresponding to a lack of full time faculty doing basic research in this field, despite the fact that the title and description of the program suggest training in social psychology (as well as in organizational). State-of-the-science research training in social psychology focuses on experimental research in areas such as social cognition, intergroup behavior and prejudice, and automatic and self-regulatory processes. Faculty additions along these lines are essential and would contribute to the excellence of the department and to its international visibility. Organizational behavior programs, at least in the US, tend to be located in business schools rather than in psychology departments. To reach the top ranks of research universities, this department must thus build a program in basic research in social psychology and make targeted hires to do so.

As for the clinical program, the committee was disturbed by the statement in the program's self study that describes the curriculum as predominantly psychodynamic in focus and the training model as practitioner-scientist. The committee believes a university program should emphasize the reverse, that is, the more common: scientist-practitioner model. Moreover, a scientific approach includes a broader range of clinical practices, especially important for the clinical populations in the country. In addition, the emphasis on practice and away from recent advances in integrative clinical science does not seem to fit the department's stated mission. The committee, however, was pleased to see recent efforts directed toward increasing representation of faculty who take an empirically based approach to clinical training and practice. State-of-the-art clinical science training emphasizes cognitive and behavioral treatments, which have been shown to be effective interventions, for example, for PTSD and major depression. The committee commends the department for planning to move in this direction but our view is that much remains to be done to strengthen the clinical program by focusing on clinical science. Continued development in this direction is needed to establish and sustain excellence in these programs consistent with the department's forward-looking aims. The committee also favorably notes a trend toward increased integration and collaboration (e.g., course-sharing) among the three clinical programs, a trend that is likely to enhance excellence in all three programs.

## **Faculty**

The committee was impressed with the department's leadership, notably, the chair of the department who encourages free and frank exchange of views, suggesting leadership that is open to criticism and both aware of and actively thinking about many of the problems facing the department and the university. The faculty morale and loyalty seems to be high.

The department's faculty are active and productive psychological scientists, and appear to have publication records that compare favorably to those of other departments. They are qualified to teach the basic BA-level courses they teach and, on balance, the graduate-level courses as well. However, as noted, some courses that students should be exposed

to at both levels are not offered, presumably because there are not faculty with the relevant expertise to teach them. The committee notes that teaching is also not as valued in promotion procedures as it might be.

The higher administration considers the psychology faculty to be a strong group of academics and has continuously commended them for their many achievements as researchers, classroom instructors, and mentors. The coverage in the department is reasonable, although as noted there is the noticeable void in some areas and building in these areas would enhance the curriculum as well as the excellence of research training.

In addition, the committee is concerned that several faculty advisors seem to carry an unusually large number of MA and PhD students. While the ultimate criterion for what is considered “too much” and an “unfavorable faculty to student ratio” depends on the quality of the product, the department agrees that this is a problem and has begun to take steps to reduce the number of incoming PhD students without compromising current students. Because this change is new and remains “fresh ink,” the committee recommends that proposed changes be taken seriously and fully implemented (in accord with this report).

Promotion criteria within the department are generally comparable to other academic institutions. A problem the committee detects, however, is that there seems to be inefficiency in the timeline to promotion, especially in the two junior levels (from Doctor-Instructor to Lecturer and from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer), and ambiguity with regard to due process (how to obtain timely information, how to register a grievance, and so on).

There is also considerable variability in the internal coherence and curricular requirements within the various MA tracks, as noted, and this is likely to pose problems for current and future faculty hires and to hamper targeted recruitment of top-flight graduate students. In particular, the experimental psychology MA track has research-active faculty whose individual laboratories train graduate students in diverse areas ranging from language development to adult attachment and interpersonal relationships. This is not experimental psychology as defined in prior decades or as contemporaneously defined, i.e., in terms of cognitive psychology, perception, and brain processes. Nor is it largely social psychology. The ill-defined nature of the track (and its’ anachronistic name) has been the subject of healthy debate among the faculty. While the department recognizes that it is a shortcoming of a major psychology department not to have a program in cognition and perception or cognitive neuroscience, both for international visibility and for attracting top-notch faculty, it appears also to appreciate that the track as it stands attracts student who are “curious” about conducting research using experimental (vs. correlational) methods, a curiosity that can foster scientific discovery.

In addition, one program in the department suggests it offers specialization in social and organizational psychology, and yet has no critical mass of faculty who are social psychologists, nor a curriculum that can ensure students’ proficiency in current social psychological science. Given the paucity of faculty representation and coverage in the former, and the fact that 4 out of 5 of the track’s faculty are in the brink of retirement, the department has a golden opportunity to reconsider this emphasis, re-design the track, or

even consider what tracks would be most appropriate, given that top-tier departments internationally have programs in social psychology. A program focused on basic research in social psychology should be developed at Bar Ilan.

Finally, three of the departmental MA tracks are considered “clinical.” The clinical faculty face special challenges above and beyond those in other tracks. They supervise students’ clinical work and need as well to be responsive to curriculum requirements emanating from the licensing board and from internship placements, which do not always converge with what the faculty rightfully views as cutting edge training in clinical practice, i.e., that based on the best science available. The changes the committee views as necessary for bringing the program up to international standards in the field are detailed below in our overall recommendations, and are consistent with evidence-based practice and clinical sience internationally. At the same time, regardless of the heavier demands on the time of these faculty, their tenure clock and the expectations regarding research and publications are similar to those faced by their colleagues in the other programs. Obstacles to the research productivity of clinical faculty should be addressed and lessened. The committee thus recommends a process of self-evaluation to monitor this and to identify, formulate, and implement solutions for alleviating demands where feasible.

The committee commends the program (and the department) for having its own in-house, faculty-run clinic and practicum rather than “farming” clinical work only to adjuncts. The higher university administration sees the in-house psychology clinic as a clear strength of the entire department, as it offers low-cost, high-quality services to the local community, thus enhancing the mission of the university to contribute to Israeli society.

The committee notes as well that the enormous research potential of the in-house clinic has yet to materialize, a potential strength recognized at all levels of the University. The committee sees this as an important goal worth pursuing. The department has already started to make personnel assignment changes that are likely to help accomplish this goal (e.g., appointing a top-notch clinical scientist in the area of anxiety disorders to head the clinic). The committee strongly recommends that the department continue moving in this direction and fully implement its plan to establish specialty clinics where science and practice are well integrated. This will allow the program to accomplish its other stated goal of moving from a “Practitioner-Scientist” to a “Scientist-Practitioner” training model.

The department has not always been successful in recruiting new faculty to their open positions, even though they advertise these widely, including in international outlets. Perhaps this is attributable in part to relatively poor research facilities (which are now beginning to improve), and the high teaching load and large number of graduate students that must be supervised.

## **Students**

**Undergraduate program.** Students are accepted by equal weighting of matriculation and psychometric scores, above 9.9 matriculation and 650 psychometric. In the past year (2007-08), approximately 350 students were accepted to the program; of those, 170 chose

to enroll. Approximately 130-200 students graduate each year, indicating that the drop-out rate is low at the BA level. A number of places are reserved for foreign students, students of Ethiopian descent, and other special cases. They are selected after individual hearings according to their grades. They are conditionally accepted to their first year, and accepted as regular students if their grade average is 85 or more and no course is below 80.

Undergraduates (and also graduate students) praised the faculty for their teaching, research, and accessibility. They also praised the atmosphere, warm, cooperative, collaborative, helpful, and supportive, they say, in contrast to other universities. It was that atmosphere that attracted many of them to Bar Ilan. Some of the undergraduates attributed the supportive atmosphere among the students to the religious character of the university. The students noted several other positive resources: the brain science center, the clinics in the building.

Students were frank and open about their reservations as well. In terms of problems, undergraduates (and also graduates) regarded the computer and library services as woefully inadequate and antiquated. Undergraduates wanted more research opportunities. They also wanted more cutting edge faculty and research, such as in brain science.

**Graduate programs.** Admission criteria to clinical tracks are similar across the three tracks. Highly-qualified applicants are further screened on the basis of their self-descriptions and letters of recommendation and those who pass the initial screening are interviewed by the appropriate track faculty. Approximately 20-30% do not pass this stage. This is followed by further interviews and discussions by track faculty. Out of approximately 150-200 applicants to each track, 12-15 are admitted to each track.

Admission to the social organizational track has a similar standard; interviews were eliminated because they were found not cost-effective. Typically 15 students are admitted out of 70 applicants. The experimental research track admits students with a grade average of 85 or above, two letters of recommendation, and an interview. No numbers on number of applicants were provided.

Graduate students, while remarking on the quality of the faculty, also noted a large number of problems. The students in clinical liked being able to work in the in-house clinic from their first year, though the committee had reservations about the wisdom of letting first-year graduate students treat broad elements of the public. They were happy with their research opportunities and the collaborative atmosphere. They wanted more experience, at least a year, of TAing, and said that their fellowships prohibited earning extra money that way.

The clinical students expressed many reservations and suggestions. They think their training has far too great emphasis on psychodynamic approaches. They would prefer evidence-based treatments, notably cognitive behavior therapy and felt that this therapy was far more appropriate for the populations they treat. They also wanted research

integrated into the clinics. Finally, they felt the education should be common across the three clinical tracks in the first few years, with some specialization later.

Student morale is high, although time to completion seems to far exceed what students expect when they enroll in the program. This could be due to the high student/faculty ratio in the department. A large number of MA Students are enrolled in each program: Social/organizational 45-50; Experimental/research approximately 30; Adult clinical approximately 40-45, child clinical approximately 40-45, rehab, approximately 35. Although the faculty praised the quality of the graduate students, there were no data on the rejection rate, scores of incoming students, where they previously studied. 10-15 students graduate each year from each of these programs suggesting that the MA programs take about 4 years to complete. Approximately 140-170 Ph D students enrolled each year. Only 15-20 finish each year, suggesting either a high drop-out rate or a long time to completion. According to the self-evaluation report, formal data are lacking about the integration of alumni into the workplace.

## **Research**

**Faculty.** As noted, faculty research programs are active and largely of high quality. The committee is particularly impressed, in addition, by initiatives aimed toward integrating science and practice, especially in the Psychology Clinic. Consistent with this, the department plans to open three new clinical research laboratories. These will be organized around faculty research interests, namely, infants, young adults, and the disorder of autism, respectively. These laboratories are intended also to serve the practicum training needs of graduate students in clinical – in a manner that combines scientific research and professional training at the same site. This will be a boon both to the research productivity and excellence of both faculty and students.

**Undergraduates.** BA students currently work on faculty members' research projects, a commendable state of affairs. Students need first-hand exposure to research in order to properly interpret and evaluate the research that the field rests on as well as the research they will need to interpret and evaluate throughout their careers. There was a sense that on the process of involving students in faculty research was somewhat haphazard. A need was expressed to have this more organized.

**Graduate students.** There are many MA and PhD students and few faculty members. The ratio is approximately 10:1, too high for effective training. Faculty members guide many students, which makes guidance problematic for both the students and the faculty. This is not ideal for graduate research training or for the quality of faculty research.

## **Infrastructure**

Although the Gonda Brain Research Center provides an opportunity to expand the department's research infrastructure, the committee noted some tension in the relations between scientists in psychology and those of the Brain Sciences. There is ample lab space in the Gonda Center while lab space is quite severely limited in the psychology

building, and it would thus be preferable if there were more lab space in the psychology building as well, especially for researchers doing research having no neuroscience or physiological component. Related to this, there is a sense among the faculty that they lack sufficient equipment for conducting high-quality research in their own highly competitive areas, and space without equipment cannot be used. Hence, creative ways should be explored to enable faculty to obtain funding for needed lab equipment.

Although classroom resources seem adequate, the library facilities need improvement. Students expressed frustration with the library's information technology. The library has one computer with Word and even that is a recent addition. There are also relatively few electronic data bases, e.g., e-journals. In some cases, one can get articles only up to 2006. This is inappropriate for a research university. Multiple computers and easy access by faculty and students to regularly updated e-journals is essential.

The Psychology Clinic's space is as good as we have seen, provides an opportunity to integrate science, practice, and training under one roof.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

The committee was favorably impressed by faculty engagement in the department as well as the stated commitment of the administration to make changes to improve the quality of the department. The committee was also impressed, overall, by the undergraduate program, with some important exceptions (noted below). One central obstacle to departmental excellence is the relative absence of faculty in some core areas of the discipline (cognition and perception or cognitive neuroscience, and social psychology, respectively). Moreover, while progress has been made in the clinical program, significantly more progress is needed in that program as well. Each of these concerns is addressed below largely in the terms of the graduate programs and faculty recruitment, and in order of their priority, though some of these pressing issues are about equally important (vs. literally ranked) in their relevance to fostering excellence in the department. The first eight recommendations are of special urgency. Done properly, these changes would quickly enhance Bar Ilan's international status.

1. The committee recommends that Bar Ilan's psychology department re-think its graduate training to emphasize the goal of establishing state-of-the-science doctoral training in each program. In the committee's view, this will require designing and building research training programs that are closer to the center of the discipline – i.e., that emphasize basic research in cognition and/or cognitive neuroscience, and in social psychology, respectively (and possibly in developmental later, once these other changes have been made).

- a. A strategic plan should be developed for building programmatically in cognition/perception or cognitive neuroscience and in social psychology and for securing funding for the new positions that will be required. In the committee's estimation, building these programs is essential and will entail making a minimum of two new hires in each area for a total of four new hires in the coming years (whether based on retirements or the creation of new positions in the department, allocated by the administration). The strategic plan should be

- completed within the first year, with implementation details in recommendations 2, 3, 8, and 9 below.
- b. A strategic plan should be developed for restructuring the clinical programs within the first year, with implementation as noted in points 4-9.
  - 2. The ill-defined nature of the experimental program (and its unhelpful name) does not serve the department well. What is absent in the program is a coherently organized graduate program in cognition, perception, and brain sciences, or in cognitive neuroscience. This is a core area of the discipline of psychology that no university can do without. The discipline simply cannot be captured adequately without such a program.
    - a. The committee thus recommends (as noted in #1) that the department build such a program and make a minimum of two targeted faculty hires to staff it (although a group of at least 4 faculty will ultimately be needed to fully staff the program).
    - b. The committee recommends that a strategic plan for developing this program and doing faculty recruitment is developed within one year, as noted in #1.
    - c. The committee also recommends that the actual searches take place in the subsequent two to three years.
  - 3. The committee recommends as well that the department use the opportunity offered by upcoming retirements in the social-organizational program to develop a first-rate basic-science research program in social psychology by recruiting mainstream social psychologists who do research, for example, on social cognition, stereotyping and prejudice, intergroup bias, or social neuroscience. The committee also recommends that the more applied approach to organizational development currently in the department is phased out, given that organizational behavior and human resources management are migrating out of psychology departments at major universities and into business schools.
    - a. Hence, the committee recommends that the department revamp the social organizational program by building a full-fledged program in experimental social psychology in its place and making a minimum of two targeted faculty hires to staff it (although ultimately a total of four faculty will be needed to fully staff the program).
    - b. The committee recommends that a strategic plan for developing this program and doing faculty recruitment is developed within one year, as noted in #1.
    - c. The committee recommends that the actual searches take place in the subsequent two to three years.
  - 4. As stated in the departmental self-study, the central orientation of the clinical programs (particularly the adult program) in the department is psychodynamic. This is inconsistent with the state of the science for clinical training. Hence, the committee recommends that this emphasis be revised in short order – in accordance with international scientific standards. In particular, the committee recommends that students in the clinical program be required to train to proficiency in one or more of the empirically-supported treatments such as cognitive and cognitive-behavioral therapies. Students should not be trained

exclusively in psychodynamic intervention. The same principle should apply to the area of clinical assessment. Pre-scientific psychodiagnostic assessment methods that are not supported by validation studies should be eliminated from this academic department's curriculum unless or until such validity can be established via scientific methods. In particular, it is critical that the department reduce the number of courses in psychopathology, assessment, and intervention – which will have the added benefit that students will be freer to engage in research.

- a. The committee recommends that the courses on psychodiagnostic tests be reduced to 3 semesters (i.e., 1-1/2 annual courses) and that these focus on assessment tools that are known to be valid. If diagnostic instruments of questionable validity must be covered, they should be limited to a one-semester course that addresses the scientific literature regarding the validity of these tests.
  - b. The committee further recommends that courses on psychopathology be reduced to 2 one-semester courses (or 1 annual course), and that not more than one covers historical and psychodynamic approaches, while others present advances in clinical science concerning psychopathology.
  - c. With respect to intervention, the committee recommends that courses in this area be reduced to 3 single-semester courses (1.5 annual courses) focused on evidence-based treatments, with at least one semester on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies (CBT).
  - d. The committee recommends as well that a curriculum committee be formed in that regularly evaluates syllabi (particularly of courses taught by adjunct faculty) and proposes and ensures revisions that will meet international clinical science standards.
  - e. The committee also recommends that appropriately trained adjunct clinical supervisors be hired within one to two years to make the above changes possible.
  - f. Beyond this, the committee suggests that the department support its clinical program by working with other academic departments (and internship sites) to ensure that students whose training does not include pre-scientific methods of intervention and assessment such as the Rorschach and the TAT diagnostic tests will not be penalized, including by Israeli licensing laws.
  - g. Finally, the committee recommends that in the first year the department and program(s) develop a strategic plan for making the above curriculum and structural changes above, and that these changes then be implemented in the second and third years.
5. Importantly, the department needs to develop a coherent and systematic plan for transitioning to a clinical science program that emphasizes evidence-based assessment and intervention methods, together with a faculty recruitment plan. As a first step, the

department should quickly follow-up with its plan to appoint a senior scientist specializing in evidence-based practice to head the clinic.

- a. The committee recommends that a new senior (tenure-track) faculty position be created within the university for recruiting one such clinical scientist within one year and the search conducted in the second year.
  - b. The committee also recommends that as each slot within any of the three clinical tracks becomes available it be filled with a clinical scientist.
  - c. The committee recommends as well that the appointment of a clinical *scientist* to head the clinic occur immediately (within one academic year).
6. Furthermore, the department should quickly move to implement its plan to make the clinic research-based, with specialty clinics in which faculty and students treat patients while implementing and further developing effective science-based assessment and treatment methods, fostering the integration between science and practice
- a. The committee recommends a three-year time-frame for fully implementing this plan.
7. The committee also recommends that the three tracks of clinical program be unified at initial stages – at the level of courses. This is important for breadth of training and will allow each track to take advantage of research and practice excellence in the other tracks, and will also foster an integrated view of clinical science and greater identification with the program and field as a whole.
- a. This change should be planned within the first year and fully implemented in the second.
8. Across all graduate programs, the committee believes the faculty-graduate student ratio is too high for effective graduate training. Hence, the department should construct a rational policy for deciding the maximum number of MA/Ph.D. students that a faculty member can supervise.
- a. Given the current size of the full-time academic staff – 33 senior faculty members, the committee recommends that the department reduce the size of the MA enrollment from the current size of 193 to a maximum of 120 and the Ph.D. enrollment from a 170 students to a steady-state maximum of a 100 students.
  - b. The committee recommends a maximum number of 6 doctoral students per advisor (all years, with exceptions in special cases).
  - c. The committee recommends as well that the total number of graduate students (Ph.D. and MA students combined) should not exceed 8 per faculty member.
  - d. These recommendations should be implemented within the first year as a guiding factor in that year's more restrictive admission decisions. As the department begins to reduce the number of students supervised by each faculty member, it should also guide and control the number of students permitted to join each faculty member's lab group.

9. To enhance the overall excellence of the doctoral programs, the committee suggests that the department consider establishing a procedure for admitting students in a way that emphasizes student-mentor fit in advance of admission. That is, doctoral admissions at top psychology departments internationally occurs for a given student not simply on the basis of his/her grades and psychometric scores, but also on the basis of the excellence of the fit with a particular faculty member in terms of research interests, the substance of the prior research experience the student has, and the student's particular knowledge and skill sets). The professor then selects this student to join his/her laboratory as a doctoral student, leading the department and university to grant the student.
10. Regarding the undergraduate program, the committee also recommends an infusion of courses in the curriculum reflecting the expertise of newly hired faculty in cognition and brain science or cognitive neuroscience, and social psychology, respectively.
11. The committee believes it is important for morale in the department that ambiguity about the promotion and tenure process for young faculty (Doctor-Instructor and Lecturer) is reduced, and that the time-frame for promoting young faculty and communicating to them about the department's decisions is also reduced.
  - a. The committee suggests that the department develop a system for periodic evaluations of tenure-track faculty (e.g., every 2 to 3 years) that offers a written evaluation indicating what that faculty member needs to do to meet criteria for promotion.
  - b. The committee also suggests that the department make the procedures for promotion and tenure more transparent and develop systematic procedures for informing candidates of their status within a year from the time the candidate submits promotion materials (at least the department's decision if the university administration's decision is not yet made).
12. The committee also recommends that the university significantly upgrade information technology in the library, i.e., access to e-journals. Internet connections need to be simple and widely available, and regularly updated journals need to be available on line. This is a bare minimum requirement for a psychology department at a research university. One cost-saving possibility would be a country-wide library consortium that purchases journals and allows all students and faculty online access to current and past journals and all psych data bases. The library can and should emphasize books as well (unless the books are also on-line and the university wishes to hold fewer hardcopies).
  - a. A strategic plan should be developed for implementing this plan within the first year and it should be implemented in the second.
13. The committee recommends in addition, that the department conduct an alumni survey. Such surveys can be informative about the jobs and future education of graduates, permitting job placement and further education over time to be tracked, and providing crucial information for subsequent planning purposes.

- a. The committee recommends that the department develop a strategic plan for conducting an alumni survey in the second year and that it implement the plan in the third year.
14. Finally, the committee suggests as well that the department and the administration implement procedures that will develop and solidify an alumni culture at the university, beginning with establishing ongoing contacts with alumni. This will allow the university to keep graduates involved via newsletter and potentially in groups organized by discipline or by current employment or perhaps geographic region. Given that alumni groups often support their alma maters financially, it is in the university's interest to establish and maintain such contacts.

**Signed By:**



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**Prof. Susan Andersen**  
**Committee Chair**



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**Prof. Varda Shoham**



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**Prof. Seymour Spilerman**



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**Prof. Sidney Strauss**



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**Prof. Barbara Tversky**

# **APPENDIX 1**



18/11/2008  
14612824

**Professor Susan M. Andersen**  
**Professor of Psychology**  
**Director, Doctoral Program in Social Psychology**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**New York University**  
**USA**

Dear Professor Andersen,

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, particularly as our nation reaches maturity in its 60<sup>th</sup> year.

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 the Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Studies.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Susan Andersen - Chair, Prof. Victor Azarya, Prof. Yinon Cohen, Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Prof. Avishai Henik, Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Prof. Varda Shoham, Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Prof. Sidney Strauss and Prof. Barbara Tversky.

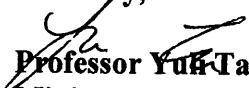
Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.



In your capacity as a member 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 a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

  
**Professor Yuli Tamir**  
**Minister of Education**  
**and Chairperson of the Council for Higher Education**

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

cc: Ms. Riki Mendelzvaig, Secretary of the Council for Higher Education  
Ms. Michal Neumann, Head of the Quality Assessment Unit  
Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator



October 07

## **Appendix to the Letter of Appointment for Evaluation Committees (Study Programs)**

### **1. General**

On June 3, 2003 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to establish a system for quality assessment and assurance in Israeli higher education. Within this framework, study-programs are to be evaluated every six years and institutions every eight years. The quality assessment system came into effect in the academic year of 2004-2005.

The main objectives of the quality assessment activity are:

- To enhance the quality of higher education in Israel;
- To create an awareness within institutions of higher education in Israel of the importance of quality evaluation and to develop internal self-evaluation mechanisms on a regular basis;
- To provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel;
- To ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

**It is not the CHE's intention to rank the institutions of higher education according to the results of the quality assessment processes. The evaluation committee should refrain from formal comparisons.**

### **2. The Work of the Evaluation Committee**

- 2.1 The committee shall hold meetings, as needed, before visiting the institution, in order to evaluate the material received.
- 2.2 The committee shall visit the institution and the academic unit being evaluated – if possible - within 3-4 months of receiving the self-evaluation report. The purpose of the visit is to verify and update the information submitted in the self-evaluation report, clarify matters where necessary, inspect the educational environment and facilities first hand, etc. During the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution, faculty members, students, the administrative staff, and any other persons it considers necessary.
- 2.3 In a meeting at the beginning of the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution (president/rector, dean), the heads of the academic unit and the study-programs, in order to explain the purpose of the visit. At the end

of the visit, the committee will summarize its findings, and formulate its recommendations.

- 2.4 The duration of the visits (at least one full day) will be coordinated with the chairperson of the committee.
- 2.5 Following the visit, the committee will write its final report, including its recommendations, which will be delivered to the institution and the academic unit for their response.
- 2.6 In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member in an institution being evaluated, he will not take part in discussions regarding that institution.

### **3. The Individual Reports**

- 3.1 The final reports of the evaluation committee shall address every institution separately.
- 3.2 The final reports shall include recommendations on topics listed in the guidelines for self-evaluation, such as:
  - The goals and aims of the evaluated academic unit and study programs.
  - The study program.
  - The academic staff.
  - The students.
  - The organizational structure.
  - The broader organizational structure (school/faculty) in which the academic unit and study program operate.
  - The infrastructure (both physical and administrative) available to the study program.
  - Internal mechanisms for quality assessment.
  - Other topics to be decided upon by the evaluation committee.

### **4. The structure of the reports**

#### ***4.1 Part A – General background and an executive summary:***

- 4.1.1 General background concerning the evaluation process, the names of the members of the committee, a general description of the institution and the academic unit being assessed, and the committee's work.
- 4.1.2 An executive summary that will include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit and program being evaluated.

#### ***4.2 Part B – In-depth description of subjects examined:***

- 4.2.1 This part will be composed according to the topics examined by the evaluation committee, and based on the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution.
- 4.2.2 For each topic examined the report will present a summary of the findings, the relevant information and analysis.

#### ***4.3 Part C –Recommendations:***

- 4.3.1 Comprehensive conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluated academic unit and the study program according to the topics in part B.
- 4.3.2 Recommendations may be classified according to the following categories:
  - ***Congratulatory remarks and minimal changes recommended, if any.***

- ***Desirable changes recommended*** at the institution's convenience and follow-up in the next cycle of evaluations.
- ***Important/needed changes requested for ensuring appropriate academic quality*** within a reasonable time, in coordination with the institution (1-3 years)
- ***Essential and urgent changes required, on which continued authorization will be contingent*** (immediately or up to one year).
- ***A combination of any of the above.***

#### ***4.4 Part D - Appendices:***

The appendices shall contain the committee's letter of appointment and the schedule of the on-site visit.

### **5. The General report**

In addition to the individual reports concerning each study program, the committee shall submit to the CHE the following documents:

- 5.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.
- 5.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

**We urge the committee to clearly list its specific recommendations for each one of the topics (both in the individual reports and in the general report) and to prioritize these recommendations, in order to ease the eventual monitoring of their implementation.**

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# **APPENDIX 2**

**אוניברסיטת בר-אילן (ע"ר)**  
**שבח סגן הרקטור**

**BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY (RA)**  
**OFFICE OF THE VICE RECTOR**

**Site-visit schedule - Bar-Ilan University Psychology Department 01.06.08**

Time	Subject	Participants	Location
09:00-09:30	Opening session: The heads of the institution	Joseph Menis, Rector Haim Taitelbaum, Vice Rector, Head of Quality Assessment System	Council room
09:30-10:00	Meeting with the Dean	Shmuel Sandler, Dean of Social Sciences	
10.00-10.45	Meeting with the School's/department's academic leadership	Miriam Faust, Department chair Rachel Ben-Ari (vice-department chair), Noa Vilchinsky (head of BA program) Meni Koslowsky (head of MA social-organizational track) Michal Lavidor (head of MA experimental track) Ronny Geva (head of MA child clinical track) Eva Gilboa (head of MA adult clinical track) Gila Hirschberger (head of MA clinical rehabilitation track) Eli Vakil (head of PhD program, member of faculty committee)	Council room
10:45-11:45	Meeting with senior faculty and committees' representatives	Ruth Feldman (ex- head of child clinical track) Shaul Fox (ex-chair, head of library committee) Peri Kedem-Friedrich (head of ethics committee) Shmuel Schulman (ex-chair, member of faculty committee) Rivka Tuval-Mashiach (co-head of in-house clinic) Shlomo Yehuda (member of faculty committee)	Council room



**אוניברסיטת בר-אילן (ע"ר)**  
**לשכת סגן דהkan**  
**BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY (RA)**  
**OFFICE OF THE VICE RECTOR**

Time	Subject	Participants	Location
11:45-12:30	Meeting with junior faculty	Avi Goldstein (experimental track) Ofer Golan (child clinical track) Ety Berant (adult clinical track) Ilanit Hason-Ochayon (clinical rehabilitation track, co-head of in-house clinic)	Council room
12:30-13:00	Meeting with adjuncts	Elon Kaplan (social-organizational) Harry Gotesdyner (social organizational) Leah Fostick (experimental) Yari Gevion (child clinical) Tamar Zilber (clinical rehabilitation)	Council room
13:00-13:30	Closed Lunch		Faculty club
13:30-14:15	Meeting with undergraduate students	Natali Yisraei (first year ) Rina Baumel , Benny Horowitz (second year) Nachshon Paz, Elad Arnon (third year)	Council room
14.15-15.00	Meeting with graduate students	Shani Pindek, Noa Nelson (social-organizational) Katy Borodkin, Ilanit Gordon (experimental) Bar Tamuz, Naama Shaffran (adult clinical) Adva Vangrover, Avital Merom (child clinical) Ohad Ben-David, Dana Bechar (clinical rehabilitation)	Council room
15:00-15:45	Tour at the institution	Classrooms, library, clinic, faculty facilities, labs at the Brain Science Center	Psychology building & Brain Science Center
15:45-16:15	Closed meeting of the Committee		Council room

לשכת סגן הדקן רקטור, אוניברסיטה בר-אילן, רמת-גן, ישראל 52900

E-mail: vicerect@mail.biu.ac.il Fax: 972-3-5352649 : 0725 Tel: 972-3-5317808 : 0725

**אוניברסיטת בר-אילן (ע"ר)**  
לשכת סגן הרקטור

**BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY (RA)**

**OFFICE OF THE VICE RECTOR**

Time	Subject	Participants	Location
16:15-16:45	Summation meeting with heads of the institution	Joseph Menis, Rector Haim Taitelbaum, Vice Rector, Head of Quality Assessment System Shmuel Sandler, Dean of Social Sciences Miriam Faust, Department chair	Council room