



**Department of Philosophy**

**Faculty of Humanities**

**Hebrew University, Jerusalem**

**Report of the External Evaluation Team**

**for**

**The Council for Higher Education**

November, 2009

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The following document is the Evaluation Committee's report on the Department of Philosophy of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to the Quality Assessment Unit of the Council for Higher Education (CHE). In keeping with the template provided by the CHE, the report is divided into three parts, A: General Background and Executive Summary, B: In-depth description of subjects examined, and C: Recommendations.

***Part A – General Background, Committee Procedure and Executive Summary***

**General Background**

The report is based upon the Evaluation Committee's interviews at the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and its study of the Department of Philosophy's Self-Evaluation Report of December, 2008. The Evaluation Committee (EC) is composed of Professors Paul Davies, Richard Eldridge, Jacob Joshua Ross, Gila Sher, and the committee's chair, Daniel Dahlstrom. Ms. Michal Kabatznik served as the CHE appointed coordinator. Each member of the committee received and studied the Department's Self-Evaluation Report individually in advance of the committee's meeting in Jerusalem. Shortly before its on-site visit, the members of the EC met and conferred to determine the number and ranking of questions to pose during its interviews as well as to assign different members of the committee with the responsibility of leading the respective discussions with the different groups of interviewees. The Department of Philosophy in Hebrew University, housed in the fifth wing of the building of the Faculty of Humanities on the Mt. Scopus campus, teaches philosophy to undergraduate and graduate students alike.

The EC conducted its interviews of the Hebrew University Department of Philosophy on Wednesday and Thursday, June 3 and 4, 2009. In successive meetings on the first day, the EC met with members of the university administration (including the president, rector, vice rector, and head of the academic review in the humanities and social sciences, the dean of the humanities faculty, the administrative head of the faculty of humanities), the head of the department of philosophy, the MA and BA advisors, senior academic faculty, and adjunct lecturers and alumni. On the second day, the EC had meetings with junior academic faculty, groups of BA, MA, and PhD students as well as Alumni, followed by a summation meeting with the rector, vice rector, and head of academic review in the humanities and social sciences. The EC was satisfied with the level of forthrightness, cooperation, and seriousness of those who participated in these meetings. No question went unanswered or was evaded. The EC found the Department's Self-Evaluation Report generally informative, though lacking in detail in some respects. The Department promptly honored our requests for additional information and clarification.

### **Committee Procedures**

The Committee members received the self-evaluation reports in January, 2009, and discussed them via email.

The Committee held its first meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel and the quality assessment activity, as well as General Philosophy study programs.

In April and June, 2009, the Committee members visited the institutions offering General Philosophy study programs. During the visits, the Committee met various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

**This report deals with the Committee's general impression of the field of General Philosophy within the Israeli system of higher education.**

The Committee wishes to thank the management of the institutions and the general philosophy departments for their self-evaluation reports and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visits.

## Executive Summary

The Department of Philosophy of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is the oldest such department in Israel, sustaining for decades a vital role as the flagship of philosophical instruction and research in Israel. The Department conducts successful BA, MA, and PhD programs precisely because it maintains its traditionally strong research orientation. As in the past, the Department has several eminent researchers of international renown, particularly in such areas as ethics, the history of modern philosophy, and, perhaps above all, the philosophy of science, logic, and mathematics. Complementing researchers in these areas are experts in other branches of philosophy, including ancient and medieval philosophy, 19th and 20th century continental European philosophy, and the philosophy of mind. Members of the Department are also productively engaged in a breathtaking number of intensive reading groups and interdisciplinary enterprises: PEP (integrative of philosophy, economics, and political science); the  $\Phi$  working group on the Intersection of Logic and Philosophy; the Law and Philosophy Forum; Philosophy and Cognitive Science; the Center for the Study of Rationality; the Edelstein Center for the History and Philosophy of Science; the Van Leer Institute; the Hartman Institute, the New Israeli Philosophy Association. To its great credit, the Department, when given the opportunity to hire, has made the most of it. Thanks to some sagacious hiring, the Department's ranks include excellent researchers at early stages of their careers as well as some at mid-career.

However, largely as a result of huge reductions in tenure track positions in the faculty of humanities over the past five years, the Department is presently in a critical stage of transition. The steps taken during this transition are critical not only to the Department's international reputation as a center of cutting-edge research in philosophy, but also to its very viability as a graduate-degree granting department in a major research university. The figures are stark: for the academic year 2007-08, the Department had 10 members in full-time positions, 6 members in half-time positions, and one member in a quarter-time position.<sup>1</sup> In raw numbers, then, for AY 07-08 the Department managed its undergraduate and graduate offerings, while directing master's and doctoral students, with the equivalent of 13.25FTE's. By the end of 2007-08, there were two retirements: (both full positions), leaving the Department with the equivalent of 11.25 FTE's.

Historically, the Department has been, much larger – indeed, almost a third larger – than its present composition, as it averaged 16 to 17 FTE's. Between 2002 and 2007 alone, 4 members of the Department had retired. The retirements of two more faculty members at the end of 2008 have already been noted. During this entire period, there have been only two new appointments (both half positions). Nor can these numbers begin to tell the story of the Department's downward trajectory, when one takes into account the expertise and renown of retired and soon-to-be retired professors. Their loss has made it difficult for the Department to cover certain core areas of philosophy at the level of sophistication (e.g., in

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<sup>1</sup> This data was kindly provided by the author of the Department's Self-Evaluation Report. Due to leaves of absence from teaching, 2 faculty members were not included in the list of the Senior Academic Faculty in the Self-Evaluation but the Department otherwise counts them as part of its Academic Staff on its website and elsewhere in its Self-Evaluation. In separate correspondence, it was confirmed that these two members are full time.

the philosophy of language) required of a graduate program.

The situation is particularly dire, given the imminent prospect that the Department's size will dwindle even more if replacements for upcoming retirements are not immediately authorized. By the end of 2008/09, one professor with a half position will be retiring and by the end of 2009/10, two other names will be added to the list of retired professors: one full position and one half position. If these retiring professors are not replaced, the size of the Department falls to 9.25 FTE's by 2011. But this need for replacements is only the beginning of a major transition facing the Department and the Administration. Looking ahead, in the near future (2011-2014), there will be another spate of retirements: 6 faculty members in all. As the Department itself puts it: "By 2015 out of the current senior staff (15 persons) only 5 people will be left (three and a half positions)".

Given the situation outlined in the previous paragraphs, the Department's most pressing needs are patent. Put in the simplest terms, it needs to plan for strategically replacing retired and retiring professors and it needs support from the Administration to execute that plan. The Department's planning strategy must center on determining and coordinating its search priorities, in light of past and impending retirements as well as its traditional and current curricular and research strengths, and it must have the Administration's support for this strategic list of search priorities. No doubt it will be impossible to replace all retired and retiring professors immediately. Hence, it would be advisable to develop short-term and long-term goals in hiring. In our view, the Administration should not allow the Department in the short run to fall below its current size (11.25) and should restore the Department within the next three years to its size (13.25) prior to 2008. In the long run, the Administration should provide the Department with the resources to rebuild itself as a Department with its traditional size of 16 to 17 FTE's, prior to the spate of retirements that commenced in 2002.

Moreover, in order to maintain the Department's renown in the international academic community, it is essential that every appointment, including part-time, be of a person with an international profile in philosophy or the promise of developing such a profile. To this end and in view of the department's large loss of eminent philosophers, we urge that, if possible, one of the upcoming appointments within the next three to four years be at the senior level (associate or full professor). Later in this report (Part Band Part C), we discuss and make specific recommendations in this connection.

But obviously, any such planning is for naught if the Department does not receive authorization to conduct the searches it proposes. The Rector, Vice-Rector, and Dean impressed us with their concern and appreciation for the challenges facing the Department, particularly the challenges created by the retirements, both past and impending. We urge these administrative officials to sit down with the faculty of the Department as a group and discuss candidly what needs to be done and what can be done to meet these challenges successfully.

There are other important problems facing the Department that are elaborated in more detail below but warrant flagging in this Executive Summary, namely, a lack of sufficient writing assignments and feedback in all courses; a lack of adequate funding for graduate study; an insufficient number and variety of courses at the BA level; the high dropout rate among undergraduates; inadequate oversight of teaching assistants; the modest decline in the number of MA students; a need for courses and distribution requirements explicitly designed as graduate courses (for MA and/or PhD); the lack of a

structured PhD program (or, given the lack of a graduate school, the reliance upon oversight by a committee appointed by the Authority for Research Students); the underrepresentation of women on the faculty; ill-equipped offices and the uninviting physical infrastructure of the Department's facilities on the Mt. Scopus campus; the challenge of integrating the recommendations of the Gager Report in a way that preserves the Department's traditional orientation as a research, not a service department.

The challenges and problems confronting the Department are severe; many of them no doubt the result of financial considerations beyond its control. However, the Department has enormous reserves of good will, sound judgment, and enthusiasm for philosophical research and teaching – in short, all the ingredients to meet its challenges successfully, given the proper support. By no means, it bears adding, is the Department presently in a state of disrepair. Its faculty continues to excel in the classroom and in its research, exciting its students and creating lasting contributions to philosophy. But it is also clear that it cannot continue to aspire to be the internationally renowned department of philosophy that it has been for well over thirty years – without a renewed commitment of support by the University Administration to restore it to its traditional eminence.

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

This part of the EC's report is divided into five sections, each of which corresponds to a separate section or chapter of the Department's Self-Evaluation Report:

1. Departmental aims and self-conception
2. Research profile and academic staffing needs
3. Study program
  - 3.1 Undergraduate program (BA)
  - 3.2 Graduate programs (MA & PhD)
4. Teaching and learning
5. Self-administration and physical infrastructure

#### **1. Departmental aims and self-conception**

The Department considers itself “pluralistic,” enabling “its students to experience different philosophical approaches”. Despite its dwindling size, this self-conception seems accurate, particularly given the range of the faculty's expertise and its offerings to undergraduates. The Department aims to provide its students with “a solid academic training in philosophy,” such that they are “comparable to students in the best universities worldwide”. The Department completes its mission statement with descriptions of the goals of the BA, MA, and PhD programs. The stated aspirations of the Department are thus plainly academic, as determined by international criteria. These aspirations are certainly laudable and the Department has clearly been a success in realizing them, again despite the crisis presently looming before it. Perhaps, however, because the Department's self-evaluation follows a template that requires a “mission statement of the study program,” it neglects to mention as a goal the pursuit of philosophical research, a pursuit at which its faculty clearly excels. If it sells itself short in this regard, it also does so with

respect to its impact on other programs in the university, on the state of philosophy in Israel, and, indeed, on the very culture of Israel.

### **1.1 Restructuring of the Humanities Division (Gager report)**

The humanities division is currently undergoing a restructuring based on recommendations contained in the influential Gager Report. This restructuring, which will make an important contribution to the BA studies at the Hebrew University, involves the introduction of multiple new classes as well as new teaching positions. In our conversations with the philosophy faculty we found that many welcome these changes or at least feel they can “work” with them, but just as many are concerned that in a time of a serious budget crisis, there is a danger that the university’s investment in the division’s restructuring will be at the expense of its investment in the individual departments and their research profiles. In addition, some members of the philosophy faculty doubted that implementation of recommendations by the Gager Report would be compatible with a double major or with the need to combine certain advanced courses, e.g., in mathematics, with philosophy courses. In general, members of the faculty in the Department saw the pedagogical benefits in the move towards a general liberal arts curriculum for undergraduates, in keeping with the Gager Report but many worried that it would come at the expense of independent research departments like the Department of Philosophy.

We share these concerns. The Administration should take steps to insure that the structural changes contemplated do not adversely affect the Department’s strengths as a center of research and graduate studies. It is our view that in a great university there is no substitute for the excellence of individual research departments, that such excellence depends primarily on the research profile of the faculty and on the quality of the graduate programs, and that it demands a “critical mass” of teachers and researchers. Furthermore, we believe that it is unwise to delay investment in individual departments. It is very easy to lose the status of a first class department in a relatively short time, but much more difficult, lengthy, and expensive, to regain this status once it is lost. As one of Hebrew University’s premier independent research departments, the Department of Philosophy is indispensable to the excellence of the University’s undergraduate as well as graduate education. We accordingly urge the University Administration to support the Department in this research capacity.

### **1.2 Relation to Jewish Thought**

Since its establishment in 1928, the philosophy department at the Hebrew University has been an independent department. The administration raised the question whether merging the philosophy and Jewish Thought departments was desirable. While the members of the philosophy faculty welcome cooperation and joint appointments with the Jewish Thought department, they adamantly resist the idea of such a merger. Some of the reasons mentioned by members of the philosophy faculty are: (1) the substantial differences between the two fields of studies, (2) the fact that most members of the Jewish Thought faculty are not philosophers, (3) the likelihood that such a move would radically reduce enrollment (many students with interest in philosophy will choose to study in another university, Tel Aviv being the most likely alternative), (4) the great difficulties in recruitment of philosophy faculty that such a merger would create (a philosophy position at the Hebrew University would be far less attractive to most candidates with doctorates in

philosophy); (5) the potential losses of existing faculty (some faculty said they are likely to seek a position in other universities if philosophy is merged with Jewish Thought), and (6) the negative experience of combining these departments in other universities (Bar Ilan). We concur with the Department that these are more than ample reasons against a merger of the philosophy and Jewish Thought departments.

## **2. Research profile and academic staffing needs**

The Self-Evaluation Document lists 170 research outputs produced by 17 members of the faculty over the past five years. Much of this work appears in top quality international journals and publications from top quality publishers. Along with the work produced by adjunct faculty, it amounts to a substantial body of research in the discipline. Faculty members are active in organizing international conferences and workshops. They serve on the editorial boards of prestigious journals. Everything here reflects a genuine research culture and a desire to sustain the world-class reputation of philosophy at the Hebrew University. However, in the face of imminent retirements and institutional changes, this is obviously a time of transition for the department and this will inevitably have consequences for the way in which it focuses or is enabled to focus its research over the coming five years. In such a context, the reputation and tradition of the department and the university can be intimidating.

The Self-Evaluation Document helpfully presents the departmental research publications under eight area headings: Ethics and Political philosophy; Greek and Medieval philosophy; Early modern philosophy; Modern philosophy; Logic; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of mind; and Philosophy of language. Inevitably there is quite a bit of overlap, several members of faculty publishing in more than one area, but it enables us to see where the currently most productive work is going on. It is the Ethics and Political philosophy and the Modern philosophy groupings that comprise the highest number of active researchers (4 in each). In the case of Ethics and Political philosophy, given the depth of the thematic overlap, the career stages of the relevant faculty, and the quality of their research, this area clearly has great potential with respect both to future individual scholarship and to student interest at the doctoral level. It will also have implications for the Department's commitment to interdisciplinary work. In the case of Modern philosophy, although there is some excellent work, it is more a matter of four disparate scholars and two very different traditions. Indeed one of these four is the sole member of faculty whose publications are listed under the heading of Logic. Philosophy of mind and philosophy of language are also represented by a single faculty member – a clear signal of the effect of retirements mentioned earlier. Recalling the significant roles the philosophies of logic and language and early modern philosophy have played in establishing the profile and standing of the department since its inception, it is impossible not to notice how much has changed. The Department continues to produce excellent research in these areas but they no longer define it in the way they perhaps once did.

As noted above in the Executive Summary, the Department had 13.25 FTE's in AY 07-08. To illustrate that the number and configuration of researchers and teachers is less than adequate for a solid undergraduate and graduate program, it suffices to indicate the ratio of students to faculty. Given that there are 279 students currently enrolled in the undergraduate program (see 3.1 below) and 80 students in the graduate program, the ratio of students to faculty in the Department is approximately 27:1. During the 2007-08

academic year, 1457 students took courses in the BA program with 34 instructors (including senior and junior academic staff) at an unhealthy ratio of 43:1, i.e., 43 students to each instructor per course. (For comparison's sake, consider the ratios for some well-regarded US universities: NYU 12:1, Duke 11:1, Texas 17:1, Virginia 15:1.) Plainly the Department is understaffed, whether one considers either ratio indicated above, the ratio of students pursuing all levels of degrees in philosophy to senior academic staff or the ratio of students in courses to their instructors. There is probably no more patent indication than these ratios, of the importance of not allowing the Department to shrink from its current size and the need for restoring it to its traditional size, as noted in the Executive Summary above.

An additional issue that warrants attention is the underrepresentation of women among the faculty. In AY 07-08, less than 12% of the Senior Academic Faculty were women. Moreover, both of the women currently on the faculty will be retiring within the next five years. Particularly given the student population, the Department needs to increase the number of women on the faculty and this need should be considered in future hirings.

### **2.1 Balancing full-time and partial positions**

It appears to be easier for the administration to allocate partial positions for the Department (i.e., positions divided between philosophy and other departments) than full positions. There are both advantages and disadvantages in this policy. On the one hand, there is the advantage of additional intellectual stimulation for both faculty and graduate students as well as the advantage of a larger number of “bodies” in the Department. But, on the other hand, there are also disadvantages, e.g., adding to the burden of full-time philosophy faculty members and limiting their availability to the students. The majority of faculty appear to prefer having a solid core of full-time positions with a (smaller) number of joint positions. We concur with the department on this issue. In the course of replacing retiring professors, the Department should maintain a core of full-time teachers, so that the number of part-time or joint appointments ideally never exceeds 49%.

### **2.2 Faculty exchanges**

In light of the retirement crisis confronting the Department but especially given the presence of experts in different Israeli departments, it may be a boon to both collaborative research and teaching for the Department to develop exchanges with other departments of philosophy, primarily in Israel but also outside Israel, if possible.

## **3. Study program**

The Department offers BA, MA, and PhD programs. The BA program aims to provide undergraduates with a systematic and historical breadth, while giving them the foundations for thinking critically and articulating arguments. The MA program aims to “deepen and broaden ... philosophical knowledge and capacities,” with the aim of arriving at some specialization in philosophy. Training “the highest level philosophy researchers and teachers” is the goal of the PhD program, though the Department does not itself administer this program, as elaborated below (see 3.24).

### **3.1 Undergraduate program (BA)**

The undergraduate program is very well-designed, providing students with a suitable range of introductory courses with tutorials in the first year and progressively more demanding requirements and electives in the ensuing two years. There are three forms of BA studies, depending upon whether (1) a student studying in two programs majors in philosophy (64 hours) or takes it as a minor (40 hours), (2) a student studies exclusively in the Department (64 hours), or (3) a student studies philosophy as a section in the multidisciplinary program of the Humanities faculty (16 hours). The Department observes that in recent years it significantly improved the program by adding obligatory courses on the philosophy of 19th and 20th centuries to the curriculum. We concur with this observation, as did students whom we interviewed. Because of a lack of teachers, some MA seminars are open to excellent BA students. One criticism registered by undergraduates in our interviews with them was the insufficient diversity among the Department's undergraduate offerings. In particular, they complained of the lack of courses in political philosophy, continental philosophy, Indian philosophy, and Chinese philosophy. In the short run, the Department might consider hiring adjuncts to offer courses in these areas. But students also singled out certain courses for particular praise, e.g., the Critical Reading in Philosophical Texts, introduction to Greek philosophy and philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The latter two popular courses are taught, it deserves noting, by professors with retirement on the horizon. The students were obviously aware of this and stressed how vital it would be to the undergraduate program that suitable replacements be found for these retiring professors.

As for the size of the undergraduate program, in the academic year 2008-09, 102 students newly enrolled in the undergraduate program. This compares with 84 in 2007-08 and 91 in 2006-07. The total number of undergraduates in 2008-09 was 279, a figure that has risen or fallen only very slightly (2 to 4 students) over the past four years. With a few exceptions, the sizes of the courses and discussion sessions are quite good, ranging roughly between 15 and 30 students per course or discussion session. (Perhaps it is an oversight, but an introductory ethics class lists 163 students but no "discussion" groups). Notable, too, is the fact that senior academic faculty (especially professors and associate professors) are teaching introductory, 1<sup>st</sup> year courses to BA students as well as courses in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years as well. This practice is both a boon to the students and a clear sign of the faculty's dedication to undergraduate education. The high dropout rate among BA students, however, is cause for concern. The Department would be well-advised to reconsider different approaches to teaching and curriculum, both among its faculty and elsewhere, with a view to determining their different degrees of effectiveness in capturing students' imagination and sustaining their interest in philosophical questioning. As noted above, it should review its undergraduate curriculum to determine whether there are any significant lacunae, i.e., courses that cover important material and that undergraduate students have a legitimate interest in taking.

### **3.2 Graduate program (MA, PhD)**

The graduate program of the philosophy department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is a first class program that is facing a crisis due to retirements. This crisis has been broached often enough in this report but its potentially damaging repercussions for the graduate program in particular deserves special emphasis. Currently, the program has a

number of faculty with a distinguished international reputation, and the department offers a rich array of international conferences and guest lectures which tremendously enrich its students' experience. But both faculty and students are seriously worried about the administration's commitment to maintain the program's status in the face of recent and imminent retirements. The program offers two MA tracks and a PhD track, although the PhD track is run by the faculty of the humanities. The two MA tracks are (1) a research track (requiring a Masters thesis), and (2) a non-research track (not requiring Masters thesis). There is no direct PhD track. Unlike other philosophy departments in Israel, the Hebrew University philosophy department hires its PhD students as TA's in spite of the fact that they are more expensive than the MA students. We commend the department for this practice.

We examined the following main structural features and issues regarding the graduate program: (1) the size and standards of the program; (2) the effect of the retirement crisis on the academic quality of the graduate program; (3) the adequacy of the structure of the MA program as well as (4) that of the PhD program; (5) the prospects and merits of direct vs. indirect tracks to the doctorate; (6) the "one community" problem; and (7) job prospects and placement for graduates.

### **3.21 Size & Standards**

The graduate program is a medium size program with 44 MA students and 36 PhD students enrolled in the program for the academic year 2008-2009. (Some of the latter have submitted their dissertations). The number of MA admissions is down slightly from an average of 15 over the past four years and, while these enrollment numbers should be watched, it is not possible to determine whether this drop is an anomaly or not. As noted in the Executive Summary and Section 2 above, the faculty (senior teaching staff) consisted of 17 permanent members or 13.25 positions in AY 07-08, falling to 11.25 with two retirements at the end of 2008. This is a minimally adequate number of staff and positions for a first class graduate program of this size. The distribution of specialties is quite good, covering most of the core fields of philosophy, with significant clusters of excellence in philosophy of science & mind, philosophy of logic & mathematics, ethics & political philosophy, continental philosophy, and a few areas in the history of philosophy. There is no adequate coverage of philosophy of language, and some important areas in the history of philosophy are not adequately covered.

The standards of admissions to the two MA tracks are appropriate, although the department reports on a lowering of the level of students in recent years. It is possible that this is partly a result of the loss of several distinguished professors in the last decade. In order to preserve the program's standing, it is essential that the faculty is not reduced below its current size. It would be greatly beneficial for the graduate program if the department was restored to its traditional strength of 16-17 full positions.

### **3.22 Potential Impact of the Retirement Crisis**

In the Executive Summary and in Section 2 above (Research Profile and Academic Staffing), we described the current critical situation of the department, in view of recent and impending retirements. This catastrophic reduction that the Department is facing in its permanent faculty (senior teaching staff) due to retirements obviously looms large in regard to the quality of its graduate program. As noted above and flagged by the

Department in its Self-Evaluation, it is expecting 10 retirements by 2015, which, without new hires, will reduce the number of faculty from 15 to 5, and the number of positions to 3.5. Unless the university launches a major recruitment initiative, it will lose an outstanding graduate program.

With the administration's cooperation, however, the Department is positioned to renew itself and reclaim its status as a first class graduate program in international standards. This expectation is based on the following facts: (1) In the last decade and a half the department made excellent recruitments of young faculty. (2) There are today in the department a number of relatively young faculty who have the organizational skills, vision, energy, and judgment to oversee the rebuilding of the department. (3) It seems that there is a large pool of highly accomplished and promising recent PhD's who received their degrees from top philosophy programs in Israel and abroad, and are interested in a job at the Hebrew University. It is important to realize, however, that these individuals are unlikely to pursue a job at the Hebrew University if there is no commitment to rebuilding the department in a way that preserves its current quality.

### **3.23 Structure of MA program**

As noted above, MA students can pursue their degrees on a research track (28 hours plus four requirements: a seminar paper, thesis, final examination, and foreign language) or on a non-research track (40 hours plus two seminar papers). Both tracks are well-conceived but there are some problems. Perhaps the most salient problem is the relative lack of structure, requisites, and distinctiveness in the MA students' curriculum. In particular, there are no distribution requirements, requirements that ensure that students receive advanced education in all major fields of philosophy, and MA seminars are not sufficiently differentiated from BA seminars. In revising its MA curriculum, the Department might also consider how its program fulfills or could fulfill the Gager report's recommendation "that all MA programs offer a first-semester methodological seminar". Another set of problems (discussed in more detail in Section 4 below) concerns the insufficiency of the writing required of graduate students, on the one hand, and the insufficiency of the feedback given on the writing presently required, on the other. Yet another problem is the time limit. The department is apparently "punished" if students do not complete their MA studies in two years, but it is not realistic to expect that students in the research track (MA thesis) complete their studies in that time. Yet the Department notes and students confirm that "for most of the students it takes more than two years to complete the MA degree". A fourth issue concerns the final exam. Both faculty and students are dissatisfied with the current situation, but the department is planning positive changes in the exam. On all four fronts (distribution requirements, writing and feedback, time limits, and the final exam) we urge the Department to review and restructure its MA program accordingly.

### **3.24 Structure of PhD program**

There appears to be a serious structural problem concerning the philosophy PhD program (and this problem may be shared by the other PhD programs in the humanities). The problem manifests itself, among other things, in the fact that there is no information about the PhD program in the Self-Evaluation Report. There is also no mention of the PhD program on the philosophy department's web page, and students complain about the "lack of a pedagogical framework that is required for interaction between students and faculty on

a regular basis.” Apparently, the responsibility for the PhD program is in the hands of the humanities division as a whole, not the philosophy department, and dissertation proposals, for example, are submitted to a centralized division-wide committee rather than to a committee of specialists from the philosophy department (with one or two members from other departments, chosen based on the dissertation topic).

It is our view that this arrangement is detrimental to the PhD program. The PhD program is the crown of any first-rate academic department, and it is essential that the department itself assume responsibility for the program, structure it appropriately, and create regular channels of communication and cooperation between faculty and PhD students. It is not only the Department’s responsibility but also its prerogative to specify the requirements of doctoral studies, integrate them with the Master's program, develop ways for doctoral students to publicly present work in progress, and, most importantly, assure that each doctoral student is adequately supervised by an adviser who is a member of the department of philosophy. With a well-developed program under its wing, the Department would be able to include information on its PhD program, a list of its PhD students, and home-pages of its PhD students on its web page. As matters presently stand, the Department does not have sufficient oversight of the philosophy PhD program. In this connection, it may be advisable for the university administration to consider the introduction of a graduate school that, while coordinating the PhD programs of different departments and university support of them, creates conditions for the departments within the university to establish their own procedures and criteria for doctorates in their fields.

In two ways, however, the philosophy PhD program at the Hebrew University is much better structured than other philosophy programs in Israel. Firstly, PhD students are employed as TA’s (teaching assistants) in spite of the fact that they are more expensive for the department than MA students. Secondly, the philosophy department is very successful in having a large number of its PhD students supported by university and other fellowships.

### **3.25 Direct vs. indirect PhD track**

This section concerns two different paths ("tracks") to the doctorate, both of which are available and encouraged in some Israeli philosophy departments. By “direct PhD track” we mean something along the following lines: (1) Only a BA degree is required (either in philosophy or in some other field if it is augmented by adequate preparatory courses in philosophy). (2) During the first 2 years, students take graduate seminars, satisfying a reasonable distribution requirement. (3) During the 3rd year students work on dissertation proposal. (4) During the next 2-3 years students work and complete their dissertation. By "indirect PhD track" we mean the pursuit of a separate MA, including the fulfillment of all requirements for the Master's degree, not least the completion of a Master's Thesis, prior to admission to the doctoral program.

The philosophy department has recently cancelled its direct PhD track. As a result, students must complete an MA in philosophy in the research track (including an MA thesis) before they enroll in the PhD program. The Department does encourage students to write a manageable MA thesis, preferably a thesis that could serve as a first chapter in a PhD thesis. But given the obvious advantages of the direct track, both for students and for the university, in terms of time, efficiency, and support, there is a question of whether this approach is superior to the direct track.

Our conversations indicate that both PhD students and faculty prefer the indirect track. We are not sure why this is so. One would think that because most Israeli students begin their post BA studies at a later age than students abroad, and completion of the PhD in the direct track is (or should be) shorter than in the indirect track, they should prefer the direct track. Among the reasons students cite against taking the direct track are:

- (1) the need to write an MA thesis in order to prepare for the rigors of a PhD thesis,
- (2) a preference for making a short-term commitment to graduate studies over a long term commitment (taking one step at a time),
- (3) a perception of no *real* advantages in pursuing the direct track, either in terms of time or in terms of financial support.

There may be two further and likely related reasons for this preference for the indirect track:

- (4) the lack of sufficient writing experience during BA and MA studies in Israel and
- (5) the fact that BA studies last 3 years in Israel (as opposed, for example, to 4 years in the USA where the direct track is normal).

Yet these reasons may not be conclusive. It is not clear to us why Israeli students should require more preparation for writing a PhD thesis than, say, American students, who regularly take the direct PhD track. In particular, because of the structure of BA studies in Israel, Israeli students end up taking many classes in philosophy during their BA, receiving a solid education in the field. We accordingly cannot determine whether preferring the indirect PhD track is mainly a matter of tradition and habit or a case of rational decision-making. But it does seem clear to us that the advantages of the direct track warrant further examination of this issue by committees at departmental and humanities or even university-wide levels.

### **3.26 The “one community” problem**

There is an “environmental” problem at the Hebrew University that seems to affect mostly the MA students. The Hebrew University is divided between the Mount Scopus campus, where the philosophy department is located, and the Givat Ram Campus. For various reasons faculty find the Mount Scopus campus inauspicious, and prefer to spend much of their time at the Givat Ram campus and in various research institutions in Jerusalem (e.g., the Van Leer institute). For this reason and possibly other reasons, MA students feel isolated in the Mount Scopus campus, and they complain about the lack of “a philosophical community” there. This in spite of the fact that the philosophy department organizes an especially large numbers of national and international conferences, has a regular philosophy colloquium as well as a philosophy of science colloquium, has many reading and discussion groups (organized by faculty), and hosts many invited lectures. We were told by the University Rector that the university is planning to make substantial improvements in the Mount Scopus environment and we welcome these efforts, but they may not be sufficient.

### **3.27 Job prospects and placement for MA and PhD students**

Whereas graduate philosophy programs in the United States offer placement programs for their graduates, both as part of, and in addition to, programs offered by the university as a whole, philosophy graduate students at Hebrew University (like most other Israeli

universities) have no placement services at all. This is especially unfortunate in view of the fact that job opportunities are so few and difficult to come by – notably, the very reason cited by the Department for the absence of a “placement mechanism”. To be sure, the number of tenure track openings in philosophy departments is very small, and the competition is very tough (and include Israelis who receive their PhD from top international universities), so that PhD’s have to pursue other alternatives. Our impression is that students are not aware of all the job opportunities available to them even in Israel, for example, teaching positions in Israeli colleges (which do not have philosophy departments yet offer philosophy classes), fellowship opportunities (such as the Alon, Lady Davis, and Kreitman fellowships), and so on. In short, a director of placement is wanting.

#### **4. Teaching and learning**

In interviews with a sampling of undergraduates, we found them to be generally quite satisfied with the education that they are receiving. They noted that professors tend to be readily available to meet with students and even go to extra lengths to help them understand. Students whom we interviewed stressed how “working with individual professors instilled a great love of philosophy” in them. They were also enthusiastic about the level of attention that teaching assistants give them. The undergraduate students have taken the initiative to create their own events from dinner symposia to lecture series, open to all students, where faculty members lecture informally. The presence of this lively community among the undergraduates is a sign that the Department is clearly doing something right in its undergraduate teaching, inspiring students to think and exchange ideas on their own.

However, these same students also voiced some complaints that seem legitimate to us. One uniform, extremely serious complaint was a lack of adequate attention paid by their instructors to the development of their writing skills. They traced this lack to the meager number of extensive writing assignments that they are given and the scanty feedback that they receive on written work that they currently submit. Students acknowledged that they receive feedback in the first year course, Critical Reading in Philosophical Texts, but that the amount of writing and level of feedback in that course is generally the exception. Given the importance of writing and feedback in a philosophical education generally and in the introduction to philosophical thinking in particular, these are grave concerns and it is gratifying to see that the Department clearly recognizes the need to address them. Not surprisingly, both the senior and the junior academic faculty whom we interviewed iterated this point. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine that the issue of the dropout rate among undergraduates is related to concerns about the lack of attention paid to the development of students’ own thinking as expressed in their writing.

Another issue, again flagged by the Department itself, is the quality of the supervision of tutors and adjunct lectures. The eight members of the junior academic faculty (teaching assistants) whom we interviewed themselves noted the lack of oversight of their teaching, forcing them to rely largely on senior teaching assistants. The Department would be well-advised to establish some norms for the relation of instructors to teaching assistants and perhaps even tab a member of the faculty to take responsibility for oversight in this connection. The undergraduates whom we interviewed also

complained that they were not aware of any real university job assistance – a sure sign that, even if such a mechanism is in place, it is not working properly. We already mentioned students' complaints about a lack of a sufficient variety of courses as well as their concern about the future of the Department, given the prospect that some of their favorite professors are nearing retirement (see Section 3.1 above).

Mention has already been made of problems with the MA program (Section 3.23 above). In our interviews with MA students, they voiced concerns with these same problems. From their vantage point, the MA program not only lacks structure, but also is too much like the BA program. In their view, like that of the undergraduates, there was not enough variety in the Department's offerings and neither their professors nor their advisors provide them sufficient feedback. Echoing the "one community" issue raised in Section 3.26 above, they complained of a lack of common ground and interaction both with the faculty and among themselves, despite the research seminars that they attend together. While both undergraduates and graduates complain of the lack of feedback on their written assignments, there is a clear difference between the ways they view their experience in the Department. Undergraduates have a sense of community and give their professors high marks for their availability and the quality of their interaction and teaching. The same cannot be said for the MA students. Their general view of their philosophical education thus merely underscores the need, clearly perceived by the Department, to review its MA program.

We heard a recurrent and reasonable complaint from students and faculty alike about the lack of sufficient funding for MA students, indeed, even the "best MA" students. Due to this lack of funding, students are simply not able to devote themselves exclusively to their studies. As an issue common to all Israeli philosophy departments, this lack of funding for graduate studies in philosophy is a matter of high priority for the Council of Higher Education.

Earlier we noted the excellent quality of the Department's series of colloquia as well as the plethora of reading groups, meetings of institutes, and the like with which the members of the faculty are affiliated. The Department needs to encourage BA and MA students to attend and participate in these events. One means of encouragement might be to adopt a practice of fielding from graduate students alone the first two or three questions put to a speaker following an address.

As in other Israeli philosophy departments, most graduate students take their BA at the same institution in which they are pursuing their graduate studies. In light of the distribution of experts across Israeli philosophy departments and Hebrew University's own present understaffing, it might consider both encouraging graduate students to take advanced courses in other departments when appropriate and recruiting undergraduates from other Israeli departments to its program.

## **5. Self-administration and physical infrastructure**

**5.1 Self-administration.** The department appears to be well run. The chair works efficiently and well with the administrative staff and members of the faculty who in turn voiced no objections to her administrative procedures. The administrative staff seems adequate; at least no concerns were raised regarding its adequacy during our on-campus interviews. While the chair is responsible for the "ongoing execution" of the study program, two committees – a syllabus committee and the department's Senior Academic

staff committee – are responsible for planning and managing the study program. This arrangement seems quite appropriate, though the Senior Academic staff committee clearly has its work cut out for it, given the Department's apt recognition of the need to revise aspects of its graduate program in particular.

With regard to criteria and procedures for promotion and tenure, we heard only one complaint, namely, the complaint that research alone – and neither teaching nor service to the Department and University – counted. If this complaint is well-founded, we concur with its content. Certainly excellence in teaching and, perhaps to a lesser but nonetheless important extent, dedicated service should count, along with first-rate research, as criteria that must be met for tenure. We should also note (since the issue is a general one, pertaining to philosophy in Israeli as a whole) that we were told that publications in Hebrew count but not as much as publications in English.

## **5.2 Physical infrastructure**

The Department expresses satisfaction with the physical infrastructure as far as classrooms are concerned. But it rightly complains of the state of instructors' rooms: no air conditioning, antiquated computer equipment, neither web connections nor wireless accessibility. The fact that lectures must pay for internet and e-mail connection is scandalous and far below the norms of a major university. These issues of the physical infrastructure undoubtedly contribute to the "one community" problem discussed earlier (Section 3.26). The "working" conditions, if we may use that euphemism, are simply not conducive to work and it is little wonder that faculty pursues its research off campus or at least not in the halls of the Department. Faculty who work at the other campus in Givat Ram are generally more satisfied with their conditions and the contrast between the two campuses does not help the Mt. Scopus campus win any points. As noted earlier, the University Rector's effort to improve the environment on this campus is a welcome step in this regard. In our view, renovating instructors' rooms with air conditioning, new computer equipment, and internet access should head the list of those improvements.

### ***Part C – Recommendations***

We make the following recommendations to the Department, the University Administration, and/or the Council of Higher Education and distinguish them in terms of their urgency. The most urgent recommendations are those requiring either immediate or steadfast attention to insure the quality of the research and education that the Department provides. We employ check marks to flag our judgment of the respective level of urgency of a recommendation: three check marks '√√√' for the most urgent, two check marks for the next most urgent, one check mark for a less urgent but nonetheless pressing recommendation. Unchecked recommendations signal practices or policies whose adoption we consider highly advisable. As a means of minimizing redundancy, we present at most very brief justifications for these recommendations but conclude each recommendation with a parenthetical reference to the pages in Parts A and B where the relevant justification or discussion can be found.

#### **Recommendations for the University Administration**

**1. Replacing retirees #1** √√√

We recommend that the Administration (a) authorize the Department to replace in a timely manner, i.e., no later than two years after they begin their retirement, all professors in the Department who have retired or will retire from January 2008 to December 2011, (b) authorize the Department to replace some of the retirees with senior faculty (full professors and/or associate professors), and (c) commit to restoring the Department within the next three years to its size – 13.25 – prior to the retirements during the period mentioned (January 2008-December 2011) (Executive Summary, p. 5; Section 2, pp. 9f; Sections 3.21-3.22, pp. 12f).

**2. Replacing retirees #2** √√√

We recommend that the Administration authorize the Department to replace all professors in the Department who have retired from January 2002 through December 2007, with the aim of restoring the Department within the next six years to its traditional size of 16 to 17 FTE's (Executive Summary, p. 5; Section 2, pp. 9f; Sections 3.21-3.22, pp. 12f).

**3. Co-operation between the Administration and the Department** √√√

We recommend that administrative officials (Rector, Vice-Rector, and Dean) conduct frank and open discussions with the philosophy faculty with a view to establishing the possibilities and priorities for addressing the problems confronting the Department, especially the impending retirements (Executive Summary, p. 5).

**4. Re-asserting the Research status of the Department** √√

In light of structural changes resulting from implementation of proposals stemming from the Gager Report, we recommend that the Administration and the division of the humanities continue their investment in the Department of Philosophy as an independent, research department (based on the excellence of *philosophical* research) during any restructuring period, occasioned by implementing those changes (Section 1.1, p. 8)

**5. Maintaining Departmental Autonomy** √√

We recommend (a) that the Administration re-assert the autonomy of the Department of Philosophy in relation to the Department of Jewish Thought, and (b) that the Department of Philosophy continue pursuing joint programs with the Department of Jewish Thought when appropriate (Section 1.2, pp. 8f).

**6. Departmental administration of the PhD program #1** √√

We recommend that the Administration find a way, perhaps through the establishment of a graduate school, of assigning the Department the principal responsibility for the PhD program in philosophy (Section 3.24, p. 13).

**7. Physical Infrastructure** √√

We recommend that the University Administration inaugurate its improvements of the physical environment at the Mt. Scopus campus by renovating instructors' rooms with air conditioning, new computer equipment, and internet access (Section 5.2, pp. 18).

**8. Support for Direct-track PhD students**

We recommend that the University Administration offer financial support to direct-track PhD students,<sup>2</sup> so they can be full-time students (Section 3.25, pp. 14f).

**Recommendations for the Administration and the Department**

**9. Direct-track #1**

We recommend that a departmental and possibly a humanities and/or a university-wide committee be established to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of a direct PhD track (see footnote 2 below) and to investigate how the current structure of studies for the PhD degree at Hebrew University could be modified to accommodate a direct track (Section 3.25, pp. 14f).

**10. Community and the Mount Scopus campus**

We recommend that the Department establish a committee to examine and propose solutions to the "one community" problem. To the extent that this problem is not specific to the Department and not resolvable by the Department alone, we recommend the establishment of such a committee on the level of the humanities division and possibly the Mount Scopus community as a whole (Section 3.26, pp. 15f; Section 4, p. 16; Section 5.2, p. 18)

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<sup>2</sup> By a direct track, we understand two years of course work, followed by the composition of a dissertation proposal under the direction of an adviser, to be defended by the end of their third or fourth year, with the aim of completing the entire doctoral program within six years.

## **Recommendation for the Department**

### **11. Hiring priorities**     √√√

We recommend the following two stages and order of priorities for hiring in the Department. In the *first* stage (within the next 2-3 years), the Department's first priority should be a scholar with a specialization in analytical philosophy of language; the second priority should be someone whose area of expertise is the history of ancient philosophy and whose area of competence is medieval philosophy; a specialist in the history of modern philosophy (Descartes to Hegel, especially desirable would be a Kant scholar) is the third priority in this first stage. In the second stage (within the next 3-5 years), the Department should hire specialists in continental philosophy (Nietzsche, phenomenology, existentialism) and in ethics (Section 2, pp. 9f; Section 3.1, p. 11; Section 3.21, pp. 12f).

### **12. Quality and Stature of New Faculty**     √√

We recommend (a) that every new appointment, including part-time, be of a philosopher with an international profile in philosophy or the promise of developing such a profile and (b) that, if possible, one of the upcoming appointments within the next three to four years be at the senior level (associate or full professor) (Executive Summary, p. 5).

### **13. Revising the MA program**     √√

We recommend that the Department revise the MA program by (a) introducing a distribution requirement that will ensure that students receive advanced education in all major fields of philosophy; (b) requiring more writing from students and feedback from faculty, (c) implementing the planned changes in the final examination, and (d) changing the time requirement for the MA research track from 2 to 3 years (in concert with the council of higher education, the university administration, and the humanities division) (Section 3.23, pp. 13f; Section 4, pp. 16f; see, too, Recommendation #27 below.)

### **14. Departmental administration of the PhD program #2**     √√

We recommend that the Department, in consultation with the Administration, assume responsibility for its PhD program, introduce some structure into it, and create regular patterns of interaction between faculty and students (Section 3.24, p. 13; see Recommendation #6 above).

### **15. Departmental administration of the PhD program #3**

We recommend that the Department (a) develop ways for doctoral students to publicly present work in progress and (b) include on its web-page information on its PhD program, a list of its PhD students, and home-pages of its PhD students (Section 3.24, p. 13).

### **16. Need for Additional Women among the Faculty**     √

We recommend that the Department hire additional women faculty, so long as they are no less capable than the best male applicants (Section 2, p. 9).

### **17. Need for Full-time Members**

We recommend that the Administration and the Department aim to have a solid core of full-time positions plus a (smaller) number of joint positions (Section 2.1, p. 10).

**18. Direct-track#2**

Until a committee reaches its conclusions about the direct PhD track (see Recommendation #9 above), we recommend that the Department restart the direct-track and make a special effort to identify suitable candidates for it. This proposal is not intended to eliminate the current practice of completing a master's thesis before pursuing doctoral studies, should students, in consultation with their advisors, decide that this practice is preferable for them (Section 3.25, pp. 14f).

**19. Writing and feedback**      ✓✓

We recommend that the Department take steps to insure that, in its courses, teachers are requiring more extensive writing assignments in BA and MA courses and providing sufficient feedback on those assignments (Section 4, pp. 16f).

**20. Monitoring undergraduate teaching**      ✓✓

We recommend that the Department assign senior professors with the responsibility of formally monitoring undergraduate instruction by MA and PhD students (Section 4, pp. 16f).

**21. Review of Undergraduate Offerings**

We recommend that the Department (a) review its undergraduate offerings with a view to determining any significant lacunae in its offerings and (b) consider assigning or hiring adjuncts to teach such courses not presently offered (Section 3.1, p. 11).

**22. Placement**

We recommend that the Department create a placement service for both PhD and MA graduates within the philosophy department and that it appoint a philosophy professor as a placement director, responsible for assisting graduates in their search for employment or further research opportunities (doctoral or post-doctoral) (Section 3.27, p. 15).

**23. Interuniversity #1**

We recommend that the Department, as a means of broadening students' horizons, (1) encourage graduate students to enroll in advanced courses at other universities, and (2) recruit undergraduates from other Israeli universities to the philosophy graduate program at Hebrew University (Section 4, pp. 16f).

**24. Interuniversity #2**

We recommend that the Department attempt to develop more faculty exchanges with other departments of philosophy, both in and outside Israel (Section 2.2, p. 10).

**25. Tenure**

We recommend that the Department recognize, along with research and publications, both excellence in teaching and service to the Department and University as part of the criteria for tenure (Section 5.1, p. 17).

## **Recommendations to the Council of Higher Education**

### **26. Increasing financial support for graduate students** √√√

Given (a) the dependency of the quality of both undergraduate and graduate philosophy programs on the level of support that MA and PhD students receive and (b) the paltry level of this support by international standards, we strongly recommend that the CHE explore every possible avenue for increasing that level of support (Section 4, p. 16).

### **27. Revising expectations for length of MA studies** √

We recommend that the CHE recognize that MA students should be expected to complete their MA degree within 3 years of matriculation in a master's program in philosophy (Section 3.23, p. 13).

### **28. Interuniversity: enlarging educational horizons for students and faculty**

The following recommendation follows up on Recommendations #23 and #24 above. In view of the fact that exchange of students and faculty among Israeli departments of philosophy requires co-ordination among the respective universities that house them, we recommend that the CHE form a committee with representatives of the various departments, charged with exploring ways to promote exchange of students and faculty among their departments (Section 2.2, p. 10; Section 4, pp. 16f).

**Signed by:**



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Prof. Daniel Dahlstrom, Chair



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Prof. Paul Davies



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Prof. Richard Eldridge



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Prof. Jacob Joshua Ross



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Prof. Gila Sher

**Appendix 1- Copy of Letter of Appointment**



מדינת ישראל

STATE OF ISRAEL

**Minister of Education**

Tuesday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Professor Daniel Dahlstrom  
Department of Philosophy  
Boston University  
USA

Dear Professor Dahlstrom,

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.

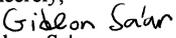
This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense 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 General Philosophy Studies. The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Daniel Dahlstrom - Chair, Prof. Paul Davies, Prof. Richard Eldridge, Prof. Jacob Joshua Ross, and Prof. Gila Sher. Ms. Michal Kabatznik 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  
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. Michal Kabatznik, 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/she 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.

**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- Site Visit Schedule

**THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Hebrew University**

**Tentative Schedule of Site Visit**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Philosophy – tentative schedule of site visit**

**Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Room/Location</b>
09:30-10:15	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	President Prof. Menachem Magidor Rector Prof. Sara Stroumsa. Vice-Rector Prof. Miri Gur-Arye. Head of academic review in the Humanities and Social Sciences prof. Kobi  metzer	President office
10:30-11:15	Meeting with the heads of the Humanities Faculty*	Prof. Israel Bartal- Dean	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
11:15-12:00	Meeting with the heads of the Department of Philosophy and M.A. Advisor and B.A. Advisor	Prof. Avital Wohlman, M.A. Advisor, Dr. Michael Roubach, B.A. Advisor – Prof. Mark Steiner	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
12:00-12:45	Meeting with Senior Academic Faculty*	Dr. Daniel Attas, Prof. Yemima Ben Menahem, Prof. David Enoch, Prof. Jacob Golomb, Prof. Moshe Halbertal, Prof. Carl Posy, Prof. Itamar Pitowsky, Prof. Samuel Scolnicov, Prof. Oron Shagrir, Prof. Elhanan Yakira	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
12:45-13:30	Meeting with adjunct lecturers and Alumni	Dr. Alon Chasid *, Dr. Rami Gudovitch, Dr. Pini Ifergan*, Dr. Eliezer Malkiel*,  * Alumni	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411

Evaluation Committee Report, Philosophy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

13:30-14:15	informal lunch with faculty members	Prof Yemima Ben-Menahem, Prof. Carl J. Posy, Prof Oron Shagrir, Prof Samuel Scolnicov	BEIT MAIERSDORF
14:15-15:00	Tour of campus (Including classes, studios, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)	Prof. Avital Wohlman, Dr. Michael Roubach	
15:00-15:45	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee		Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411

**Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Room/Location</b>
09:45-11:00	Meeting with Junior academic faculty*	Tirtsas Harif, Ron Aboodi, Michal Bareket, Yaron Alon, Ran Baratz, Moshe Ifargan, Gilad Nir, Shay Zaks, Gil Sagi	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
11:00-11:45	Meeting with B.A. students**	Benjamin Sacks-2, Michael Aman, Magen Inon-2, Bar Shoshany-3, Nimrod Borenstein-2, Or Tuttnauer-3, Ilan Finkelstin-2, Sagy Mizrahi-2, Noa Lahav-2, Roey Reichert-2	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
11:45-12:30	Meeting with M.A. students**	Liran Gordon-2, Avital Ben Shalom-2, Netanel Kupfer-1, Guy Schultz-4, Dan Baraz-3, Benjamin Silver-3, Benjamin Weisberger-3, Ben Schlomi-3, Farhad Rustamov-3, Hillel ben-Sasson-3 מ"ח ד"ו	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
12:30-13:30	informal lunch with PhD Students	Edo Litmanovitch, Dror Yinon, Eli Schonfeld, Amir Konigsberg	Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
13:30-14:45	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee		Meeting room- hum. Faculty 5411
15:00-15:45	Summation meeting with heads of the institution, faculty, and the Dept. of Phil.	President Prof. Menachem Magidor, Rector Prof. Sarah Stroumsa. Vice-Rector Prof. Miri Gur-Arye. Head of academic review in the Humanities and Social Sciences Prof. Kobi Metzger	President office

