



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

**Tel Aviv- Yaffo Academic College**

**The School of Behavioral Sciences**

**Evaluation Report**

**August 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 the decision of the CHE, 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, U.S.A - Committee Chair**
  
- **Prof. Victor Azarya, The Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University (emeritus), Israel**
  
- **Prof. Yinon Cohen, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A and Departments of Sociology & Anthropology and Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University, Israel**
  
- **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**

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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.

- **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.**

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 full-day visits to five of the twelve institutions whose Psychology and Behavioral Science study programs the committee was requested to examine.

The committee visited the remaining seven institutions during December 2008.

During these visits, 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 School of Behavioral Sciences at the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College.***

The Committee's visit to the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College took place on December 11, 2008.

The following members of the committee participated in the visit to Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen - Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Victor Azarya**
- **Prof. Morris Moscovitch**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham**

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 School of Behavioral Sciences for the self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit.

## **Chapter 3- Evaluation of the School of Behavioral Sciences at the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College**

### **Background**

The Tel-Aviv-Yaffo Academic College was established in 1994 as part of a collaborative effort by Tel Aviv University, the Council for Higher Education and the Municipality of Tel Aviv.

The Council for Higher Education issued a permit to open the College in January 1994.

The institution's self-evaluation report states that, during the academic year 2006-7, there were 2,822 students at the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College of whom 2,503 were studying for a BA degree and 319 for an MA degree.

The School of Behavioral Sciences comprises an undergraduate program in Behavioral Science and a Masters Program in Clinical Psychology, Neuropsychological Rehabilitation, Medical Psychology and Vocational Psychology and Counseling.

The institution's self-evaluation report states that in 2007 there were 924 students in the BA program in Behavioral Sciences at the college and 218 students in the MA programs in Psychology.

The undergraduate program in Behavioral Sciences was inaugurated in 1994 and received permanent accreditation from the CHE in 2001.

The MA program in Clinical Psychology (without thesis) was introduced in the academic year 2003-4 and received permanent accreditation from the CHE in January 2009.

Neuropsychological Rehabilitation was introduced in the academic year 2003-4. A "child-oriented focus" was added in 2006. The program received permanent accreditation from the CHE in November 2008.

The Medical Psychology program was introduced in the academic year 2003-4. The program received permanent accreditation from the CHE in November 2008.

The Vocational Psychology program was introduced in the academic year 2006-7. The program received temporary accreditation from the CHE in December 2008.

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

As its self-evaluation document indicates, Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College has pursued two central goals since its inception. First, it has aimed to offer academic studies that match the level and quality achieved by Israeli universities by creating a learning environment conducive both to standards and to academic achievement. Second, it has aimed to contribute to community development in Yaffo, where the college is currently located and where the permanent campus is being built, while making an educational and social contribution to all walks of life in Israeli society through equal opportunity.

To this end, the college offers BA-level education in behavioral science emphasizing solid undergraduate training in psychology, while also offering MA-level training in applied areas of psychology. The undergraduate program includes a solid basis in methodology and statistics, reasonable depth and breadth in disciplinary studies, and exposure to hands-on experience with research. To enable students whose qualifications are somewhat lower than those of their university peers to meet the exacting requirements, the college aims to create a supportive learning environment including small classes, extensive exercises and tutorials, easy access to the academic and administrative staff, and efficient library services offering easy access to diverse data bases, as well as to computer laboratories. The school measures its success in terms of the degree to which it offers a solid undergraduate background in behavioral science and in terms of whether or not its graduates are able to secure employment in their field and gain admission to graduate programs in Israel and abroad.

There was considerable participation in the committee's evaluation process, the self-evaluation document was particularly candid and well written, and the committee's meetings at the college were highly informative. Based on the self-evaluation document and the committee's meetings with students and faculty, the committee believes that the school is achieving most of its goals. The college has established and maintained a reputation as an institution committed to teaching undergraduates in a congenial atmosphere. Faculty and students interact closely and in smaller classes than possible in universities where large classes are the norm. Almost all students with whom the committee met indicated that this congenial, more "intimate" learning experience is what drew them to Tel Aviv-Yaffo, sometimes even if they were accepted to a university; they believed the college was meeting their expectations. According to the self-evaluation document, nearly one-quarter of its graduates gain admission to graduate programs, which themselves are stepping stones to employment. This figure compares favorably with that of the universities, although no alumni survey has been done that might verify its accuracy. Still, the college's graduates in behavioral science are successful in that they have regularly received the prestigious Hammer Scholarship, awarded yearly on a national basis by the Council of Higher Education to ten college graduates admitted to graduate research training. Based on the committee's meetings with alumni, the college prepares well even those BA-level graduates who forego graduate training and instead seek employment.

The MA programs aim to train graduate students in four fields – clinical psychology, neuropsychological rehabilitation, medical psychology, and vocational psychology – and to train in these applied areas with academic excellence. The school pursues this aim by engaging students in a common core of studies across all the programs, including an emphasis on psychobiology, with the latter also characterizing the applied work in each applied area (except vocational psychology), a feature that seems unique among the colleges. There is also a developmental stream or track that tends to run through these programs and this also may be unique in Israel. A commitment to research is evident as well, in that students prepare a final project that is research-based, while developing an appreciation of and familiarity with evidence-based practice.

In general, the committee's impression is of effective programs that are well considered, organized, and largely sensible. Both students and faculty see the school as offering high quality education and training, and based on the committee's meetings, it seems clear that

there is a great deal of satisfaction among students (and alumni) with training at the college. As noted, students are quite frequently admitted to graduate programs at universities, and although it is difficult to know how readily students are able to secure employment, it seems that early alumni have been quite successful.

Although the school appears to be doing quite well in offering high quality academic programs, it is worth noting that it has not attracted significant numbers of Arab students, which the committee sees as unfortunate. More systematic efforts are needed to ensure improvement in this area. According to the faculty and administration, the school is, however, engaged in various educational projects with both elementary and high-school students in the local community in Yaffo, and faculty volunteer their time and experience to these projects.

These strong programs notwithstanding, training excellence in the school is challenged by a number of problems ranging from curriculum matters to class size, the quality of supervision MA students receive (especially on their final projects), and library facilities. These challenges make up the bulk of the committee's recommendations.

## **2. The Program of Study**

According to the self-evaluation document, the program in Behavioral Sciences in the School of Behavioral Sciences offer BA-level education based on a solid disciplinary basis in psychology and sociology. Rather than being an integrated program of Behavioral Sciences, it is structured more as a double major in psychology and sociology/anthropology. The double major appears to be carefully designed, particularly in psychology, which is by far the emphasis. The program is largely defined by BA-level education in psychology, which is offered in a thorough program of study seems comparable with the course content offered to psychology majors at universities around the world (at least when these are double majors). The strengths of the program include, as the self-evaluation document indicates, intensive training in research methods and statistics as well as in applied computer skills—all necessary, in the committee's view, to BA-level education in behavioral science (as well as psychology). As the document indicates, students also enroll in a research seminar in each of the two disciplines, and carry out a research project from start to finish in each course. This kind of hands-on experience with research is essential. It is thus noteworthy that the program includes this structure for gaining such experience. Although other improvements in the curriculum might profitably be made (noted below) and some structural arrangements may need to be revisited, this aspect of the program appears to function well.

The double-major model is sensible in its course requirements; yet it is not backed by a comparable strength of faculty in sociology/anthropology relative to psychology. Moreover, even if such a parity were to be achieved, the program would not convey to students the interrelatedness of the fields of behavioral science (i.e., psychology, sociology/anthropology) as approaches to understanding human behavior—in the absence of some curricular changes. Although the self-evaluation report notes that the BA-level program emphasizes integration across these disciplines as well as grounding in each, the committee's meetings indicated that the program does not in fact systematically integrate these fields for students, leaving this an aim that is not met well. Such an integration could be accomplished by arranging that one or more advanced seminars are required that are



explicitly integrative and show how these differing disciplines view the same problem. One way to do this would be to use a team teaching approach, and to advise students about this as an opportunity for them to bring the two fields together. Alternatively, the school might revise this aspect of its mission.

In addition, as far as the psychology curriculum, some aspects of it seem to present less psychological science than they might. For example, the undergraduate curriculum requires a full year of personality theory (at least one semester more than is typically required internationally) and offers no exposure to the contemporary science of personality. The second semester could thus be replaced profitably with an introduction to research in personality using a standard textbook, which would typically include a broad range of research from the cognitive underpinnings of individual differences and self-judgment to emotional neuroscience and behavioral genetics.

Finally, regardless of whether the BA is in behavioral science or in psychology, gaining proficiency in reading the science literature in English is important for depth of exposure to the field and for both graduate school and the professions. The basic textbook for at least one, and preferably more, of the core courses should, therefore, be in English, and one or more of the advanced courses should assign key journal articles in English.

Turning to graduate training in the school, it is offered in four MA programs (all without thesis) in: Clinical Psychology, Neuropsychological Rehabilitation, Medical Psychology, and Vocational Psychology. Each of these programs except the last also offers both an adult and a child track, and thus asks students to choose which track (child or adult) they wish to pursue upon applying to the program. As noted, students in all programs are exposed to a common set of core courses. In clinical psychology and allied fields the overlapping courses include not only the psychotherapy courses that are psychodynamic, but also those in cognitive behavioral therapy, family therapy, and gestalt, a diversity in approaches that allows students to be introduced to these varying approaches rather than only to one. The core also includes biological bases of psychopathology, two neuropsychology seminars, and several statistics and research methods courses, among others. Each program, in addition, has its own specialized course requirements and requires its students to participate in a 12-month practicum placement providing hands-on experience in students' chosen field. Finally, each program requires students to complete a final project – nearly equivalent in scope to a thesis – as required by the licensing board of the Ministry of Health.

In the committee's view, the basic concept and structure of the curriculum is good and well thought out. Moreover, it is particularly valuable that the clinical program (and allied programs) adopt the scientist-practitioner model as the guiding approach to clinical training, and that students thus learn to appreciate and understand evidence-based practice. Courses to ensure that students gain such knowledge are included in the curriculum, and this is forward-looking and well conceptualized. At the same time, the committee's meetings revealed that students are not required to gain supervision in clinical intervention that is not psychodynamic in orientation, such as cognitive-behavioral interventions, and are not commonly supervised in this treatment approach. Hence, although the strengths of the program are apparent, including the enthusiasm, commitment, and high standards of the faculty and students, there are problems in the existing training that need improvement.

Moreover, it is evident that the courses offered in the program remain very heavily skewed to the psychodynamic, overall, and too often without basis in scientific evidence. Indeed, the psychopathology, assessment, and psychotherapy courses do not sufficiently capture the evidence-base of the field, and this is problematic (see next section). We are aware that the major source of the problem stems not from the Tel Aviv-Yaffo program but from the Professional Committees of the Council of Psychologists (through the Ministry of Health) and from internship sites that require such courses (again, see below).

The graduate programs in medical psychology and in vocational psychology face quite serious challenges to their viability, as valuable as they might potentially be. Although the medical psychology program is unique and can make a substantial contribution to the community, it is staffed by very few regular faculty, as the self-evaluation document candidly notes, which may compromise the quality of the program, particularly in terms of the availability of faculty supervision for final projects. Moreover, there are very few internship sites in this specialty area and this leads to long waiting times to secure an internship upon graduation (e.g., up to 1.5 years). Hence, it is perhaps the case that fewer students should be admitted to this program on a yearly basis to facilitate students' efficient completion of their education, licensure, and entry into the workforce— in this program that the committee sees as worth nurturing.

By comparison, the vocational psychology program seems to have even fewer strengths. It is likewise staffed by only 1.5 faculty, as the self-study notes, making it challenging at best to implement a high quality program and to supervise students' final projects. Beyond this, in the committee's view, this vocational psychology program does not seem to have the strength or the clear purpose of other programs. It seems to consist of industrial psychology (as in testing and personnel selection), human resource management, and organizational behavior, and yet to mainly be a form of clinical program. Given that the MA programs in the school are so heavily oriented toward clinical intervention, and the shared core of curriculum across programs, both medical psychology and vocational psychology seem to offer additional avenues to training practicing psychotherapists. This raises the question of how advisable it is to include both of these programs—in terms of both training quality and workforce needs. Of these two additional programs, the vocational one is noticeably weaker and should be dropped if its quality and staffing is not improved markedly.

Finally, none of the MA programs allocates sufficient time for students to conduct high level research projects in their fields, which could serve to elevate the level of their final projects. Although the MA programs are all applied in focus, high level graduate training in these areas requires that students receive adequate research training and supervision so that they will be capable of keeping up with and even contributing to the literature in their fields, should they choose to do the latter during their careers. By the program's own account in the self evaluation report and in our meetings, the quality of the final project is highly variable, and most projects have not lived up to the faculty's expectation for high quality empirical studies.

For this and other reasons, the school is considering moving to a set of 3-year MA programs that require a thesis, and indeed, an empirical thesis. The committee sees this move as entirely sensible.

### 3. Faculty and Teaching

**Faculty.** According to the self-evaluation report, the teaching staff of the school consists of 26 faculty members holding regular appointments corresponding to 22 full time positions. A table the committee received separately a bit later updated this to 19 full-time and 15 part-time faculty for a total of 34 regular faculty. This is a fairly good-sized faculty as compared with psychology departments at research universities internationally and larger than what is generally found in colleges. It is not a problem for the department, in the committee's view, but it is worth noting.

Overall, members of the faculty appear well qualified in terms of training, experience and research track record. They received their degrees at top universities in Israel or abroad and some have published extensively, including in leading journals in their respective specialty areas. This is noteworthy in view of their teaching load, which is higher than at research universities, and in that colleges in Israel are not primarily as research institutions. The committee regards this as a significant asset.

Core members of the faculty indicated that they are satisfied with their job. They appeared committed to the department and to the college. Students and alumni reported that members of the faculty are helpful, open and accessible. Students were virtually unanimous in stressing the high quality of teaching as one of the strengths of the program.

Looking at this by MA-level specialty area, however, the picture is less satisfactory. As noted, the Vocational Psychology program relies on only 1.5 regular faculty positions, and the Medical Psychology and Rehabilitation program also appears to have only a thin layer of faculty as well.

Another faculty imbalance is especially serious with regard to representation of psychologists versus sociologists/anthropologists in the school. Of the 30 to 35 main academic staff members, only 4 are sociologists/anthropologists. Of these, two are part-time and those remaining are one sociologist and one anthropologist. All the remaining members of the faculty in the school are psychologists except for two statisticians. This is obviously not ideal for the program since it claims to offer an integrated behavioral sciences program, and not just a major in psychology and a minor in sociology/anthropology. The small representation of sociologists in the department is especially puzzling in light of the near parity between sociology/anthropology and psychology in the program's course requirements (37 versus 38 credits) by the numbers (more on this below).

To implement the sociology aspect of the program, the school makes *very extensive* use of adjunct (external) teachers. The self evaluation report lists 18 senior (i.e. holding a Ph.D. degree) and 16 junior (i.e. without Ph.D.) adjunct teachers. This is a total of 34 adjuncts compared to just 4 regular faculty, and thus providing 89.5% of the teaching staff. This proportion is unacceptably high. Moreover, looking at the courses taught by external teachers, the situation becomes still more serious, because many of the required core courses in sociology are taught by external teachers. These include Introduction to Sociology and Introduction to Israeli Society A and B, one of the Sociological Theory courses and all but two of the Foundation Courses in Sociology. It is likely to be challenging to offer a high quality sociology/anthropology curriculum without hiring more

regular faculty in this area or tapping regular faculty in related schools in the college to help solidify this aspect of the behavioral science BA program.

In addition, adjunct teachers in sociology are divided into three different groups:

1) retired professors from other universities who teach to supplement to their retirement income, 2) students who have not yet completed their Ph.D. (or sometimes even their MA), 3) young Ph.D.s on the academic job market. Such heavy reliance on adjunct teachers creates a number of problems: a) they are an unstable teaching force whose commitment to the school and to the program may not be firm, b) they earn a very low salary and hardly any social benefits, in that they are usually paid for 8 months a year only, are fired and rehired every year in order to avoid making them eligible for social benefits that derives from continuous employment, raising questions about unfair labor exploitation, and c) they are not judged by the same criteria of excellence as are the regular faculty (except the retired professors among the adjuncts) but are still entrusted with the most important courses in the program. Finally, they are not in a position to be doing long-term planning for the school in terms of guiding what should be included and required on the sociology side of the behavioral science undergraduate curriculum.

In psychology, by contrast, the reliance on external (adjunct) teachers appears lighter. There are 14 senior and 4 junior adjunct teachers in psychology, totaling 18, compared to 21 regular faculty, making up 47% of the teaching force. It should be added that in psychology some reliance on adjunct teachers may be needed when they bring special clinical expertise essential to a training program that is professionally oriented.

In view of the high reliance on adjunct teachers deriving from a scarcity of regular faculty positions, the committee was surprised to learn that professors have a lighter annual teaching load than lecturers and senior lecturers (10 versus 12 hours for regular faculty and 12 versus 14 hours for adjuncts). The reason for such differentiation is unclear. If any difference should exist in the teaching hours, it is the committee's view that it should probably be junior staff who teaches fewer hours relative to senior staff to facilitate career development among junior faculty.

Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College, as other colleges, handles appointments and promotions to lecturer and senior levels internally and promotion to associate and full professor is handled externally, by CHE. The emphasis on high quality research and scholarship as well as teaching in promotion has contributed considerably to the strength of the school. At the same time, it creates some ambiguity as to faculty expectations with regard to the importance of research versus pressing teaching duties, tutoring students, and advising them. To address this, the college makes clear to faculty the importance of the research component in their work at the college, and we commend them for encouraging and supporting faculty's opportunities to enhance their research programs. This is done by allowing faculty to apply for paid sabbaticals, providing faculty with a travel allowance of 5000 US\$ a year (which is high by Israeli standards), and maintaining a research fund that provides small competitive research grants to faculty. Moreover, the college pays a salary supplement to faculty who win external research grants and allows the use of salary supplements received from external sources to redeem teaching hours (i.e., the college accepts course releases).

Appointments and promotions that are handled internally are initiated by the Head of the School who recommends it to the Appointments Committee of the College, chaired by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. There seems to be no formal departmental body involved in initiating appointments and promotions of colleagues. In our discussion with the faculty we sensed that they know very little about the promotion procedures. Uncertainty and confusion exists also with regard to academic tenure. The faculty list provided to us notes that 5 members have academic tenure, all at the ranks of associate professor or above. The faculty who took part in discussions with us did not seem to know who in the school has tenure and who does not, and some also complained that tenure appears to be restricted to full professors even though in the past faculty received tenure at a lower rank and have kept their tenure at this rank. It is important to note, too, that those not offered tenure after a number of years can still renew their contracts (usually for three years) and keep their employment—so they do not have to leave the institution as is the case in research universities.

Faculty involvement in decision making seems to be minimal in other matters as well. The only active departmental faculty committee appears to be the Teaching Committee dealing with curriculum-related matters. There are no general departmental meetings where policy decisions or recommendations are made, and no executive committee of the school, both of which may be useful to have to distribute some responsibility within the school. At this point, power is concentrated at the level of the Head of the School and perhaps the Heads of the various Programs. Moreover, there are no term limits. The only senior office-holder appointed to a limited period is the President of the College (for three years) and even in this case there is no limit to the number of times the appointment may be renewed.

Such concentration of power at the top and long periods of service becomes crucial when considering that the School of Behavioral Sciences will have to face serious hiring decisions. For example, given how few regular faculty there are in the sociology/anthropology aspect of the undergraduate program and in order to better develop and deliver that aspect of the program, hiring of regular faculty is essential unless the undergraduate program is reformulated. In short, the sociology/anthropology side of the program cannot continue as a viable component of the program unless the regular faculty in these fields is at least doubled and very soon. On the other hand, the school is focused more on further developing its MA-level programs in psychology, particularly the program, Vocational Psychology, and there is an argument to be made for this, because the teaching staff in that MA-level program is very thin. There are also few faculty, as noted, in medical psychology, which is thus an area where a core faculty hire would seem important if the program is to be viable.

Giving priority to faculty hiring is essential and urgent in the school. If this is not done, the school runs the risk of spreading itself too thin and trying to do too much. If sociology/anthropology does not get the priority it needs within the school, it would be wise to plan and implement moving this part of the program into the Government and Society Department (G&S) where there is a presence of sociology. If this were done, the school could continue to offer the behavioral sciences BA program, with an emphasis on psychology and a variety of minors, such as sociology/anthropology, political science, economics, and so on, each of which would be offered by another department. Some steps appear to have been taken in this direction, as students reported that they are now required to register for all sociology courses within the Government and Society

Department. It is the committee's view that the school should make this change, unless it can significantly strengthen its sociology/anthropology component.

**Teaching.** The BA program in Behavioral Sciences consists of 112 credits, of which 95 are for required courses. This leaves only 27 credits for electives (6 to 9 courses given that most courses provide 3 or 4 credits). The students unanimously complained that this is too small a number of electives and the committee tends to agree. In addition, if the electives are to be divided more or less equally between psychology and sociology, as would be expected from a double major track program, it would mean at least 3 courses in each discipline. Three elective courses out of 27 to 30 total courses is very low for a sociology curriculum. Undergraduate sociology programs usually depend on a far larger set of electives than included in this behavioral science program, even if in psychology programs, it may not be uncommon to have as few as three electives.

Under the circumstances of so few electives in sociology, in addition, the courses offered are more redundant than they should be. For example the school offers "Historical and Intellectual Origins of Social Sciences" as a compulsory 5 credit course as well as a 4 credit course on "Classical Sociological Theories" and still another elective 3 credit course on "Contemporary Sociological Theories." This creates an exaggerated philosophical and theoretical emphasis in the program. Such over-emphasis on theory and intellectual history in required courses should be reduced, perhaps by making some electives, thus increasing elective course hours in sociology.

The MA level programs are quite well structured and organized. The department requires that students take some of the same courses across the different programs, which the committee sees as a strength. Moreover, assuming reasonable class size, the committee believes that there would be an advantage to teaching some of these courses as multiple-program courses because it would increase cross-fertilization between areas, while building bonds between students in different areas, and economizing on faculty time. At the same time, all the programs are more clinical in quality, i.e., their focus is more like clinical psychology than one might expect from an international viewpoint. Medical psychology is basically clinical health psychology, which is often considered a branch of clinical psychology. Likewise, vocational psychology has a counseling/clinical focus. If these programs were to rely more formally on the clinical courses offered by clinical faculty and faculty in neurorehabilitation, perhaps this might help address the problem of large class sizes and very few faculty.

Unfortunately, in terms of clinical psychology, the programmatic aim to emphasize evidence-based practice within a scientist-practitioner model, while laudable, is compromised by great redundancy among the four (2 credit) courses required on psychopathology and among the three required courses on personality assessment (two of which are 4-credit and one is a 2-credit semester-long courses). In both sequences, the coverage of psychodynamic material greatly predominates over research-based assessment tools grounded in cognitive, behavioral, and systemic approaches. State-of-the-science work by clinical scientists is missing from the reading lists, which instead include old, mostly psychodynamic materials that should no longer be required in a science-practitioner training program. The assessment sequence includes redundant coverage of psychodiagnostic tests and includes several that are no longer considered valid or appropriate as clinical assessment tools. If the program teaches students about

these tests, it should be done in just one semester that also includes the empirical work that casts doubt on their validity, and certainly a course covering cognitive-behavioral assessment tools must be required in this sequence. Similar problems exist in the four psychotherapy courses, which must trim redundancies and be modernized, with reading lists that contain cutting edge work in intervention science rather than outdated material. Ideally, students should also be required to do a practicum in (i.e., to be supervised in) either cognitive-behavioral treatment or family systems intervention in addition to psychodynamic treatment, to ensure breadth in their training.

The committee recognizes that these outdated course requirements (and the problems noted) are imposed on the program by the regulations fashioned by the Professional Committee of the Council of Psychologists (through the Ministry of Health) that define eligibility for internship and licensure. But they do not fit with international training standards in the field or with the training goals of the existing clinical program. Even so, alleviating these burdensome requirements and replacing them with contemporary, streamlined courses in evidence-based practice is greatly needed both for excellence in the program and for the good of the public at large.

#### **4. Students and Learning**

Admissions standards are high for both the BA and MA degrees. The cutoffs for both matriculation and psychometric scores are high. For instance, in AY 2006-07, the admitted students had either a high-school matriculation average of 98 or a psychometric exam score of 610 or a combined score of 625. In the past two years, the average number of applicants to the BA program was approximately 460 from which approximately 395 were admitted and 290 entered the program. Between 5-10% of the BA students dropped out for nonacademic reasons and less than 1% were expelled for academic reasons. Students receive scholarships and financial aid based on both merit and need. In 2006-07, for example, approximately 25% of students received such aid. The minimum admission criteria for MA studies include a BA in psychology or behavioral science with a GPA of 87, and a MITAM score of 85. Of the Master's programs, the clinical program has the most applicants, and is the most selective, accepting between 8-14% of an applicant pool that has increased from 146 in 2003 to 316 in 2006. Most of those accepted choose to attend the program. Fewer students apply to the other programs and a higher percentage is accepted. Dropout rates from the MA programs are zero or close to zero.

The committee met with 10 undergraduates and more than 15 graduate students, and a group of recent alumni whose views seemed to converge with the views of the existing students with whom the committee met. In these meetings, students were frank and forthcoming in both praise and criticism. The undergraduates reported very much valuing the college's supportive atmosphere and the fact that classes are smaller than those offered in universities. Most reported career goals of becoming applied psychologists, usually in the clinical area. While some said that they were not admitted to one of the universities (usually due to being just below the cutoff score), others reported having a choice and opting to enroll in the college due to the high quality of teaching and the smaller classes. The students uniformly reported that they hold the faculty in high regard and praised the faculty for their teaching and personal advising, for their accessibility, and for creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. With that, some noted feeling that the two areas of study in the BA program, psychology and sociology, are not well-balanced, not

equally engaging, and not well integrated. Some also expressed a wish for more applied experience at the undergraduate level in research laboratories or in field settings during their second year of studies. They noted as well that while fieldwork experience is essential for admission to applied MA programs, taking part in such activity is entirely voluntary and not uniformly recommended by the faculty. In the committee's view, such practical experience should be systematically offered as a standard part of the curriculum. Students also noted that it is difficult to get into elective courses for students who are not close to graduation and that this poses an obstacle to pursuing their interests.

The graduate students with whom the committee met were equally enthusiastic about the quality of the teaching faculty, their accessibility, and the respect with which they treat the students, as well as the friendly atmosphere they create. Students mentioned being exposed to cognitive-behavioral as well as to family systems modes of intervention in addition to psychodynamic therapy. Students were also candid about their critical evaluation and suggestions for improvement. They noted that they would like to see the number of students in the clinical program reduced. Class-sizes currently range from over 40 (in core courses) to 21 (in specialty courses) and 7 (in group supervision) and their sense is that these large class sizes are not conducive to the high-quality learning to which both the students and the faculty aspire. While the small-group supervision classes provide a good opportunity for case formulation and consultation, each student is currently able to present only two cases per semester, and this is not sufficient. In spite of increasing numbers of applicants to the clinically oriented programs (probably due to the reputation of having a high-quality training program), the committee thus agrees that reducing the number of students admitted in these programs is important. Other graduate students expressed hopes that the 12-month practicum be expanded to include more months and to allow a practicum at another site as well (such as a cognitive-behavioral practicum in addition to a psychodynamic one). Students also mentioned needing more than one hour of individual supervision each week. They mentioned as well that their academic work is compromised by how inefficient it is to retrieve journal articles as a student at the college (see below), and feeling at a disadvantage due to not having at least the option of doing an empirical MA thesis.

Both students and faculty noted they are acutely aware of and worried about extra-program hardships that hinder students' career goals once they graduate from the program. A four-year, half-time internship is required by the Ministry of Health, but is not easy to secure, and students can only *apply* for this level of training after they submit their final project. They then enter into a waiting period that lasts between a few months in the vocational program and a year in the clinical program to a year and a half in the neuropsychological rehabilitation and the medical psychology programs. Thus, an applied MA program designed to span 2-3 years turns into a 7- or 8-year training program from admission to licensure. Just how many graduates may be lost to the profession due to difficulties in finding an internship is difficult to assess in the absence of an alumni survey (which the program should conduct). But one thing is clear: If the program is designed to enable students to become licensed applied psychologists, as it is, there are certainly a number of obstacles to this that currently hinder students' progress toward this goal, many beyond the program's control (and the control of other programs). What is in the program's control are its decisions, e.g., about incoming class size and the structure and requirements of its several MA programs, which could better facilitate student progress.



In terms of students efficiently securing internships, the committee sees it as important that the school carefully consider how to do a better job of facilitating students' internship applications and placements, in order to reduce delays. One potential solution may be to shift from offering a set of 2-year MA programs to offering 3-year programs, integrating application to internships into the curriculum at the end of the second year. This makes sense from the committee's point of view, although students are reportedly hesitant about this, fearing that it might further delay their entry into the job market, causing them greater hardship.

## **5. Research**

As with all colleges in Israel, Tel Aviv-Yaffo College was formed with the aim of fulfilling a teaching mission rather than the mission of conducting research. Nonetheless, there is considerable emphasis on research in the college, while the college maintains its principle goal of serving as a teaching institution. In this regard, the school has acquitted itself admirably.

**Faculty.** The members of the faculty in the school are required to engage in research, albeit not to the extent required by research universities, and they are asked to demonstrate on an ongoing basis their involvement in research. Along with books and articles published, evaluation of the faculty also places significant emphasis on participation in academic conferences and activities involving applied research. They are also evaluated in terms of the degree to which they formulate and prepare instructional material that demonstrates new and original developments in the area being taught. In these ways, the committee was impressed by the level of research activity in the school, especially considering constraints on faculty time. Many members of the faculty have published steadily over the last five years, some hold grants, and many are involved with research collaborations with colleagues at Israeli universities where resources for conducting research are more plentiful.

**Undergraduates.** BA-level students receive intensive courses on research methods, statistics, measurement survey methodology and applied computer skills. Third-year students participate in two research seminars, one in psychology and one in sociology, and carry out independent research projects on a hands-on basis. The student is required to formulate the research question, collect the data, analyze the data, and submit a written report. In many cases, students also make an in-class presentation. The committee strongly believes that hands-on experience with research is essential to high quality BA-level education in behavioral science, even in the colleges. This aspect of the curriculum should thus be protected and would ideally be expanded. That is, if feasible, students should have the opportunity to work with faculty on faculty research projects as research assistants, an invaluable component to students' education.

**Graduate students.** The MA programs stress the importance of analytic and methodological skills, as essential tools for evidence-based practice in their professional training and to foster in students the approach of being life-long learners who combine research evidence with first-hand experience in the clinic. Students would benefit from involvement in faculty research, and yet the heavy teaching load of the faculty limits their research activities and narrows the opportunities for involving students in research, which the committee views as far less than ideal. Finally, the very heavy course load students

must complete in two years leaves little to no time for research, limiting students to their final project, the quality of which is highly uneven by the school's own admission. Given the limitations, the final project serves its goal quite admirably and, as evidence, a number of these are published in refereed journals. Still, a process should be instituted to ensure that the final project is more regularly of high quality and that students are able to take part in ongoing faculty research.

## **6. Infrastructure**

Infrastructure in the school is generally good – in terms of classrooms, offices for faculty, computer facilities, and library facilities (including testing materials for the MA program), although there was room for improvement in each category. For example, the success of the school's programs is reflected in increased enrollment in recent years and this has led to crowding in some classes. Classes designed to hold 60 students, at most, now accommodate a standing-room only crowd. There is also little to no office space for graduate students, which means they must work from home, reducing opportunities for valuable interactions with fellow students, faculty, and undergraduates. An effort should thus be made to allocate office space for graduate students, so that they can be provided desks in a shared office and can do their work on campus.

The most pressing infrastructure problem concerns the library. Although it has a reasonable supply of textbooks and journals used in courses, there is very little access to many electronic journals and data bases that students need for their courses and projects. To remedy this, students can gain access to the library at Tel Aviv University, but they must be on site to do so. This is not only inconvenient; it entails travel time to and from the university that eats into time spent learning. Moreover, this option is restricted to graduate students, leaving undergraduates with no access at all, compromising their education. This needs to be remedied. Beyond this, the college (in negotiation with the university) should spare students the hassle of having to pay 30 NIS every time they need library services there (then getting a refund for that sum from the College). A less bureaucratically cumbersome system is much needed, given the very limited holdings of the college library. Finally, even if Tel Aviv-Yaffo subscribes to the particular journals or data bases, students do not have access to library resources from their home computers where they must typically work, posing yet another stumbling block in their education. It should be noted as well that the library at the school includes no top sociology or anthropology journals from abroad, which is far less than ideal, and is missing some diagnostic tests commonly used in clinical neuropsychology.

## **7. Recommendations and Suggestions**

The committee was impressed by the enthusiasm and scholarly ambitions of those we met at the college and by a well prepared self-evaluation report. Meeting with the large number of students and faculty we were scheduled to meet left the committee with the impression of a strong school and program, on balance, with much potential. The recommendations we make below are offered in the spirit fostering continuing innovations to enhance the quality, depth, and breadth of existing programs in accord with stated aims.

We are aware of the fact that some of our recommendations are at odds with requirements set by the Ministry of Health's professional committee and that others (e.g., pertaining to

the size of graduate-student cohorts) are at odds with the increasing number of applications to the school's graduate program. That said, we make recommendations that we believe will enhance the quality of training and bring the colleges clinically oriented graduate programs (and those in other Israeli institutions) to international standards. We order the points below in terms of priority, although we note that a number of issues are equally urgent and important and should thus be initiated in the first year. Overall, we suggest a 12 to 24 month window for completing the recommended improvements, often with a follow up at 36 months.

## **A. The Undergraduate Program**

In the committee's view, the school has an urgent decision to make about whether or not it is committed to offering a BA in behavioral science.

1. The core emphasis of the undergraduate program in behavioral science is psychology, and the program is construed largely as a double major in psychology and sociology/anthropology. The coursework and training in psychology is of particularly high quality. The structure, however, is not formally codified as a BA in psychology offered as a double major or as major taken with a minor from another behavioral science discipline, e.g., sociology/anthropology. Codifying it as such would allow students the option of pursuing a double major with a different discipline in the college, for example, political science or economics, or of majoring in psychology and minoring in another discipline. The school is contemplating a move in this direction, and the committee endorses this, particularly if it will allow these options.

a. The committee recommends that the school and college continue their deliberations on the structure of the undergraduate program and commit to formulating a strategic plan for formally offering a double major with psychology.

b. Moreover, the committee recommends that the behavioral science program, assuming it is retained with the above change, require at least one course that explicitly allows students to compare and to integrate these two approaches to addressing the same set of problems (i.e., psychology and sociology/anthropology), perhaps through team teaching.

c. In addition, the sociology/anthropology side of the behavioral science curriculum seems less well structured and less rigorous than the psychology side of curriculum. Hence, the committee recommends that the school and college arrange that the sequences of courses required in the program in sociology/anthropology is better thought out and cover the essence of evidence-based sociology/anthropology, with better specified rationale than currently presented in the self-evaluation report. For example, several of the required courses seem to be theory courses thus creating an imbalance within the sociology/anthropology component of the program.

d. If the school and college ultimately decide not to move the sociology/anthropology side of the behavioral science curriculum to the Government and Society Department, and wish to continue offering it, the committee recommends that two or more evidence-based sociologists be hired as regular faculty in the school and take charge of upgrading and monitoring the quality of the coursework in the program.

e. Finally, the committee recommends that the school and college develop a strategic plan within the one year for making the recommended changes.

f. This plan should then be implemented in years two and three.

2. It seems apparent from the committee's meetings with students that they very much want the option of taking part in fieldwork or in faculty research to be an established part of the undergraduate curriculum – with placements in the private sector, government, or military, or in faculty-guided research groups in the school. The committee's view is that hands-on experience with research and (where feasible) with using knowledge gained in applied settings is essential to BA-level education in Behavioral Science.

a. The committee thus recommends that the school establish the option of receiving course credit for such hands-on experience in the field and in faculty research. Engaging students in hands-on research is particularly crucial to BA-level education in behavioral science (as well as psychology). Hence, formally offering students the option of gaining more research experience in this way will be valuable – in addition to the current requirement of taking an empirical seminar in which students gain hands-on experience formulating a research question, designing a study, analyzing and interpreting the data, and writing a report.

b. The committee thus recommends that in the first year the school develop a strategic plan for increasing the availability of such fieldwork and research opportunities with faculty for suitable course credit and that this plan be implemented in the second year.

3. Changes are also needed in the undergraduate curriculum so that it better prepares students for graduate studies and for the professional world.

a. Hence, the committee recommends that at least one of these core courses make use of a comprehensive up-to-date textbook in English.

b. Similarly, at least one and preferably more than one advanced course or seminar should require students to read seminal journal articles in English.

c. Strategic plans formulated about the undergraduate program in the first year should thus include a means of ensuring that the above curriculum changes are made and the plans should be implemented in the second year.

## **B. The MA programs**

The MA program is well conceived, as noted, although not all of the individual programs nested within the overall set are strong, either in terms of curriculum or the strength and number of the faculty. Hence, decisions need to be made in the school about the future directions of the school that are most essential and can be delivered with excellence, and to strengthen them to ensure their quality or disband them.

1. First, although the clinical psychology and neuropsychological rehabilitation programs

appear well thought through, functional, and sustainable, these programs could and should be strengthened.

a. The clinical psychology and neurological rehabilitation, with their child and adult components, both also adopt (with enthusiasm) the scientist practitioner model, which the committee regards as forward-looking and modern, and recommends it be protected in any further development in the school.

b. On the other hand, the training emphasis in both programs remains heavily psychodynamic and is not always evidence-based. The committee thus recommends that all students be required to take either a cognitive behavioral practicum or a family systems practicum that is evidence-based as part of their practicum training.

c. Finally, the course load is enormous in sheer numbers and it is heavily laden with courses on psychodiagnostics that emphasize projective assessment tools of questionable validity. There is also redundancy among some of the psychopathology, assessment, and psychotherapy courses, many of which are homogenous and focus exclusively on psychodynamic theory. Hence, the committee recommends that existing course work be condensed while ensuring significant exposure to evidence-based approaches.

(i) The committee recommends that all clinically-relevant MA programs bring the training they offer to international standards, by economizing on the number of courses and reducing inefficient use of students' time in courses on psychopathology, assessment, and intervention. This should also increase the time students have available for research.

(ii) In particular, the number of 1-semester courses on psychodiagnostic tests should be limited to 3 (i.e., 1-1/2 annual courses) and the focus of these should be on assessment tools with established validity data. If diagnostic instruments of questionable validity are covered, they should be restricted to one course that includes the scientific evidence on the validity of these tests.

(iii) Similarly, the number of 1-semester courses on psychopathology should be limited to 2 (i.e., 1 annual course), only one of which should cover historical and psychodynamic approaches to psychopathology, while the other focuses on advances in the clinical science of psychopathology.

(iv) Courses on the Clinical Interview should be limited to 1 semester, and those on intervention should be limited to 3 semesters (1.5 annual courses) that are focused on evidence-based treatments. At least one of these semesters should be on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies (CBT), and the others should also fit with international standards of training in evidence-based practice.

(v) The committee sees no conceptual reason to restrict basic clinical courses to students in the clinical program, except that smaller class-sizes are more conducive to learning. The committee thus recommends that students from all three clinically-relevant programs be allowed to take courses together so that enriching discussions and cross-fertilization between areas can occur— to the

degree that this can be accomplished. If courses are sub-divided to reduce class size, the committee recommends that they still include MA students from the different programs.

(vi) A curriculum committee should be established in the clinical programs to evaluate the syllabi in these programs and to recommend changes in the syllabi as needed to meet international standards in clinical science.

(vii) The department and program should develop a strategic plan in the first year for making the above curriculum and structural-programmatic changes in the clinical programs, and these should be implemented in the second and third years.

d. Given the challenges facing the clinical programs and their reputation among applicants, it would make sense to hire one or more core faculty members in the clinical and neurological rehabilitation programs, building on these existing strengths.

e. Even though the number of applicants applying to these programs is on the rise, the committee's view is that class sizes should be reduced to no more than 15 or 20 students per graduate class, in order to enable higher quality training and more individual attention.

f. The committee thus recommends that a strategic examination of these programs be done, including a decision about how to prioritize limited resources in the school, how to strengthen the core programs in the department, and that a strategic plan be formulated to strengthening these programs in the first year that is implemented in the second and third years.

2. At the same time, the two allied MA programs in the school medical psychology and vocational psychology share in some of the same courses, but are relatively less well defined otherwise than the core programs that also face operational challenges, in part because there are few regular faculty to administer develop and improve the excellence of the curriculum in these programs.

a. Hence, the committee recommends that part of the strategic examination of the MA programs, conducted in the first year, should focus on considering whether or not it is feasible and advisable to sustain these programs.

b. If the school and college decide to retain these programs, the committee recommends that they be strengthened, both in terms of revisiting the curriculum requirements and making one or more core faculty hires in each area.

c. The plan, as noted, should be implemented in years two and three.

3. Whatever decision is made about the MA programs as it pertains to hiring, the school is moving to adopt an MA thesis as a requirement in the graduate programs, and the committee concurs with the effort. Moreover, whether or not the plan is adopted, that is, even if the current requirement remains in place that students write an academic paper (a thesis equivalent) at Tel Aviv-Yaffo, the committee recommends that any such project

students are required to do be based on an empirical study that the students conduct, which should be methodologically sound and presented in a well-written report. This would, in the committee's view, elevate the level of sophistication of the school's graduates, better prepare them for careers as scientist-practitioners who are well versed in the empirical literature, and in some cases perhaps even enable them to contribute to this literature.

a. A strategic plan to ensure that this project is empirical should be formulated in the first year.

b. The plan should be implemented in the second and third year.

4. Finally, the school is considering changing its several MA programs to make them 3-year rather than as 2-year programs, since few students finish in two years. Students repeatedly indicated that it is nearly impossible to do so, given the course load and other training requirements. There are thus strong arguments for making this change and it makes good sense to the committee.

### **C. Infrastructure**

1. In addition to the above concerns, it is urgent that the college find a way to provide better access to electronic journals and data bases to both students (graduate and undergraduate) and faculty.

a. The committee recommends that this be done by increasing ease of access to materials at Tel Aviv University for all undergraduates.

b. The committee also recommends that the college arrange for more wide-spread electronic access to the college library among all students and faculty, and also arrange for electronic access to the college library to be available to students and faculty while they are on campus.

c. Finally the committee recommends that the school and college should ensure that that all students and faculty in the department have access to the college's and to Tel Aviv University's data bases and e-journals from home, as is the case in universities across the country. Also increase the testing materials available in some of the programs, such as neuropsychology.

d. More office space should be made available to graduate students, which would add to interaction with each other, and with faculty and undergraduates. This would enhance the learning atmosphere of all concerned.

e. Extra lab space will be needed if an empirical thesis is required of everyone.

f. The committee thus recommends that a strategic plan be formulated in the first year about exactly how to enable the above improvements to be made, and that this plan be implemented in the second and third years.

#### **D. Alumni Survey / Alumni Outreach**

1. In order to gain knowledge from alumni about what they do after graduation, the committee recommends that the department do an alumni survey. This can be helpful not only in tracking job placement and further education over time of former students, but can also be helpful in planning and making improvements that would benefit current students.

a. The committee thus recommends that the department develop a strategic plan in the first year for conducting an alumni survey, a plan that should be implemented in the second year.

2. The committee suggests as well that ongoing contacts should be established with alumni that will help build an alumni culture. Keeping students involved with the college after they graduate should be the aim, which can be accomplished by establishing a newsletter for alumni and helping to organize communities of graduates, either by geography or by profession. This can be valuable in that alumni groups often offer financial support to their alma maters, as well as sustaining the reputation of the institution.



**Signed By:**



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**Prof. Susan Andersen  
Committee Chair**



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**Prof. Victor Azarya**



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**Prof. Morris Moscovitch**



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**Prof. Varda Shoham**

# APPENDIX 1



18/11/2008  
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**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 YuK-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

## **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



site-visit schedule

11.12.08

| <b>Time</b> | <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Participants</b>  | <b>Location</b>                              |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 09:00-9.45  | Opening session:<br>The heads of the<br>institution<br>And the Faculty | <b>President</b> – Prof. Israel Zang<br><b>Vice president</b> - Prof. Nehemia Friedland<br><b>Director General</b> - Dror Amir<br><b>Quality Assessment System</b> - Dr. Sabrina Oppenheimer,<br>Chen-ya Maymon<br><b>Head of Students Administration</b><br>Michal Raz<br><b>Head of the School Administration</b> –<br>Orit Gutman | <b>Fomento<br/>Building<br/>Room no. 315</b> |
| 9.45-10.30  | Meeting with the<br>School's department's<br>academic leadership       | <b>Head of the School</b> - Prof. Hanan Frenk<br><b>Head of the B.A. Program</b> – Prof. Natan Sznaider<br><b>Heads of the MA Programs:</b><br>Prof. Tamar Kron<br>Prof. Rebecca Yaakobi<br>Prof. Avraham Schweiger<br>Dr. Hedva Braunstein  | <b>Room no. 315</b>                          |

|             |  |  |                         |
|-------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| 10:30-11.15 | Meeting with <b>full time senior faculty</b> and committees' representatives | Dr. Yael Vila<br>Dr. Rafi Snir<br>Dr. Dianan Lutzatto<br>Dr. Yuri Rassoovsky, <b>Ethics Committee</b><br>Prof. Natan Sznaider, Chairperson, <b>Teaching Committee</b><br>Prof. Ronit Avitzur<br>Dr. Ricardo Tarrasch,<br>Dr. Ofer Fine, <b>Admission Committee (M.A.)</b><br>Dr. Sabrina Oppenheimr<br><b>Admission Committee (B.A.)</b><br>Dr. Gal Gilad, <b>Students Appeal Committee</b><br>Dr. Dafna Dolberg, <b>Accreditation Committee</b> | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 11.15-12:00 | Meeting with <b>part time senior faculty</b> representatives                 | Dr. Moshe Talmon<br>Prof. Shmuel Melamed<br>Dr. Rebecca Reicher-Atir<br>Dr. Lax Shlomo<br>Dr. Daniel Hamiel<br>Dr. Tamamr Schifter-Sagiv.<br>Dr. Shulamit Geller   | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 12.00-12.30 | Meeting with adjuncts  | Lior Gelernter<br>Dr. Avi Cordoba<br>Dr. Danny Kaplan<br>Dr. Avi Allalouf<br>Dr. Ravid Doron<br>Sammy Hamdan<br>Dr. Naomi Ziv<br>Efrat Luria   | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 12.30-13.00 | Closed lunch of committee members  |  | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 13:00-13:45 | Meeting with undergraduate students  | Klantroff Eyal<br>Shalom Yahel<br>Wallach Maayan<br>Hagag Liat<br>Aharonovich Liat<br>Bilert Yulia<br>Yaffe Roni<br>Mazkereth Dolev  | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |

|                  |   |  |                         |
|------------------|---|--|-------------------------|
| 13:45-14:30      | Meeting with graduate students                  | Ofir Lazar<br>Shaul Lital<br>Klugman Amir<br>Shalev Mordechay<br>Knoller Noam  |                         |
| 14:30-15:00      | Meeting with alumni                             | Tomer Shechner<br>Boaz Inbar<br>Ron Menahem<br>Michal Halavy<br>Frenkel Ori<br>Elison Rotem<br>Hanalis Tsipi<br>Klienbort Shira<br>Vaadia Irit<br>Lahav Moran<br>Zisman Yarah<br>Shenkman Geva<br><b>Gottlib Yair</b>  | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 15:00-15.30      | Tour at the institution                         | Classrooms, library, faculty facilities  |                         |
| 15.3-16.00       | Closed meeting of the Committee                 |  | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |
| 16:00 -<br>16.30 | Summation meeting with heads of the institution | <b>President</b> – Prof. Israel Zang<br><b>Vice president</b> - Prof. Nehemia Friedland<br><b>Director General</b> - Dror Amir<br><b>Head of the School</b> - Prof. Hanan Frenk<br><b>Quality Assessment System</b> - Dr. Sabrina Oppenheimer,<br>Chen-ya Maymon<br><b>Head of Students Administration</b><br>Michal Raz<br><b>Head of the School Administration</b> – Orit Gutman | <b>Room no.<br/>315</b> |

3/12/08