Department of Philosophy

Faculty of Humanities

University of Haifa

Report of the External Evaluation Team
for
The Council for Higher Education

November, 2009

Contents

Appendices:

The following document is the Evaluation Committee's report on the Department of Philosophy of Haifa University 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 on the Haifa University campus and its study of the Department's Self-Evaluation Report (January 2009). 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 Haifa. 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 the responsibility of leading the respective discussions with the different groups of interviewees. The Department of Philosophy in Haifa University, housed mainly on the 17th and 19th floors of the Eshkol Tower on the Haifa campus, is a medium-sized department, teaching philosophy to undergraduate and graduate students alike.

The EC conducted its interviews of the Haifa University Department of Philosophy on Monday and Tuesday, April 20 and 21, 2009. In successive meetings on the first day, the committee interviewed leading members of the administration (including the president and vice-rector), the Department chair, representatives of relevant departmental committees, and members of the faculty. On the second day, the committee interviewed BA, MA, and PhD students as well as Alumni in meetings devoted to each group, followed by a summation meeting with leading members of the administration (including the president, rector, and vice-rector) as well as the Department chair. The committee was highly satisfied with the level of forthrightness, cooperation, and seriousness of the participation in these meetings.   No question went unanswered or was evaded. The committee was also satisfied with the clarity and frankness, organization and detail of the Department's Self-Evaluation Report.

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 19th, 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 Haifa University Department of Philosophy is a well-staffed and well-run Department that provides excellent instruction in philosophy at all levels. In general, students are highly pleased with the quality of their courses and their teachers and with the considerable accessibility of their professors and lecturers. Members of the Department's faculty are first-rate scholars who not only contribute through their numerous publications to philosophical research at the highest international levels but also manage to connect this research effectively with their teaching responsibilities. Building on a very favorable student to faculty ratio (15:1), the Department has created a close-knit community of students and faculty. Like much of the Humanities, the Department is facing a stiff challenge from declining BA enrollments but, in close co-operation with the administration, it has, to its credit, developed a well-conceived plan to face this challenge.

Based upon the Department's Self-Evaluation, two of its main challenges are the declining enrollments of BA students and, in the present difficult financial situation, the viability of replacing retiring professors in the near future. The president proposes to link the responses to the two challenges in the following way: the Department will be able to replace retiring professors only if service courses are offered. These service courses are courses that would be part of "cluster" programs, aimed at introducing students to a variety of disciplines outside their majors. The implementation of such courses would have the salutary effect of exposing a significant number of students from other disciplines, along with potential philosophy majors, to various aspects of philosophy. It is evident to us– from our meetings with the president (himself a member of the Department), the chair, and faculty members – that the president has made the necessity of this proposal clear to the Department. In our judgment, the president's proposal is sound and, indeed, vital to the Department and we are gratified to find that the Department endorses the president's proposal in this connection.

There are other challenges facing the Department that, while detailed below, deserve mention in this executive summary. These include: an underrepresentation of women on the faculty, a need for a regularized practice of monitoring teaching by junior faculty, a lack of a sufficient number of specialists in the history of modern philosophy, a need for undergraduate instructors in certain areas of philosophy, a lack of structure in the undergraduate curriculum, insufficient funding of graduate students, the lack of a placement service for graduating MAs and PhD's, an overworked administrative staff, and an impending, potentially drastic (50%) reduction of library expenditures. This assortment of challenges is formidable but so, it bears iterating, is the quality of the Philosophy Department at Haifa University. With sufficient advanced planning and administrative support, we have ample reason to conclude that the Department is quite up to these challenges.

Part B – In-depth Description of Subjects Examined

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

1. Department's Aims and Self-conception

In its Self-Evaluation, the Department gives accurate statements of its mission and challenges, statements that we found corroborated by our interviews. While seeing themselves as educators of undergraduate and graduate students alike, the members of the Department have distinguished themselves in four main areas of research (ethics, history of philosophy, philosophical psychology, and philosophy of science) and managed to integrate their research interests closely and effectively with their curricular obligations. However, it is clear that the Department lacks adequate staffing in the history of modern philosophy in order to continue to claim this as one of its four main areas of research. The Department is also facing challenges of decreasing enrollments at the undergraduate level that require changes in the structures of its offerings. To its credit, the Department is working closely with the Administration to implement those changes.

2. Research Profile and Academic Staffing Needs

Research universities must balance research with teaching; each professor must co-ordinate his or her own individual and collaborative projects with the Department's overall curricular obligations to its students. The following section reviews and assesses the research profile of the philosophy faculty, with an eye to its self-described areas of particular strengths and the adequacy of its staffing in those areas.

In academic year 2007-8, the Department had eleven (100%) FTE's. In addition there was a 75% FTE and a faculty member who was 33%. (Although he is teaching a load of 12.5%, his contribution to research and supervision of PhD students amounts, in the estimation of the Chair, to approximately a 33% position.) So the FTE's for AY07-08 numbered 12.08. With 189 students enrolled in the Department's BA, MA, and PhD programs, the ratio of students to faculty is (approximately) a very favorable 15:1. In addition, as of 1 October 2009, the Department has had the services of a recipient of the Alon Fellowship as a 100% FTE. So the current faculty now stands at approximately 13.08 FTE's.

The Department has a good balance of senior and junior faculty, all from premier universities across the world. Only two lecturers do not have tenure. Retirements are not imminent but clearly on the horizon – 3.75 positions from 2013 and 2015. The Department obviously needs to plan wisely for these retirements, both in view of its distinctive research

profile and the impending revisions of its undergraduate curricular commitments. There is another priority that the Department must also take into account in any future hires: the advantages of having a gender balance among the faculty. The presence of only one woman on the present staff is glaring evidence of the fact that women are seriously underrepresented in the Department.

Over the past six years, the Department has produced an extremely impressive body of research – including 11 books (8 single authored), at least 70 articles, and 2 volumes of translation. Members of the Department work in fields (for example, the philosophy of physics) where articles are frequently the main vehicle of publication. Many of these publications have been written by members of faculty in early or mid-career who are currently engaged in projects that will almost certainly result in equally if not more significant books and articles. This is a department with ambitious but realistic research goals. It is helped in all of this by the University's (and the country's) generous sabbatical arrangements, by travel and conference budgets, and by successful applications for outside research funding from both national and international sources. There is an established research culture here. The research active faculty are confident and well-motivated. They speak positively of the research friendly environment at Haifa, emphasizing especially the library and the opportunity to teach to their research interests at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

By the Department's own account (corroborated by the students and their research), it understands itself quite properly as having "particular research strengths" in ethics, philosophical psychology, philosophy of science, and the history of philosophy. These strengths are highly complementary and thus valuable to the research of the faculty and the distinctive sort of philosophical education available to students in philosophy at Haifa. We strongly endorse the Department's evaluation of the work done in three of these areas (ethics, philosophical psychology, and the philosophy of science), noting a substantial number of contributions of the highest quality. As already noted, however, we felt that in the case of the history of philosophy, despite the fact that there are some first-rate pieces of work and at least one scholar of international acclaim, the claim was perhaps a little overstated. In particular, the Department clearly needs the additional help of a researcher and teacher whose area of specialization is modern philosophy (1600-1900). In order both to preserve its distinctive research profile and to meet its obligations to its study program, the Department should be authorized to search for someone who focuses on one or more central figures (e.g., Descartes or Kant, Hegel or Mill) in the history of modern European philosophy.

3. Study Program

This section reviews the organization of the BA, MA, and PhD programs in the Department, based upon Section 3.2 in the Department's Self-Evaluation Report and our interviews.

3.1 Undergraduate Program (BA)

There are currently 110 students enrolled in the Department's BA program. The undergraduates whom we interviewed expressed a generally high level of satisfaction with the philosophical education they receive and, in particular, with the quality of the courses and the dedication and accessibility of the faculty. But undergraduates also complained of a lack of breadth in the offerings, a complaint echoed by the Department itself in its very enlightening self-evaluation. The Department in fact pointed out three weaknesses in the curriculum to which we directed our

attention: (1) an absence of instructors and courses in several important areas of philosophy, (2) the increased enrollment of non-majors that has had the effect of diminishing the level of second- and third-year courses, and (3) the large degree of freedom in the third year, freedom that could result in students not choosing a sufficiently balanced curriculum.

3.11 Inadequate staffing in certain areas

The Department itself suggested, in the name of the students, that their limited range of areas could be improved by hiring more specialists who would offer courses in several important areas of philosophy such as 18th and 19th century German philosophy, 19th and 20th century continental philosophy (existentialism, phenomenology, etc.), medieval philosophy, Asian philosophy, and Islamic philosophy. However, an increase of the staff on this scale seems unfeasible to us in the foreseeable future. The ratio of full-time teachers to students (15:1) is already quite favorable. According to the Department's Self Evaluation Report ("Candidates, Accepted Candidates, and Enrolled First Year Students"), the number of students was less than 200 for all years and degrees in the academic year 2007-08. Any increase in the number of teachers will inevitably have to wait for the retirement of some senior members of the teaching staff during the next few years. Perhaps the Department could hire teachers from other universities in part-time positions. This practice might spoil the exemplary warm relations between the students and teachers that is so admirable in the Department at the moment. Nonetheless, it seems advisable, given the lack of adequate staffing in the areas mentioned, to hire some young lecturers of this sort in part-time positions.

3.12 The effect of increased enrollments of non-majors and the prospect of cluster courses

One measure that might be taken to address the problem of increasing enrollment of non-philosophy majors in second- and third-year courses is to insist that students complete preliminary requisites for each or at least some of these courses. The university is presently contemplating the introduction of "cluster" programs whereby, instead of 60 units in each major of a double major, a student would take 48 credits in a major with 12 credits of general studies in the faculty (or outside it). If the university does, indeed, introduce these programs, then presumably the Department might well be asked to offer broader introductory courses for non-philosophy majors. Meeting this request might be a challenge for the present staff and induce them to present their thoughts in a more cross-cultural and less "professional" manner.

3.13 Freedom and lack of structure in curriculum

Many third level courses are devoted to topics in which the lecturers air their research interests. This practice has advantages as well as disadvantages, particularly for the students. It is probably true, as one of the lecturers remarked, that freedom to take many different classes gets students excited about philosophy. We feel, however, that more structure should be introduced in the curriculum for the BA by offering more intermediate-level courses into the second year of study. In addition to the required courses in epistemology and ethics (both of which could be offered in the first semester of the second year), there should be more "broad core" courses in ethics (e.g., normative ethics and/or meta-ethics) and epistemology (e.g., perception and/or universals in alternate years) as well as in philosophy of science, aesthetics, and so on. With this change in place, students will be encouraged or even required to select two such intermediate level courses, before going on to the more specialized courses offered in the third year as well as the first year of the MA.

3.2 Graduate programs (MA & PhD)

The Department of Philosophy has an excellent graduate program. The program offers four tracks: (i) M.A. with Masters thesis (Track A); (ii) M.A. without thesis (Track B); (iii) Regular PhD track; (iv) Direct PhD Track. There are 79 students enrolled in the graduate program: 45 MA students (33 Track A, 12 Track B) and 34 PhD students. The faculty is outstanding (many faculty received their PhD from top universities in Europe and the United States), and the level of satisfaction with the program is very high, both on the part of the graduate students and on the part of the faculty. We commend the philosophy Department for the level of excellence and congeniality of the graduate program.

We examined the following main structural features and issues regarding the graduate program: (1) the size and standards of the program; (2) the program's teaching staff, fields of philosophy, connections with fields outside philosophy;(3) the prospects and merits of direct vs. indirect tracks to the doctorate; (4) receiving one's entire education in the same department; and (5) job prospects and placement for graduates.

3.21 Size & Standards

With 79 graduate students (45 MA, 34 PhD), the graduate program is a medium size program. Recently standards of admissions were raised, and as a result the graduate program is smaller, yet better, than in the past. However, with only 13 senior members, the size of the faculty is quite small, relative to graduate programs in comparable universities in the United States. The fact that the Department is understaffed is especially worrisome in view of the fact, already noted above, that the Department expects some retirements within a few years. While replacing retiring faculty is absolutely essential to preserve the level of the graduate program, the Department also needs to be augmented by the hiring of at least two additional senior faculty members, bringing its size up to 15 senior members.

3.22 Fields of philosophy and connections with fields outside philosophy

The Department has considerable strength in most fields of contemporary analytic philosophy, including the philosophy of science, ethics, metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of language, political philosophy, and aesthetics. It also has some distinguished faculty in the history of philosophy. However, to function as a first rate graduate program, the Department needs more faculty who concentrate on the history of modern philosophy (Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, etc) and are able to offer courses in this area. The Department also has some strengths in continental philosophy. (These specialties are reflected in the sorts of doctoral dissertations written in the Department over the past five years; see Section 4.22, p. 10 below).

It is essential for a graduate program that focuses on the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind, political philosophy, etc., that it forge strong connections with related disciplines at the university. It is our impression that the Department has not established sufficient interdisciplinary connections.

3.23 Direct vs. Indirect PhD Track

Graduate students at Haifa University have, as noted earlier, two tracks to the doctorate: (i) the indirect track which requires an M.A. degree and an M.A. thesis; (ii) the direct track which proceeds directly from the B.A. to the PhD without requiring an M.A. degree or an M.A. thesis.

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In contrast to the United States, most PhD students at Haifa University take the indirect track to the PhD. They do so in spite of the fact that (1) most PhD students in philosophy are very well prepared when they join the program (the majority have a B.A. in philosophy, and have taken at least half of their B.A. classes in philosophy), (2) most PhD students begin their academic studies at a later age than in universities abroad, (3) completion of the PhD in the direct track is shorter than in the indirect track, (4) students in the direct track, unlike students in the indirect track, are well-supported by university fellowships, and (5) the university president, rector, and vice-rector support the direct PhD track. In sum: In spite of the obvious advantages of taking the direct PhD track, both for students and for the university, in terms of efficiency, support, and time, most PhD students prefer the indirect track, and the philosophy faculty recommend the direct track only to a selective few.

We are not sure why graduate students at Haifa University (and Israeli universities more generally) do not opt for the direct PhD track. Students cite the need to write an M.A. thesis as preparation for the rigors of writing a PhD thesis and they also indicate a preference for making a short-term commitment to graduate studies over a long term commitment (take one step at a time). Still, it remains unclear to us whether choosing the indirect PhD track is a matter of rational decision-making or mainly a matter of tradition and habit. On the one hand, it is unreasonable to think that Israeli students require more preparation for a PhD thesis than American students. If anything, Israeli students, who are older than typical American students, have a greater interest in shortening the duration of their graduate studies than American students. Moreover, Israeli students are often better prepared for graduate studies in philosophy since they usually devote a full half of their undergraduate studies to philosophy courses. Graduate students are better supported when they take the direct track and experience abroad suggests that the quality of PhD theses is not negatively affected by taking the direct track. On the other hand, it is possible that young Israelis face greater uncertainties than their peers abroad, and as a result it is rational for them to prefer short- rather than long-term educational commitments. In view of these contrary indications, more investigation of the matter is warranted, though we strongly suggest that the Department, in continuity with its current practice, increase its efforts to identify likely candidates for the Direct Track.

3.24 Receiving one's entire education from the same department
Unlike most PhD students in the United States, PhD students in the Philosophy Department at Haifa University receive their entire philosophical education (BA, MA, and PhD) at the same university. This has the undesirable consequence that they interact with a relatively small number of teachers and mentors, and are exposed to a limited number of philosophical approaches and fields. This problem is common to all Israeli departments, and its solution requires a concerted effort and cooperation of all five philosophy departments, but it has greater impact on PhD students in smaller departments. We recognize the complexities of this issue. It is partly a function of the small number of philosophy departments in a small country; it is also likely connected in part to special circumstances of Israeli PhD students. We are also aware of the fact that some top departments attain, and continue to preserve excellence by cultivating their own top students. But on balance it seems to us that that graduates of the BA philosophy program in Haifa University will benefit from receiving their graduate education in another philosophy department (in Israel or abroad). So, too, the philosophy graduate program in Haifa University stands to benefit from recruiting at least some of its students from among the graduates of BA

philosophy programs in other Israeli universities. Another means of achieving this objective is to have faculty exchanges among departments, again both within Israel and abroad.

3.25 Job prospects and placement for M.A. and PhD students
Whereas graduate philosophy programs elsewhere (e.g., in the United States) offer placements programs for their graduates, both as part of, and in addition to, programs offered by the universities as a whole, philosophy graduate students at Haifa University (like some other Israeli universities) appear to 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: 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's from top international universities), so that Haifa PhD's often have to pursue other alternatives. Our impression is that students are not aware of all the opportunities available to them, not least in Israel, from job opportunities such as teaching positions in Israeli colleges (which do not have philosophy departments yet offer philosophy classes) to fellowship opportunities (like the Alon, Lady Davis, and Kreitman fellowships), and so on.

4. Teaching and Learning
This section focuses on practices, strategies, and attitudes in teaching and learning, in contrast to curricular structures and requirements.

4.1 General assessment of the pedagogical situation
As is evident from their research activities and from the list of courses offered, the Department's overall orientation is toward addressing problems that arise internationally and are discussed internationally in professional publications. In particular, members of the Department pay prominent attention in their teaching as well as in their research to problems of (a) ethical and political life, and (b) knowledge, inquiry, nature, and the composition of reality, as they are addressed by 'analytic' techniques.

This orientation has had many positive effects within the Department's teaching activities. There is an attitude of open and cooperative address to problems that are felt to be in view for all. Faculty members have open doors. They are ready to talk with students at all levels at just about any time. They see their job as that of guiding students from initial interest in these problems (at the beginning BA level) up to professional engagement with them (at the PhD level). They have had considerable success at all levels, partly helped by the roughly 15:1 student/faculty ratio (comparatively favorable by current Israeli standards in hard times, but reasonable by international standards). There is also a wide range of abilities and outcomes among the students, especially at both BA and MA levels. At all levels, students consistently and enthusiastically praised the personal attention, respect, and support devoted to them by faculty members.

4.2 Assessment of the pedagogical situation at each level (BA, MA, & PhD)
Because the issues in the pedagogical situation of the undergraduate and graduate programs are different, we address each of them in turn in the following subsections.

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4.21 Teaching and learning in the undergraduate program
BA students consistently described and praised their progress through their BA studies in thinking for themselves, in understanding problems deeply, and in grasping nuances and making distinctions—all in contrast with what they sometimes saw as more superficial and merely informational presentations within other disciplines. In philosophy, you have to think, and you learn how to do it. We have some sense that the introduction of further 'broad core' courses in, e.g. ethical theory, history (especially modern philosophy), and epistemology at the 2nd BA level (see **3.13** above) might help students to move more effectively from initial exposure at the introductory level to more focused engagement with problems than is sometimes currently the case. Some students noted that there are too many 'just problems' courses beyond the introductory level; they felt they would profit from more time to work through core problems and texts in the second year. (Others felt that you 'got there' within the framework of more problem-oriented courses, and they specifically appreciated the chance to choose focused courses in their areas of interest.) More TAs would also help the quality of BA courses, specifically by providing students with more chances for guided discussion. Prerequisites for non-philosophy students to enter 2nd level courses would be helpful (as already noted in **3.12** above). Dropout rates from the BA degree are high. To some extent, this is a natural consequence of vocational pressures, financial exigencies, and misunderstanding at time of entry of what philosophy is. (As far as financial exigencies are concerned, it deserves noting that BA students typically have to work 10 to 20 hours per week while taking courses.) It is possible that the dropout rate could be improved significantly by more extensive use of TAs within introductory courses. Students engage with philosophy as a subject when they get a chance to do philosophy by thinking and talking in guided ways with each other. We had some doubt about the amount and quality of writing that is done within philosophy courses at the BA level. In 2007-08, 14 of 31 BA level courses (excluding Logic and Philosophical Writing) required only a final examination as a principal or sole component for evaluation, with no substantial analytical essay writing requirement. This may be an anomaly in 2007-08, and as we explored this situation with both faculty and students, all parties felt that enough analytical essay writing was being done. The course in Philosophical Writing is clearly devoted to cultivating this essential skill, and it seems effective. Overall, it seems adequate to urge the Department to continue to keep in mind the importance of continuously training students in analytical writing.

4.22 Teaching and learning in the graduate program
At the MA and PhD levels, financial support is inadequate. This view was voiced uniformly by teaching assistants, MA students, and PhD students in our interviews with them. There are no financial fellowships for the MA and only few PhD students receive "subsistence" scholarships, as one of the PhD students described them. As at the BA level, many students typically work, roughly from 10-20 hours per week, mostly outside the university, but occasionally in clerical jobs within it. The dropout rate at the MA level is again quite high, though (1) the absolute numbers are small (making it difficult to interpret percentages accurately) and (2) the Department reports tightening standards for admission to MA and Ph.D. programs in recent years. Students typically enter the MA (and PhD) program at Haifa from Haifa's BA program. They find it natural (and fruitful) to attach themselves to a faculty member whose research interests they share and with whom they have learned to work well. Again as at the BA level, there is a considerable variety of interest, ability, and achievement among the MA students.

95% of the teaching of PhD students is in the form of directed study. PhD students typically take 2-3 courses post-MA, submit their dissertation proposal at the end of their first year, and spend the remainder of their time doing guided research. Faculty members are seen as available, helpful, and committed mentors, willing to guide research on nearly any topic. Students are consistently grateful for the support, guidance, and attention they receive, both directly on their academic work and more broadly with regard to seeking employment and getting on with life. While self-study teaching is appropriate to a research degree, it also places burdens on faculty members, and it sometimes leaves research students a bit adrift. It might be helpful to all parties, if it is possible, to arrange some teaching of seminars (perhaps guided research seminars) in areas of PhD student research. In addition, both PhD students and MA students should be encouraged to study in other institutions both abroad (as they currently are encouraged by the faculty) and within Israel (this is possible, and students occasionally take advantage of this, but it is not systematically encouraged). This would help MA and PhD students to become more aware of philosophical interests and styles of work that are not currently represented in the Haifa Department. Though it is common for students in Israel to do their BA, MA, and PhD within a single institution, and there are good reasons for this (having to do with family life, work circumstances, etc.), it would also be good, when possible, to encourage more exposure to broader currents of philosophical thought and practice.

Our interviews with alumni and current PhD students as well as a review of dissertation titles since 2004 indicate that most students have written dissertations on the philosophy of mind (especially emotions),continental philosophy (including psychoanalysis and Rosenzweig), aesthetics, and philosophy of science.

4.23 Additional virtues and shortcomings

The MA students assisting in courses would profit from scheduled visits to their classes by senior faculty members and by further assistance with and advice about teaching. The Department needs to take steps to address the paucity of supervision of its undergraduate teachers. In this connection, it makes little sense that PhD students are typically not able to serve as TAs, owing to the union-negotiated requirement that they be paid more than MA students. According to the president, hiring PhD students costs twice as much as hiring adjuncts, under the present arrangement. It makes clear sense to use the more advanced and experienced PhD students to do TA work when possible.

There was a general sense that it is good for the Department to maintain the MA degree both with the thesis and without the thesis (for further discussion, see **3.23** above).

We raised the issue of exchanges of faculty members among the Israeli universities, both in order to enable departments to broaden their offerings and to enable faculty members to find further colleagues who share their specific interests. The faculty members thought this was a good idea.

It would be helpful to the life of the Department—to engaging students with one another and student with faculty members—if space could be found for a commons room.

In conjunction with a planned or possible move to a 48/48/24 BA degree structure, we would like to see (in addition to the introduction of prerequisites for non-philosophy students to enter Level 2 courses), more courses devoted to the philosophy of a particular discipline: e.g. philosophy of biology, philosophy of language/linguistics, philosophy of cognitive science, philosophy of psychology, philosophy of economics. To a considerable extent, these topics are selectively represented within existing courses. But it is in keeping with international norms—

and it is fruitful for both philosophy and non-philosophy students—to highlight these connections with other disciplines in dedicated courses.

Finally, particularly since there apparently are relatively more Arab Israeli students at Haifa University than at other Israeli universities, we were gratified to see that the Department identified Islamic philosophy as one of the areas that it needs to bolster among its offerings.

5. Self-administration and Infrastructure

This section concerns those administrative practices of the Department that, in the committee's opinion, deserve particular commendation and/or consideration as well as the administrative and physical infrastructure. The Department is well-organized and efficiently administered by the Chair and the rest of the administrative staff. As a member of the Department, the President of the university has a thorough understanding of the challenges and difficulties of administering the Department. The chair's excellent rapport with the president clearly facilitates its administration.

One issue that surfaced in our interviews concerned the process and standards for tenure and for promotion. Some faculty member deemed the process too cumbersome and the standards uneven and lacking transparency. There was in fact a discrepancy between the views of faculty members and those of administration officials on the standards for tenure. However, it was also clear to us that the administration is sensitive to this issue and working with the Department to address these complaints. We find this salutary and can only recommend that the University and Department persevere in facilitating the tenure process and coming to agreement on its standards. One way to help address this problem is to institute a mentoring program for incoming, tenure-track faculty. A mentor would be a tenured faculty member with the responsibility of counseling a mentored, tenure-track faculty member on departmental and university practices, requirements, and expectations, including those for promotion and tenure. In connection with the standards for tenure and promotion, the issue also arose (as it has in other Departments in Israel) that more consideration be given to the value of publications and translations into Hebrew.

The Department is amply outfitted with office space as well as classroom and seminar room space. Its library is excellent but recent budget cuts of 50% for books do not bode well for the future. As already noted (see **4.3** above), it would be highly advantageous to add a commons room, for example, a place outfitted with coffee and tea, where faculty members and students, the majority of whom work, could come together on an informal basis. The administrative staff – limited to the administrative assistant to the chair (26 hours per week) and a part-time office worker (7 hours per week) – is heavily overburdened, given their large number of responsibilities. The hours of the staff should be increased to a total of 40 hours.

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 to the Department

1. *Developing "cluster" (service) courses*   √√√
We strongly recommend that the Department develop the sorts of courses that service the "cluster" programs planned by the University Administration and integrate them into its present offerings (Executive Summary, p. 5; Section 3.12, p. 8; Section 4.21, p. 12).

2. *Undergraduate analytical writing skills*   √√
We recommend that the Department(a) examine whether its faculty sufficiently emphasizes the importance of continuously training students in analytical writing, (b) indicate what steps instructors might concretely take to reinforce this training where lacking, and (c) make the implementation of these steps one of its highest priorities (Section 4.21, p. 12).

3. *Introducing structure into BA curriculum*   √√
We recommend that the Department introduce prerequisites for certain, if not all, courses at the second and third year levels and that the Department introduce and require of its majors more intermediate ("broad core") level courses in the second year (see Sections 3.12-3.13, pp. 86; Section 4.21, p. 12).

4. *Women among the faculty*   √√
In order to be more representative of its student population and to reach standards of representations of women in philosophy common throughout the western world, the Department ought to hire more women. From our discussions with the faculty, we know that the Department is aware of the problem and we recommend that it continue its efforts to have a more gender-balanced faculty (Section 2, p. 6).

5. *Monitoring undergraduate teaching*   √
We recommend that the Department assign senior professors with the responsibility of formally monitoring undergraduate instruction by teaching assistants (Section 4.23, p. 13).

6. *Hiring priority*   √

The Department identifies four particular strengths: ethics, history of philosophy, philosophy of psychology, and the philosophy of science. However, as the faculty itself acknowledged, the Department lacks adequate staffing for its offerings in the history of modern philosophy (1600-1900). The committee accordingly recommends that the Department's next search should be for someone with this area of specialization (Section 2, p. 6).

7. *Tenure #1*   √

We recommend that the Department state formally (albeit with sufficient generality and flexibility for application to individual cases) its requirements for tenure and promotion (Section 5, p. 14).

8. *Inadequate coverage*

In order to make up for inadequate staffing in undergraduate teaching of popular and important areas of philosophy, we recommend that the Department seek authorization to hire at least part-time instructors for courses in continental European philosophy, Asian philosophy, and Islamic philosophy (Section 3.11, p. 8).

9. *Expanding the scope of courses available to double majors*

In keeping with the introduction of "cluster" (service) courses for philosophy majors who are double majoring (see Recommendation #1 above), the Department should consider allowing 12 hours of the required 60 to be taken in suitable and selected service courses, offered not only by the Philosophy Department, but also by other departments in the university (Executive Summary, p. 5).

10. *Interdisciplinary*

Because of the need for interdisciplinary competence in philosophy, we recommend (1) that, in keeping with current practices, the Department allow, encourage, and in some cases, even require graduate students to take advanced courses in other departments within Haifa University and (2) that the Department establish and encourage interdisciplinary connections within the university in general (Section 3.22, p. 9 above).

11. *Interuniversity #1: promoting educational horizons*

Haifa's philosophy Department, like others in Israel, has several home-grown students in its graduate program. While this development may reflect students' satisfaction with the Department or particular exigencies on their part, it can keep them from exposure to intellectual riches of different professors and traditions within Israel (Section 4.22, p. 10). Hence, we recommend that the Department, as a means of broadening students' horizons, (1) encourage and create channels for graduate students – particularly those who received their undergraduate education at Haifa – to take advanced courses at other universities, (2) encourage both BA and MA students to consider pursuing their graduate philosophical education in other universities, and (3) recruit undergraduates from other Israeli universities to the Haifa philosophy graduate program (see Section 3.24, p. 10).

12. *Interuniversity #2: promoting faculty exchange*
We recommend that the Department attempt to develop faculty exchanges with other departments of philosophy, both in and outside Israel (Section 3.24, p. 10; Section 4.23, p. 13).

13. *Maintain high standards*
The EC commends the Department for instituting the present practice of setting high standards for admissions to the MA and especially the PhD program and it strongly recommends that the Department continue this practice (Section 4.22, p. 12).

14. *Placement service #1*
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 graduating PhD's in their search for employment or post-doctoral research opportunities (Section 3.25, p. 11).

15. *Direct Track #1*
We recommend (a) that a departmental (and/or university-wide committee, see Recommendation#7 to the Administration below) be established to investigate the issue of the direct track to the doctorate and (b) that the Department, until such a committee reaches its conclusions, continue with the current practice, but make a special effort to identify suitable candidates for the direct PhD track and encourage them to take it (Section 3.23, p. 9).

16. *Mentoring*
We recommend that the Department introduce a mentoring program for junior faculty (where a different member of the senior faculty is assigned to be the mentor of each untenured, tenure track junior faculty member, with the responsibility of counseling him or her on departmental and university practices, requirements, and expectations, including those for promotion and tenure (Section 5, p. 14).

17. *Research in Hebrew*
We recommend that the Department take steps formally to reconsider the value of its current practice of discounting Hebrew publications in cases of promotion and tenure (Section 5, p. 14).

18. *PhD seminars*
We recommend that the Department examine the benefit, for faculty and students alike, of holding seminars designated exclusively for PhD students (Section 4.22, p. 12).

19. *Commons room*
We recommend that the Department attempt to set up a commons room, a place for students and faculty to gather informally (Section 4.23, p. 13).

Recommendations for the University Administration

1. *Replacing retirees*   √√√
We recommend that the administration authorize the Department to replace retiring faculty and eventually to add two additional members to the faculty (with a long-range goal of at least 15 full-time senior members) and that it continue its current practice of hiring faculty from top departments in Israel and abroad (Executive Summary, p. 5; Sections 1-2, p. 6; Section 3.21, p. 9).

2. *Expanding the size of the faculty*   √
We recommend that the administration authorize the Department to expand its faculty by two additional members (with a long-range goal of at least 15 full-time senior members), again continuing its current practice of hiring faculty from top departments in Israel and abroad (see Sections 1-2, p. 6; Section 3.21, p. 9)

3. *Increasing financial support for graduate students*   √√
Given (a) the dependency of the quality of Haifa University's undergraduate and graduate philosophy programs on the level of support that MA and PhD students receive and (b) the low level of this support by international standards, we strongly recommend that the administration explore every possible avenue for increasing that level of support (Section 4.22, p. 12).

4. *PhD's as teaching assistants#1*   √√
We recommend that – if possible (see Recommendation 2 to CHE below) – the University renegotiate with the union to come up with an arrangement that removes the current obstacle to hiring PhD to serve as TA's. That obstacle is the current requirement that PhD students be paid significantly more than MA students, so much more that the Department cannot afford to have its PhD students serve as TAs (Section 4.23, p. 13).

5. *Administrative staffing*   √√
We recommend that the administration increase the hours of the Department's administrative staff to a total of 40 hours (Section 5, p. 14).

6. *Additional teaching assistants*   √√
We recommend that the University attempt to find ways to make more teaching assistants available since teaching assistants' ability to conduct guided discussions with students is a proven means of improving the quality of undergraduate instruction (Section 4.21, p. 12).

7. *Direct track #1a*
Given that the issues concerning a direct track to the doctorate are not restricted to the Department, it may be more appropriate that a university-wide committee be established for this purpose. We recommend that the administration (a) determine the most suitable level(s) and make-up of committees (e.g., departmental and/or university-wide) and (b) charge such a committee with investigating the issue of the direct track to the doctorate (Section 3.23, p. 9).

8. *Direct track #1b*

We recommend that the University Administration, in consultation with the Department, make efforts to provide better financial support (committing financial aid, e.g., fellowships) for students taking the direct track compared with students who take the standard track (Section 3.23, p. 9).

9. *Interuniversity #1a: expanding educational horizons*

In the interest of promoting a more academically diverse class of graduate students (and thereby warding off any academic parochialism), we recommend that the administration allocate special fellowships for recruitment of graduate students from other universities (Section 4.22, p. 12).

10. *Placement #1a*

We recommend that the administration create an official placement service for all students graduating with higher degrees (MAs and PhD's) from Haifa University (Section 3.25, p. 11).

Recommendations to the Council of Higher Education

1. *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 low level of this support by international standards, we strongly recommend that the CHE explore every possible avenue for increasing that level of support (Section 4.22, p. 12).

2. *PhD's as teaching assistants* √√

The union agreement affecting the hiring of PhD students as teaching assistants may be nationwide and may require that the CHE, either in conjunction with or in place of Haifa University, seek to renegotiate this agreement in such a way that removes the financial obstacle to hiring PhD students as teaching assistants. We recommend that the CHE do whatever it can to aid the universities in regard to this matter (Section 4.23, p. 13).

3. *Sustaining academic staff* √√

Relatively small departments like the Department of Philosophy at Haifa University require a "critical mass" of faculty members in order to achieve and maintain a level of excellence. Maintaining such excellence is vital to Israeli higher education, culture, and the well-being of its people. To the extent that pressures currently exist to reduce the number of academic staff (faculty) in higher education, we recommend that the CHE, for the good of Israel, urge universities to resist such pressures (Executive Summary, p. 5; Sections 1-2, p. 6; Sections 3.21-3.22, p. 9).

4. *The importance of Hebrew as a philosophical language* √

The issue of the importance of philosophical publications in Hebrew (including translations of significant texts into Hebrew) is important in two respects, one immediate, the other long-range. In the short-term, the issue arises of the weight to be assigned these publications in tenure and promotion cases. On the whole, we learned that these publications are either not considered at all or considered to be of lesser importance than publications in English. More clarity on this subject is crucial to planning and judicious time-management on the part of those seeking tenure

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and promotion. This jaundiced attitude towards publications in Hebrew may be related to philosophy's perceived need to differentiate itself from Jewish studies. Moreover, there seems to be a certain amount of distrust of the blind reviewing process of Hebrew articles in Israeli publications, given the fact that the Israeli philosophical community is relatively small. Yet, while these difficulties are real, the practice of excluding or even undervaluing Hebrew publications cannot be salutary in the long term for the state of Israeli philosophy.   Accordingly we recommend that the CHE form a committee, composed of members of each department of philosophy in Israel, to investigate the practices of the different departments regarding the weight assigned to philosophical publications in Hebrew and make recommendations (Section 2, p. 6).

5. *Interuniversity: enlarging educational horizons for students and faculty*
The following recommendation follows up on Recommendations 10 and 11 to the Department and Recommendation 8 to the Administration. In view of the fact that exchange of students and faculty requires 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 (Sections 4.22-23, pp. 12-13).

<u>Signed by:</u>

_____
Prof. Daniel Dahlstrom, Chair

_____
Prof. Paul Davies

_____
Prof. Richard Eldridge

_____
Prof. Jacob Joshua Ross

_____
Prof. Gila Sher

Appendix 1- Copy of Letter of Appointment

מדינת ישראל

STATE OF ISRAEL

Minister of Education

Tuesday May 5th, 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 21st 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

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

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COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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

	החוג לפילוסופיה	לשכת הרקטור
אוניברסיטת חיפה University of Haifa לבלוט בנוף האקדמי	**The Department of Philosophy**	**Office of the Rector**

Tentative Schedule of Site Visit
20th – 21st April 2009

Monday April 20th, 2009:

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
09:00-09:45	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, President Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Rector Prof. David Faraggi, Vice-Rector Prof. Avner Halevy, Head of the Department of Statistics, Head of the Graduate Program in Quality Studies Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum, Assistant to the Vice-Rector Ms. Michal Daloya, Office of the Rector	Eshkol Tower, Floor 19 Room 1919
09:45-10:45	Meeting with the heads (academic and administrative) of the Department of Philosophy	Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev Dr. Meir Hemmo, Department Chair	
10:45-11:45	Meeting with representatives of relevant departmental committees *	Dr. Michael Antony (BA Committee). Prof. Daniel Statman (MA Committee). Prof. Shaul Smilansky (PhD Committee).	We leave the decision up to the institution as to which committees to invite.
11:45-12:45	Meeting with Senior Academic Faculty*	Dr. Michael Antony Prof. Amihud Gilead Prof. Giora Hon Prof Iddo Landau Prof. Ruth Lorand Dr. Menahem Luz Prof Shaul Smilansky Prof. Daniel Statman	
12:45-13:30	Lunch	Students Aliza Avraham David Buzaglo Dana Chernia Shay Gurevich Gal Shitrit Idit Shafran-Gittelman	

<table>
<tr><td>אוניברסיטת חיפה
University of Haifa
לכלוט בנוף האקדמי</td><td>החוג לפילוסופיה
The Department of Philosophy</td><td>לשכת הרקטור
Office of the Rector</td></tr>
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Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
13:30-14:00	Tour of campus (Including classes, studios, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)		
14:00-14:45	Meeting with Junior academic faculty*	Dr. Ariel Meirav Dr. Arnon Keren	
14:45-15:30	Meeting with adjunct lecturers*	Dr. Ram Gudovich Dr. Nati Berber	
15:30-16:00	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee		

Tuesday April 21st, 2009:

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
09:30-10:30	Meeting with B.A. students**	Lovotzky Asher David Buzaglo Ori Lipsker Maayan Mazig Karleta Terger Tamar Zislin	Eshkol Tower, Floor 19 Room 1919
10:30-11:30	Meeting with M.A. students**	Aliza Avraham Nicholas Gips Moshe Grimberg Tahel Parush Talia Shacham Oshrat Sharon Gal Shitrit	
11:30-12:15	Meeting with PhD students**	Yuval Cohen Gadi Kravitz Oded Horatzky Lior Nitzan Dina Rephael Noam Ron	
12:30-14:00	Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony		
14:15-14:45	Lunch		

החוג לפילוסופיה
The Department of Philosophy

לשכת הרקטור
Office of the Rector

University of Haifa
אוניברסיטת חיפה
לכלוט בנוף האקדמי

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
14:45-15:30	Meeting with Alumni**	Niva Arav Roni Aviram Amichai Benjamin Gideon Katz Avital Link Meshi Ori Anat Palgi-Hecker Avinoam Sayag Orr Scharff	
15:30-16:00	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee		
16:00-16:30	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the Dept. of Phil.	Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, President Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Rector Prof. David Faraggi, Vice-Rector Dr. Meir Hemmo, Department Chair Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum, Assistant to the Vice-Rector Ms. Michal Daloya, Office of the Rector	