



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

**The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

**Department of Psychology**

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

***This report deals with the Department of Psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.***

The Committee's visit to Hebrew University took place on December 17, 2008.

The following members of the committee participated in the visit to Hebrew University:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen - Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow**
- **Prof. Avishai Henik**
- **Prof. Morris Moscovitch**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky**

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

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

## **Chapter 3- Evaluation of the Department of Psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

### **Background**

The Hebrew University officially opened in 1925 on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, but after the isolation of the campus in 1948, its activities were transferred temporarily to various locations in the western parts of the city, which were consolidated with the opening of the Givat Ram campus in 1955. Today, the university has several campuses in various parts of the country, including Mount Scopus, which was reopened in 1967.

The Hebrew University was accredited as an institution of higher education in accordance with the Law of the Council for Higher Education in 1962.

According to the institution's self-evaluation report, in 2007 there were 21,814 students at the university, of whom 11,872 BA students, 7,171 MA students and 2,771 were doctoral students.

Psychology was first taught at the Hebrew University in 1939 in the Department of Education. In 1957, the present department was established in the School of Social Sciences.

By 1966, the department had instituted a two-year MA program; the first Ph.D. was awarded not long after. The Psychology Department offers a Master's (MA) program in psychology in six fields, four of which are primarily applied programs: Clinical Psychology, Educational and Clinical Child Psychology (in collaboration with the School of Education), Neuropsychology (applied or research), and Social Psychology (applied or research); the other two being research-oriented: Cognitive Psychology and Psychobiology.

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of students in the Department of Psychology at the Hebrew University during 2006 was as follows: 454 students were studying for a BA degree, 149 for an MA degree and 53 were studying for a Ph.D. degree.

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

According to the self-evaluation document, the mission of the Department of Psychology is two-fold: (1) to contribute to our knowledge of behavior, and (2) to disseminate this knowledge to students, scientists, and the public for the purpose of ultimately applying the knowledge to people's well-being. To this end, the Department has programs designed to do research and to teach in the domain of behavior at social, cognitive, and biological levels of analysis, with a strong, productive faculty on the cutting edge of the discipline at each of these levels.

The Department is in the process of reshaping itself to reflect new directions in the field, in particular, emphasis on psychology's biological core and on interdisciplinary

research. To this end, the department is involved in new programs in Cognitive Science and Psychobiology and is encouraging ties with research centers at the university (e.g., the Center for Rationality, the Computational Center, and the planned Interdisciplinary Center for Brain Sciences). Part of this plan, according to the self-evaluation report and the committee's meetings, is a move to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and, given that the Natural Sciences are housed at Givat Ram, the plan would entail relocating to the Givat Ram campus. The department is aware that this move has advantages and disadvantages. Given that psychology is a laboratory science with strong roots in biology, it has a home in the natural sciences. Not only are there strong intellectual ties and collaborations with the natural sciences, there is also a shared research mentality. Thus, the department's needs for expanded and modern laboratory facilities, notably, brain research resources, will be better understood and fostered in the Natural Sciences. At the same time, psychology is a science of behavior and there are, therefore, some disadvantages to leaving the Faculty of Social Sciences. Primary among these is the physical distance, especially from the Statistics Department. These disadvantages are probably more than compensated for by the anticipated proximity to the Rationality Center, as well as the new Centers and collaborations that proximity to the life sciences will foster.

The department offers programs at three levels: BA, MA, and Ph.D. According to the self-evaluation document, the BA program aims to provide its undergraduates with a broad perspective on psychology within a research environment; specifically, to provide basic concepts and scientific tools in psychology and the possible applications of the field. More generally, the aim is to teach students to think rationally, creatively, and critically; to communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing; and to collect, analyze and interpret data. The committee believes that these goals are being met quite well, with some exceptions, as noted below.

The MA program aims to prepare students for careers in academic and applied programs. Two areas of specialization are exclusively research-oriented (Cognitive Psychology and Psychobiology) and others have both applied and research foci (Clinical Psychology, Neuropsychology, Social Psychology, and Educational & Clinical Child Psychology, which is a joint program housed in the School of Education). To achieve its educational aims, each program provides students with content courses that include training in the methods, principles, and ethics of scientific inquiry in each area, as well as applied training where relevant. A research thesis is required of all MA students. They are encouraged to produce a thesis that is empirical, which we believe is a commendable goal. In general, the aims of these programs are well met (as detailed below), although some of the applied programs may drain faculty time partly because faculty responsibilities in these areas do not map well onto faculty research interests and expertise.

The Ph.D. program aims to train doctoral students to become researchers and practitioners in academic and applied settings so that they are capable both of adding to the base of scientific knowledge about psychology and applying their cutting-edge knowledge about psychology to medical, business, and therapeutic settings, among others. In the long term, the department would like (as noted in its self-evaluation report and in meetings with the committee) to reduce or even eliminate the Master's program

and to focus on the doctoral program. On the whole, the committee supports this direction for the department, so long as students in the clinical programs continue to be permitted to obtain the MA (in the context of the direct-to-Ph.D. program being considered), enabling these students to apply to internship and ultimately to get licensed. The committee also believes that fashioning these programs into first rate Ph.D. programs will require hiring two more clinical psychology faculty, both because relegating all (or virtually all) clinical training to outside teachers who are unlikely to have the evidence-based training to sustain a first-rate clinical program is frequently counter-productive and because the clinical programs are the high-enrollment programs.

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

As the self-study indicates, the Department of Psychology at Hebrew University offers a BA in Psychology as an intensive individual major, as dual major in combination with any other major at Hebrew University, as a Psychobiology program (a joint arrangement with Life Sciences in which students receive a B.Sc.) or as a Psychology and Law program for students in the Law School. All students complete the undergraduate program in psychology, which, in the committee's view, offers a comprehensive traditional program of sufficient depth to prepare students for advanced study in the discipline or other relevant endeavors. This includes a thorough grounding in statistics and methodology as well as exposure to the core areas of the discipline. It also requires a research seminar in which students formulate a research question, design a study to examine it, conduct the study (in miniature form), analyze the data, and interpret it in a formal paper on the research project. Such a course is essential to BA-level education in psychology. In addition, students have opportunities to participate in fieldwork – such as supervised laboratory research or placement in the community – experiences that are central to a first-rate undergraduate education in psychology. Based on students' comments, it seems that it would be helpful for them to have access to such fieldwork and lab experiences beginning in the second year.

The department dropped the Introductory Psychology course for students majoring in psychology (although they have two such courses for students not majoring in psychology), apparently due to student and instructor dissatisfaction with repetition of introductory material in more advanced courses. The committee has reservations about this decision because psychology is not typically taught in high school, leaving students without a comprehensive overview of the field to get a sense of what most interests them. Not having an introductory course requires that elementary material be taught in the advanced courses. As a result, second level courses cannot include sufficiently advanced material to enable a third level of specialized courses for undergraduates desiring deeper exposure.

The undergraduate classes are large and there are virtually no exercise/discussion sessions in which students have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss material, have writing assignments, and make presentations. The result is an educational experience at the undergraduate whose quality is not as high as it should be, a concern expressed by students. Likewise, students noted that they regretted having little opportunity to synthesize the material they learned, in part because exams are multiple-

choice. The committee recognizes that it is costly to provide discussion sessions, and yet at the same time is concerned that educational quality is seriously compromised without them.

The department offers an MA and Ph.D. in six areas of study: (a) Clinical Psychology, (b) Educational and Child Clinical Psychology, (c) Neuropsychology (applied or research track), (d) Social Psychology (applied or research track), (e) Cognitive Psychology, and (f) Psychobiology. These MA and Ph.D. programs are largely geared toward research excellence in each field, although three also have applied tracks. It was not possible to evaluate the Child Clinical program because its faculty and administration are located in the School of Education. MA students in all programs are required to write a thesis; the department favors empirical theses, as does the committee, and indeed, the committee believes that it should be required that all theses are empirically based. To insure high quality research for the masters' theses, it would also make sense to establish a rule that only faculty with active empirical programs of research are permitted to supervise students. This restriction is particularly important in the clinical areas where the department seeks to provide training in evidence-based clinical practice. The Department has wisely decided to keep the number of students accepted into the MA program small so that students can be supervised adequately by the full-time faculty.

Beyond admitting students to the MA program, the department also admits to its Ph.D. programs in two tracks: a small number of students are admitted to the Ph.D. program at the end of their undergraduate studies and others are selected for this program after entering the MA program, but before completing it. In addition, there is regular admission to the Ph.D. program of students who have completed their MA degree. As the department moves toward emphasizing the Ph.D., admission to terminal MA programs is expected to decrease. Focusing on Ph.D. admissions, and not on MA-only programs, is the standard at virtually all research universities in the U.S.

The psychobiology program is centered on the Brain and Behavior Laboratory in the department, which appears to have a productive faculty and engaged, talented students. Students in the program formulate individualized programs of study under close faculty supervision and establish themselves as productive research scientists.

The cognitive psychology program is closely interlinked with cognitive neuroscience in the department, currently structured as part of the research track of the neuropsychology program (see below). The course coverage in the current cognitive program is solid and is supplemented by courses from other departments in the university, notably the Cognitive Science program. Research training in the program appears to be of high quality, based on the research productivity of its faculty and students.

The social psychology program focuses on basic research in a number of areas, including social cognition, judgment and decision-making, and conflict and negotiation. In conjunction with sociology, it also provides training in organizational behavior and consulting. Based on faculty CVs, the faculty are productive, capable scientists, and the department is to be commended for having built this strong program given the centrality

of social psychology to the discipline and its broad ranging relevance to social issues faced by the State of Israel (e.g., stereotyping and prejudice, intergroup behavior, conflict and negotiation). On the negative side, the structure of the program currently requires faculty to invest considerable time training students whose central aim is to become organizational consultants rather than researchers, perhaps not an ideal use of faculty resources. In the U.S., organizational behavior programs have migrated to business schools where students with applied interests fit better with the program's mission and goals.

The neuropsychology program, as noted, has two tracks. One is a two-year research track that trains students as research scientists for future academic careers, while the other is an applied three-year track that trains students to assess and treat patients with neuropsychological impairments. The research program functions independently from the applied program in that its students need not take the applied assessment and treatment courses, but rather substitute training in theory and research methodology. The faculty in this research track is productive and accomplished, and there is excitement among the students working in faculty labs.

The applied track of the neuropsychology program functions in accord with Israeli law, with students taking virtually all the required courses in the clinical program (described below). Thus, the program's strengths and weaknesses are similar to those in the clinical program. In addition to those requirements, students take a neuropsychology sequence; they also have different practica and internships. The program appears to train students effectively to enter this profession.

The clinical program aspires to increase its focus on evidence-based therapeutic techniques, consistent with the state-of-the-science international standards. This has meant undertaking a transition from a program based on psychodynamic theory and treatment to one based in evidence-based practice, grounded in the social and biological bases of clinical phenomena. This is also especially suited for common problems in Israeli society, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and Traumatic Brain Injury. The faculty coverage in the program is good in terms of their expertise, and forward-looking changes are being undertaken to strengthen and solidify the program, as indicated in the self-evaluation document and seen in the committee's meetings. In particular, the science-based training model is fully shared among the faculty. However, to implement fully the transition to a scientifically-informed clinical research and training program, the department should hire two additional clinical researchers to add to the three clinical scientists currently serving as the program's core faculty. The department seems to be considering establishing an in-house training clinic in which science and practice would be fully integrated, a win-win move that stands to benefit clinical training, clinical research, and the community. It would allow faculty to supervise students in treatment modalities that match the clinical disorders that they are examining scientifically, and thus to better integrate science and practice.

Because of the common coursework and intervention focus of the applied neuropsychology and clinical programs, it seems quite feasible that these programs could effectively be combined into one clinical psychology program with two tracks within a united program, a possibility the department should consider.

Although clinical-child psychology is also offered at the MA level as joint program with educational psychology, evaluating the program is beyond the scope of the committee's review because it is housed in the School of Education, as noted.

Overall, the faculty at Hebrew University has a distinguished track record of publication in psychology. The leadership of the department appears to be energetic, wise, and forward-looking. Together the department seems to be taking decisive action toward solidifying its strengths and building on them in order to foster its excellence, and the committee fully endorses this.

The committee also was impressed with the leadership of the university and its support of the Department of Psychology. It has permitted psychology to flourish in its movement toward increasing its reach and prominence, and seems a positive influence on morale of faculty and students alike. It also augurs well for the further success of the department.

### **3. Faculty and Teaching**

**Faculty.** The department's core faculty are active and distinguished scholars and researchers with high visibility nationally and internationally across the core fields of psychology, ranging from cognitive neuroscience to social and clinical psychology. Faculty morale seems high. They collaborate with one another and with colleagues in the US and Europe, they publish their work in top-tier journals along with their graduate students, they have substantial intramural and extramural grants, and they have strong credentials as evidenced by awards received and election or appointment to offices in professional organizations. The work style of the tenured faculty is highly collegial and this extends to mentoring younger, non-tenured faculty by advising them as they progress to the tenure review.

The size of the faculty and the mounting demands on faculty time are worrisome, as even such achievements can be short-lived if faculty are spread too thin. This is especially true for the clinical program. The department is aware of this and is committed to a hiring plan that will enlarge the tenure-track clinical faculty and help the program implement its mission to produce first-rate scientist-practitioner clinical program. In the committee's view, this will require hiring two regular, full-time clinical faculty who are exemplary scientists and are role models of the scientist-practitioner model the department endorses.

The faculty in the cognitive area and in the research track of neuropsychology is in the process of becoming integrated into one cognitive neuroscience program. This is a wise direction, one taken by many elite departments around the world. The faculty in each area are strong and already collaborate with each other, healthy trends that should be further fostered by this joining of forces.

As noted, the overall department is strong in cognitive, neuroscience, and social psychology. A notable weakness is in developmental psychology, an area that would form useful links to those programs as well as to clinical psychology. The department is

aware of the need to hire in the developmental area and is taking steps to find excellent candidates. A hire in cognitive development would complement, and nicely interface, with the recent hire in social development.

Expectations and procedures for promotion and tenure seem sufficiently clear in the department and the junior faculty feel well supported as they go through the process. Junior faculty get startup funds and laboratories remodeled to fit their needs, although the time that it takes to provide them is costly in terms of faculty productivity.

**Teaching.** The curriculum on both undergraduate and graduate levels appears comprehensive, sequential, and logical. Courses are taught by senior and junior faculty members with substantial expertise in their respective areas, and clinical training is augmented by a group of part-time and adjunct faculty. BA students have opportunities to participate in research, both in the context of research seminars and by becoming research assistants in faculty labs, which the committee sees as essential to high quality BA-level education in the discipline.

The BA program is composed of two compulsory courses in the first year (statistics, biological bases of behavior) and three compulsory courses in the second year (statistics, experimental psychology and research methods, and computer applications). There are a number of core courses that the students are required to take during their BA studies. As discussed earlier, the department eliminated the course Introduction to Psychology that commonly gives an overview of psychology to first year students and the committee has reservations about this decision, elaborated in the program section. The self-evaluation report indicates that this was done in response to student complaints, but the absence of this course seems to pose problems for students now. A number of students the committee spoke with indicated that an introductory course would have been helpful to them in gaining a full sense of the field early on to begin to formulate their own interests and better select their coursework. An introductory course would also provide background for advanced courses so that those courses can be taught at a higher level. Students indicated that at present their intellectual abilities are not really challenged in many advanced courses.

More broadly, it is the committee's view that the research activities offered to undergraduates in the department are quite well structured. At the same time, the department might promote more satisfaction among undergraduates in psychology by working to attract students with more appropriate interests, such as finding ways to better inform students at the outset (when they apply) about the research focus of the department and its programs. Existing students would also benefit if the department created a website to provide them with a complete and accurate description of individual faculty research projects that might be available to them.

As for the MA, the clinical program's course requirements are heavier than those of other departmental programs, an imbalance that is due to the program's wise decision to teach cutting-edge courses in addition to those mandated by law. However, many of the latter courses cover material and assessment tools of questionable scientific validity, overburden the curriculum with materials unnecessary for students to become competent clinicians, and take precious training time away from teaching empirically

supported assessment and treatment methods, and from students' own research training. To begin to remedy this problem, program's faculty have expressed a willingness to serve on the Council of Psychologists so that changes in the requirements imposed for licensure can be informed by and updated according to recent advances in clinical science. The committee commends the faculty's readiness to contribute their time for the benefit of the public.

Teaching, advising, and clinical training needs in the department are augmented by part-time, as well as adjunct faculty. While adjuncts do not serve as thesis and dissertation advisors, part-time faculty do. This helps lighten the load of the full-time faculty and enrich applied research, while also providing access to important patient populations since several part time faculty function in key positions in local hospitals. At the same time, it makes it more difficult for the core faculty to set the standards for the students' research. It is the committee's view that a core (full-time) departmental faculty member should serve as advisor or co-advisor for all MA theses.

From its meetings, the committee has sensed a mismatch between the orientation and training philosophy of the core faculty in the clinical program and those of adjunct and some part-time faculty. This mismatch could compromise the coherence of the program and its ability to achieve its mission and goals in terms of emphasizing evidence-based practice aligned with research expertise. Over time, as more core, full-time clinical faculty are hired, moving more toward faculty-owned and faculty-guided clinical training – aligned with the research and practice expertise of these faculty – is crucial for building and maintaining excellence in this program. The core clinical faculty should set the tone for what students are exposed to (and how much of it) in all aspects of their training—concerned both with practice and with research.

#### **4. Students**

The undergraduate program in Psychology is highly selective. Out of 1200-1300 applicants, approximately 380 are admitted, based on matriculation score (approximately 10.8) and psychometric score (approximately 700). Scores for students in Psychobiology and Cognitive Science tend to be higher. Of those admitted, approximately 160 enroll. The dropout rates for psychology are around 15%, primarily after the first year. Dropout rates for Psychobiology are far higher, 45%, again primarily after the first year. This high rate is of some concern, and measures to reduce it should be taken, as it wastes departmental resources and can threaten the morale of students in the program.

Admission to the MA program is based on scores on the advanced exam (MITAM), undergraduate grades (minimum average 87) including passing grades in courses on statistics and research methods; for the applied areas, interviews, recommendations, CV, and letter of intention are also used in making admission decisions. From the approximately 230 students applying to the MA, around 75 are admitted, and approximately 40 enroll. As of the time of the visit, the MA program had 16 students in clinical, 11 in Applied Neuropsychology, 2 in Research Neuropsychology, 10 in Social, and 2 in Cognitive. Students complete the MA in 3 years on average, two years of courses, and an additional year for a thesis. During the visit, the doctoral program

currently had 47 students; the distribution across areas and the entrance requirements were not given. Those in the direct Ph.D. track take approximately 6 years to complete a Ph.D., including an MA. Those who first complete an MA take 5 additional years to complete a Ph.D.

On the whole, the BA students seem happy and pleased with their education, based on the committee's meetings. Nevertheless, students indicated that they wanted more challenge in their studies, more depth in their courses, more theory, less overlap ("every course begins with Freud"), exams that test thinking and integration rather than memorization, and the like; they reported wanting higher standards. They also wanted more opportunities to apply, integrate, and extend the knowledge they are acquiring, stressing the need for discussion sections. They were enthusiastic about the courses, especially the smaller ones that focus on research and fieldwork, and would like more experience in both of these activities. The undergraduates have an association and take care of each other, both academically and socially.

Our sample of graduate students was small, only 3 Ph.D. students. They appeared engaged in and committed to their work; they seemed also to be young professionals. The students reported that funding was a constant problem; each depended on several small fellowships and had to supplement these with work. In some cases, the work was relevant to their areas of interest, but often it was not. Students reported having respect for their mentors and programs. Some expressed regret over the changes in the clinical program, both in terms of its having become increasingly focused on evidence-based practice and in terms of the retirement of some legendary mentors.

## **5. Research**

Research at Hebrew University is world class in each area represented in the department – cognition/perception, social psychology, psychobiology, and clinical psychology. Almost all faculty are active researchers, publishing extensively in the best journals in their specialized fields, and also in high impact general journals such as *Nature Neuroscience*, *Brain*, *PNAS*, and *Neuron*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Memory and Cognition*. The high level of productivity is enabled at least in part by considerable grant support, totaling over \$11 million and comprising over 40% of the Social Sciences grant support. That comes to an average of \$500,000 per faculty which compares favorably with the best institutions internationally. This research productivity is also reflected in teaching. The faculty have trained more than 200 MA students and 100 Ph.D. students over the last five years.

At the same time, an impediment to the quality of the research training of graduate students arises when any one faculty member is supervising too many graduate students to give each one the attention needed. In particular, it is the committee view that each faculty member should supervise a maximum of 6 doctoral students, with a total of 8 graduate students when both the MA and Ph.D. level are considered. Steps should thus be taken to increase graduate student funding.

In addition, graduate student funding in the department is not adequate. As a result, many students have to work at jobs that are unrelated to their education, decreasing the

amount of time they can spend doing research and lengthening time to degree.

Although research is encouraged and facilitated as much as possible at the university level, investigators conducting clinical research are hampered by regulations at the Board of Ethics. The regulations are interpreted in such a way that all clinical research must be conducted under the supervision of a physician to comply with Helsinki regulations. This is not the case at institutions in North America where clinical research that is not invasive (and even some that is) can be conducted without medical oversight. The department is pressuring the Board of Ethics to enable clinical research that is psychological in nature to be conducted without medical supervision, a sensible effort.

## **6. Infrastructure**

The department's offices and labs are housed in the Social Sciences Building on the Mount Scopus Campus. Faculty office and classroom space is, for the most part, adequate. Laboratory space, however, is insufficient even though it has recently been upgraded. Lack of space diminishes undergraduate education by limiting the number of undergraduates who can participate in research and compromises future hiring. Because psychological research increasingly involves brain imaging, with its consequent needs for space and equipment, lack of space and equipment will increasingly threaten the continued excellence of the department. The planned move to Natural Sciences and the Givat Ram campus will provide an opportunity to modernize and increase needed infrastructure.

## **7. Recommendations and Suggestions**

The committee was impressed with the openness of the university and department leadership, and with the high regard the university leadership has for the department, a regard the committee shares. The department is forward-looking and has short- and long-range goals for improvements, notably moving to Natural Sciences/Givat Ram and shifting graduate training resources to Ph.D. degrees, including perhaps eventually eliminating MA-only programs. Although the move to the natural sciences/Givat Ram is not without some potential losses both to the department and to the Faculty of Social Sciences as discussed earlier, the committee supports it. We also support the department's plan to move toward a Ph.D.-focused graduate program makes sense, if students in the revised clinical program, continue to be able to obtain the MA (along the way in the new Ph.D. program) so that they can apply for internship and get licensed.

In general, the committee agrees with the department's plans and recommends implementing them. At the same time, there are improvements in the department that the committee sees as needed and important to excellence, and these are raised below in approximate order of priority, although many recommendations are about equally important. Overall, we suggest a 12 to 24 month window for making recommended improvements, with a follow up at 36 months.

### **A. Faculty Hires**

Based on teaching and scientific needs in the department, the committee recommends

that faculty hires be made in two areas: in clinical and developmental psychology.

1. In order to make the transition to a first-rate clinical science program that relies primarily on its own faculty and less on outside faculty, the department needs two additional full-time faculty researchers in clinical science.
2. Although the department has impressive breadth and depth, a faculty member in cognitive development is needed; such an addition would complement the recent addition in social development and would foster relations with the social, cognitive, and clinical areas.
3. The committee recommends that a strategic plan be developed for securing funding for these targeted positions and that this be done in the first year, with the hires made in the second or third year.

## **B. The BA Program**

In the committee's view, some aspects of the undergraduate program compromise the quality of the education students receive in the department, and a concerted effort should be made to make improvements that foster excellence in undergraduate education.

1. The committee recommends that the department give priority to finding a way to include exercise (discussion) sections for each large core course in the department, enabling students to think, write, question, and speak about what they are learning, as well as to extend that knowledge to broader contexts.
2. In terms of the sequence of courses in the curriculum, the committee recommends that the department establish a mechanism to ensure that courses are sequenced so that advanced courses are more challenging than introductory courses, perhaps through faculty discussion, student input, and periodic review of syllabi.
3. The committee also recommends reestablishing a general course in introductory psychology in the first year. This would allow students to refine their interests in psychology and prepare them for more intensive advanced courses.
4. To expand the information students have available to them, the committee recommends that the department develop an advising system for undergraduates to inform them about the program and graduate and career opportunities. The program could involve faculty, administrators, advanced students, and an undergraduate organization, as appropriate.
5. A strategic plan for making the above changes should be formulated in the first year and implemented in the second.

### **C. The MA program**

The committee agrees with the department's decision to keep the number of students accepted into the MA program small in order to ensure adequate supervision and training. Especially for the clinical program, adequate training requires curriculum and training improvements.

1. The committee recommends that all MA theses be empirically based and supervised by faculty who have empirical research programs. A core (full-time) member of the faculty should be advisor or co-advisor of each MA thesis.
2. In terms of the clinical program, the committee makes a number of recommendations concerning curriculum and its structure.
  - (a) First, the committee recommends that as more faculty are hired in the clinical program, the program should rely less on outside faculty for courses and research training to ensure that students are exposed to the latest clinical research and methods, and that faculty supervising student research have active research programs themselves.
  - (b) In terms of the curriculum, the department needs to economize on the number of courses in psychopathology, assessment, and intervention it offers, in order to enable students to have time to engage more deeply in research.
  - (c) Beyond this, the committee recommends that courses on psychodiagnostic tests be limited to 3 semesters (i.e., 1-1/2 annual courses) and focus on assessment tools known to be valid. No more than one semester should be offered on diagnostic instruments of questionable validity and if these are taught, the evidence on their lack of validity should be included.
  - (d) The committee further recommends that courses on psychopathology be reduced to 2 one-semester courses (or 1 annual course), and that not more than one course cover historical and psychodynamic approaches; one of the two courses ought to present advances in clinical science concerning psychopathology.
  - (e) With regard to intervention, the committee recommends that this area be reduced to 3 single-semester courses (1.5 annual courses) focused on evidence-based treatments, with at least one semester on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies (CBT).
  - (f) The committee also recommends that a curriculum committee be formed in the clinically relevant programs to regularly evaluate the syllabi used (particularly by adjuncts) to propose and ensure revisions that meet international standards in clinical science.

(g) Finally, the committee suggests that the department proceed with its plan to establish an in-house clinic that will provide research and training facilities as well as serve the community.

3. The committee suggests that the department consider consolidating two of its MA programs (clinical and neuropsychology, applied track) into one clinical program with two tracks, one in clinical neuropsychology, with research and practice integrated in each (rather than being designated as separate tracks).
4. The committee endorses the planned consolidation of the research track of the neuropsychology program with the program in cognitive psychology to create a cognitive neuroscience program.
5. A strategic plan should be developed in the first year for addressing each “recommendation” above (with flexibility for the “suggestions”) and the plan should be implemented in years two and three.

#### **D. The Ph.D. program**

The committee supports the department’s decision to de-emphasize its Master’s level programs and to encourage applications from students whose goal is to complete a Ph.D. (i.e., the direct and regular tracks), as the committee believes this will enhance faculty and student productivity in research. The committee also supports the research direction the department is taking, in particular, creating closer ties with the life sciences.

#### **E. Infrastructure and Research**

1. In order to foster research productivity and excellence, the research and infrastructure in the department need to be aligned or obstacles will hamper research productivity and research education. The department needs the space and technological resources to continue to conduct the high level research they do and to advance psychological science. The committee endorses the proposal that the department has made to move to the Givat Ram campus, as it will enable the department to substantially increase lab space and to gain access to needed technologies. The space needed would constitute nearly doubling its existing space. If the move is impossible, building such a space on Mt. Scopus would be necessary. A decision is needed imminently on this. Either way, it is essential for the university’s continued prominence and its ability to attract Israel’s best minds that the department be designated a Natural Science in terms of the funding formula and its teaching load, which would then be on par with top universities in North America, which are necessarily competitors for top faculty.

(a) A strategic plan should be formulated within the first year (perhaps as is now being done) that includes a decision on the move, a plan for implementing the department’s designation as Natural Science, and an explicit strategy for solving the space problem.

(b) Implementation of the plan should begin in the second year and continue through the third.

2. As noted, graduate funding is markedly low. Graduate education at universities in Israel is underfunded relative to graduate students (MA and Ph.D. level) studying toward the doctorate in North America, which puts Israeli students who cannot go abroad for their education at a profound disadvantage, while also impeding research productivity overall. The committee thus recommends that steps be taken to increase graduate student funding, at least by designating students in psychology in the natural sciences. In addition, private fundraising efforts should be undertaken, where feasible, to increase graduate stipends.

(a) The committee recommends that a strategic plan be formulated within the first year for increasing graduate student funding – that is, to bring it up to a level that would provide at least minimal subsistence (for example, perhaps 36,000 shekels per year). This would vastly better enable graduate students to focus on their education and training than they currently can, given that they work outside jobs that interfere.

(b) This plan should be implemented in the second and third years.

3. It makes sense to the committee that the department should push the Board of Ethics to enable clinical research that is psychological to be conducted without medical supervision, and the committee suggests this continue.

## **F. Alumni**

Alumni are an important resource for departments and universities; hence, the committee suggests that the department form an alumni association. Alumni associations have many benefits, among them: allowing the department to track the results of their education, allowing alumni to network with each other, fostering loyalty to the program, including the possibility of fund-raising. E-communications make forming an alumni association and communicating with alumni relatively easy, and the small size of the country will also allow valuable face-to-face meetings that can combine intellectual, e. g., state-of-the-science lectures by faculty, with social activities.

**Signed By:**



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**Prof. Susan Andersen  
Committee Chair**



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**Prof. Susan Goldin- Meadow**



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**Prof. Avishai Henik**



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**Prof. Morris Moscovitch**



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**Prof. Varda Shoham**



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**Prof. Barbara Tversky**

# 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

**Wednesday 17.12.08-visit schedule**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>	
08:00-08:30	Opening session: The heads of the institution <b>(Rector's office 408)</b>	Rector Vice rector Head of Quality Assessment System	
09:00-09:30	Meeting with the School's/department's academic leadership <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>	Head of department Heads of BA, MA, PhD programs	Prof. A. Cohen
09:30-10:00	Meeting with <b>full time senior faculty</b> and committees' representatives <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>	For example: admissions, curriculum/teaching, research committee (possible also research director or similar position), faculty promotion etc.	Prof. U. Shavit, Prof. L. Deouell, Prof. R. Frost, Prof. S. Bentin, Prof. J. Huppert, Prof. Y. Schul,
10:00-10:30	Dean <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>		Prof. B. Shamir
10:30-11:00	Meeting with <b>full time junior faculty</b> <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>		Dr. I. Yovel, Dr. A. Maril, Dr. R. Mayo, Dr. A. Knafo, Dr. R. Hassin, Prof. J. Huppert
11:00-11:30	Meeting with <b>part time faculty</b> (senior & junior) And adjuncts <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>		Prof. G. Shefler, Dr. E. Bachar, Dr. D. Hoofien, Dr. Y. Polak,
11:30-12:00	Meeting with undergraduate students <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>		Limor Borstein, Yaakov Rozenfeld, Rotem Or, Ayelet Levin
12:00-12:45	Meeting with graduate students <b>(room 2602 Psychology)</b>		Ayelet Porat, Anat Perry, Shani Kuna, Florina Yosepovski, Renana Elran, Or Hasson
12:45-13:15	Meeting with Alumni		Dr Hagit Magen, Dr. Tamar Zilber
13:15-13:45	Meeting with adjuncts		Dr. Shai Shoham
13:45-14:30	Closed meeting of committee members (and Lunch) <b>(Room no 2-602)</b>		
14:30-15:00	Tour at the institution	faculty facilities	Prof. A. Cohen, Prof. R. Frost
15:00-15:30	Summation meeting with heads of the institution <b>(Rector's office 408)</b>	President (optional) Rector Head of Quality Assessment System	Rector's office