

23 January 2012

**Hadassah Academic College's answer regarding the Council for Higher Education's
comments of the evaluation report of Communication Disorders**

The department of Communication Disorders at Hadassah Academic College thanks the Council for Higher Education for the opportunity to participate in the self evaluation process and also thanks the committee for its valuable and challenging report and recommendations. The department is committed to the mission and goals stated and in view of that will act on the recommendations presented to continue meeting higher standards in the report in the field of communication disorders.

The response below aims to clarify a few miscomprehensions in the report and thus will focus only on the report of our department.

Documentation: The current documentation of the clinical practicum hours is very similar to the one recommended by the committee. The clinical education faculty will strive to develop a more cumulative method of documentation as recommended.

Evaluation: The clinical education faculty has been actively engaged in developing a comprehensive and sensitive system for evaluation of students' practicum in both speech-language pathology and audiology including on site visits based on experience in other countries and research in the field of clinical evaluation. The faculty will continue searching to improve the evaluation methods.

Clinical integration courses in both areas present a unique opportunity for formative learning and assessment of individual learning outcomes. During the ongoing process of self evaluation the most recent changes in these courses have been in the area of student assessment, thus aiming to improve the way the final grades reflect student's abilities.

Off-campus Practicum sites: Evaluation of the quality of off-campus sites and outside supervision is performed continuously using various methods. Each student submits a written reflection of his clinical experience and the faculty maintains ongoing direct communication with off-site supervisors. The department also offers an ongoing course on supervision skills for all off-campus supervisors.

The clinical practicum program is based upon the current availability of clinical sites in Israel. In the process of trying to cope with this issue the department opened the Adler Center for Aphasia allowing all students to receive practicum in the area of aphasia.

All off-campus sites for clinical practicum are assigned to one or two students thus offering a maximum of hands-on experience.

Personnel: The report states that teaching specialization in specific areas is lacking. The area of stuttering is covered by Dr. Caatia Adelman who is a researcher in the area and teaches the course on "Fluency Disorders- Assessment and Intervention". The area of swallowing is covered in the course "Neuromotor Disorders- Assessment and Intervention".

The faculty aims that all changes made to the program will be in order to advance student learning. An example is that the fourth-year clinical practicum has been reinstalled.

The faculty of the department wishes to thank the committee for the comprehensive report and evaluation. The faculty finds the remainder of the comments very helpful in the continuing mission of excellence in the field of Communication Disorders. The department would welcome the allocation of necessary funds and personnel for implementing the recommendations.