

20 November 2012

To: Tamar Maagan Efrati, Coordinator
The Quality Assessment and Assurance Division
The Council for Higher Education
Jerusalem

Re: Response to Prof. Gila Sher's review of the implementation of the evaluation committee's recommendations in the Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Haifa received an exceptionally good evaluation from the "External Evaluation Team of Philosophy Departments in Israel" (2009). We are truly grateful to Professor Sher for her report of June 15th 2012 on the implementation, by the University of Haifa, of the recommendations of the 2009 team. We accept all of her conclusions and will implement the few recommendations of the Evaluation Team that pertain to us as a Department, and that have still not been fully implemented. We share Professor Sher's concern regarding the issue of position replacements—particularly as one faculty member retired this year, and four more are expected to retire in the coming four years. Thus, unless new faculty members are hired, the standards of excellence in research and teaching that the Department was found to exhibit in 2009 will be severely threatened.

With kinds regards,



Saul Smilansky
Professor and Chair

Response to Prof. Gila Sher's review over the Implementation of the Recommendations made by the External Evaluation Team of Philosophy Departments in Israel, November 2012

<p>Prof. Gila Sher review over the Implementation of the Recommendations made by the External Evaluation Team</p>	<p>University (U)/Department's (D) response (November, 2012)</p>
<p>On the positive side: P1. Replacing retirees The university is committed to keeping "enough teaching staff to enable a varied, updated, and most important - highly qualified study program" and intends to continue the method of recruiting new teaching staff through the Alon Scholarships, a method that served the department very well in the past. This year, the university authorized a job search (Alon Fellowship) for the philosophy department.</p>	<p>(D) The Department of Philosophy at the University of Haifa received an exceptionally good evaluation from the "External Evaluation Team of Philosophy Departments in Israel" (2009). We are truly grateful to Professor Sher for her recent evaluation report. We accept all of her conclusions and will implement the few recommendations of the Evaluation Team that pertain to us as a Department, and that have still not been fully implemented.</p>
<p>P2. Increasing financial support for graduate students: Furthermore, the university raised the sum of scholarships for one subgroup of graduate students, namely MA students (as well as BA students).</p>	<p>(U) We thank Prof. Gila Sher for the review and positive impression regarding the implementation of these recommendations.</p>
<p>P3. Direct track, Interuniversity: Promoting educational horizons & Placement service: Moreover, the university has implemented the two direct track recommendations, is planning to implement the interuniversity recommendation through the Graduate studies authority, and has implemented the placement recommendation.</p>	

Prof. Gila Sher review over the Implementation of the Recommendations made by the External Evaluation Team	University (U)/Department's (D) response (November, 2012)
<p>On the negative side: the university has not expressed a direct commitment to the first two recommendations of the external team:</p>	
<p>N1. Replacing retirees: Replacing all retirees in a timely fashion (regarded by the external team as of highest urgency).</p>	<p>(D) We share Professor Sher's concern regarding the issue of position replacements—particularly as one faculty member retired this year, and four more are expected to retire in the coming four years. Thus, unless new faculty members are hired, the standards of excellence in research and teaching that the Department was found to exhibit in 2009 will be severely threatened. (U) The Rector and the University Administration are aware of the retirement process with which the Department of Philosophy is contending. Accordingly, last academic year we approved the recruitment of a young promising scholar, who unfortunately at the last moment decided to accept a position in another university. We are committed to recruiting similar excellent candidates identified by the members of the Department.</p>
<p>N2. Expanding the size of the faculty: Expanding the size of the faculty (regarded by the external team as a persistent need) and in the two and a half years that have passed since the recommendations were issued the university has authorized only one junior job search (Alon Fellowship).</p>	<p>(D) We welcome the 2009 Committee's recommendation, supported by Professor Sher, that the Department be expanded. As mentioned in the response to N1 above, our situation is, however, more acute. As a first step, we need to receive University approval for replacing current retirees, in order to maintain our numbers, before we seek to expand. (U) The University Administration goes through a thorough and methodical process of evaluation before recruiting young faculty members. This process is based on an international search for potential candidates and careful examination of the academic excellence of these candidates as well as on specific priorities of the University.</p>
<p>N3. Administrative staffing: The university Did not Implement the administrative staffing recommendation (regarded by the external team as of second highest urgency).</p>	<p>(U) The cumulative number of hours provided by the administrative team to the Department has increased from 33 hours per week to 54 hours per week: administrative assistant to the Chair (26 hours per week) and a part-time office worker (28 hours per week).</p>
<p>N4. Increasing financial support for graduate students: The university Did not increase financial support for PhD students (second highest urgency).</p>	<p>(U) During the last five years the University's management raised the sum of scholarships for MA and BA students from NIS 21 million to NIS 27 million, despite the many curtailments in the University's budget. We plan on increasing the budget for this purpose, and at the same time expect our researchers to attain competitive research grants in order to finance research students through these sources as well.</p>