

10 Shvat, 5773  
January 21, 2013

To:  
Ms. Daniella Sandler  
Coordinator for QA  
Quality Assessment Division (QAD)  
Council for Higher Education  
Jerusalem

**Response to the report of to the CHE Evaluation Committee for  
Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, Bar-Ilan University**

Dear Ms. Daniella Sandler,

Enclosed please find our response to the report by the Committee for the Evaluation of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at Bar -Ilan University.

We read the report with great interest and were pleased to see that the Committee found the Department to be of a very high quality, both in terms of the high level and broad scope of its teaching program, as well as the outstanding reputation of its senior staff in the international research scene. We heartily agree with the view expressed by the Committee that the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages has a special significance due to the central role the Hebrew language has played in our national heritage. As noted in the Report, Israel is the only country in the world with departments entirely devoted to the field of Hebrew studies, making the strengthening and development of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at Bar Ilan University especially important.

In the following I respond to specific recommendations of the Committee.

1. In line with the Committee's recommendation and following University authorities' decision, the department will take the Unit for Expository Writing under its academic aegis. The Department has already taken the first steps in this direction, with the intention of completing the change before the end of the academic year 2012-2013. The Report stresses the need for a new tenured academic position to be created for this purpose. The University recognizes this need and will make any effort to enable the Department to receive a new tenured position following the recruitment of an appropriate, excellent scholar of applied linguistics, who will be able to develop research-oriented activities of the Unit.
2. The Committee recommends that the department should maintain the current balance in expertise across the senior tenured staff. At the moment, this balance has been upset because of the recent retirement of a full-professor in the field of Modern Hebrew. The University is aware of the urgent need for a tenured position in Modern Hebrew to fill this gap.
3. The Committee recommends that efforts should continue towards establishing research centers. The Department has been working towards the foundation of a research center in sociolinguistics, which

would be especially relevant would constitute a unique entity in the Israeli academic scene. We believe that high priority should be given to funding a center of sociolinguistics that can attract students and scholars of a high caliber and be a hub of innovative academic activity.

4. The Committee recommends the strengthening of collaborative relationship between the department and the linguistics division in the English department. From our point of view, potential collaboration should include two main elements:
- (a) cross-registration, namely, graduate students can participate in theoretical linguistics courses in the English department, if theoretical knowledge relevant for their thesis is not taught in the Department. Students from the English department should find some of our Hebrew courses equally relevant.
  - (b) co-supervision, namely, research students in Hebrew Linguistics can benefit from having two supervisors from the two departments.

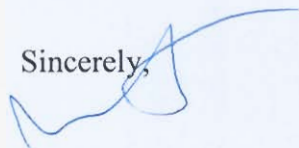
Let me specify one correction to an assertion made in the Report.

It is mistakenly stated on page 8 (appearing again on page 10, as recommendation number 7) that the first year foundational courses on grammar and vocalization offer no credits. In fact, the first year courses on grammar and vocalization offer credits like all the other courses in the department.

In summary, we feel that the Evaluation Report expresses a deep understanding of the strengths and unique contributions of the Department, and makes valuable recommendations for the improvement and development of the Department.

We look forward to working with the Department as well as with University officials to address the substantive issues and recommendations raised in the report. We thank the CHE Committee for helpful recommendations and hope to continue to improve the quality of the Department.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Prof. Miriam Faust.

Prof. Miriam Faust  
Vice Rector  
In charge of Quality Evaluation

Cc:

Prof. Haim Taitelbaum, Rector

Prof. Eliezer Tauber, Dean of the Faculty of Jewish Studies

Prof. Zohar Livnat, Head, Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages