

June 19, 2019

Dear Committee Members,

We have received your assessment report with great pleasure, and we would like to thank you for the time and efforts you have invested in evaluating our elementary-track (ET) program. Needless to say, we view the quality assessment process as very helpful and your assessment report as very enlightening. Here are our responses to the different issues you raised in the report:

Executive Summary

1. We are glad to read that you view our multi-age track (MAT) program as a positive development. Our self-evaluation report did not mention it because we did not have it at the time of submitting the report. The report was submitted in March, 2017, while the MAT program was approved in July, 2017, and started in October of the same year.

General

2. While you rightly argue that a MAT program is better than an ET program, we believe that having these two programs can be beneficial. Candidates who are strongly believed to have the characteristics of good future English teachers but who cannot be admitted to the MAT program because they do not meet the admission requirements can still be admitted to the ET one. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the passing grades in the MAT program are very high (80 in proficiency and didactics courses and 70 in the rest of the courses), and no other college or university in Israel has such passing grades. If a MAT student is unable to obtain these grades, we would like to give him or her the opportunity to move to the ET program.

Assessment

3. The college accepts and endorses the recommendation of the committee as regards the assessment procedures.

Curriculum

4. The college has decided to reduce the number of online courses in any department to a minimum (two or three). A lecturer who wishes to teach an online course can do so after submitting an application to the Faculty Head and taking part in a workshop. No lecturer is obliged to teach a course as an online course.

Courses: Didactics

5. We will examine the syllabi and weed out any duplication of content.
6. With regard to the course in Songs and Games, we will consider revising it, adding to it other necessary means of teaching English to elementary-school pupils. We

will also consider its timing, so that it will be offered closer to student teaching. At the same time, we would like to point out that drama, short stories, and poetry are taught in the course in Introduction to Literature and the course in Poetry and Short Stories.

7. We will consider the two full-year courses on using digital tools in teaching to determine their effectiveness.
8. We will pay closer attention to the topics covered in the English didactics courses so that our program would be more balanced and comprehensive.

Courses: Literature

9. The MAT program does not have a course entitled 'Anglo-American Culture.' This course appears in the ET program. In the MAT program, it is called 'Cultural Perspectives of English Speaking Nations.' This course does not fall under the category of literature courses but under cultural studies. This being so, it is not clear to us why its content needs to be revised.

It is worth noting that there are seven, and not only three, literature courses in the MAT program. They are 'Introduction to English Literature', 'Literary Encounters', 'English Children's Literature', 'English Short Stories and Poetry', 'Language Acquisition through Literature', 'Seminar in English Literature', and 'Shakespeare'.

As regards the element of minority and women's writing, we believe that it is well-represented in a course in 'Exploring Culture through Literature in English', one of the four courses in the cultural studies section.

Courses: Linguistics

10. We believe that we have a good number of courses in linguistics in the MAT program. In these courses, we intend to compare English to Arabic and Hebrew, be it in terms of morphology, phonology, syntax, or semantics.

Courses: Proficiency

11. The college will make every effort to limit the number of students in proficiency courses to 20.

Courses: Practicum

12. With regard to the practicum, in the MAT program, professional retraining students have their practice teaching in elementary schools in their first year and in junior-high and high school in their second year.
13. We shall revise the checklists for lesson observations in order to be able to better evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in terms of pupil learning outcomes achieved in the lesson.

Courses: Faculty

14. The college aspires to employ pedagogical instructors who have both PhDs and professional experience. The college does not view this matter as an either-or-matter. Having said that, the college does not exclude the possibility of employing pedagogical instructors who have only MAs; it is worth noting that, in

the 2017/18 academic year, we have three pedagogical instructors, one has a PhD while the two others do not.

15. The college has lately worked on allocating more funding for research and conference travels. Also, lecturers are encouraged to submit applications for research funding and active participation in conferences.
16. We beg to differ as regards the induction and mentoring of newly-employed staff members. Candidates that are deemed to be suitable lecturers are asked to come to a job interview; they give a presentation before the induction committee, and they are interviewed afterward. After their induction, the Department Head or a senior lecturer observes one of their lessons and gives them feedback on it. Also, the Department Head converses with them from time to time to inquire about their work and progress; he also reviews with them their students' feedback at the end of each semester.

Infrastructure

17. We have bought over 80 books in 2017 in an attempt to dramatically increase the number of books in English language and literature in our library. We will do our best to buy more books and subscribe to more online journals, especially those indicated by the committee.

Once again, we extend our sincerest thanks to you for your hard work, which is highly professional and very much appreciated.

Dr. Sandy Habib
English Department Head



Prof. Shimon Amar
College President

