



EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDIES – GENERAL REPORT

COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENTS IN ISRAEL

June 2021

Section 1: Background and Procedures

- 1.1 In the academic year 2019-20 the Council for Higher Education [CHE] put in place arrangements for the evaluation of study programmes in the field of Physical therapy sciences in Israel.
- 1.2 The Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] participating in the evaluation process were:
 - Ariel University
 - Ben-Gurion University
 - Tel Aviv University
 - Zefat Academic College
 - Haifa University
- 1.3 To undertake the evaluation, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of¹:
 - 1.3.1 **Prof. Stuart Binder-Macleod**- Edward L. Ratledge Professor Emeritus, Department of Physical Therapy University of Delaware, USA-Committee Chair
 - 1.3.2 **Prof. Lori Michener**-Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy University of Southern California, USA
 - 1.3.3 **Prof. Yocheved (Yochy) Laufer**²- (EMERITUS), Department of Physical therapy, University of Haifa, Israel.
 - 1.3.4 **Prof. Chad E. Cook**- Division of Physical Therapy, Department of Orthopedics, Duke University, USA

Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik and Mr. Yarden Bialistok Cohen served as the Coordinators of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

- 1.4 The evaluation process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (February 2019). Within this framework the evaluation committee was required to:
 - examine the self-evaluation reports submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Physical Therapy
 - Conduct virtual site visits at 5 institutions participating in the evaluation process.
 - submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the academic units and study programs participating in the evaluation
 - set out the committee's findings and recommendations for each study program
 - submit to the CHE a general report regarding the evaluated field of study within the Israeli system of higher education
- 1.5 The evaluation committee examined only the evidence provided by each participating institution — considering this alongside the distinctive mission set

¹ The committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

² Prof. Yocheved (Yochy) Laufer did not participate in the visits to the University of Haifa or in the panel's discussions concerning the evaluation of this institution.

out by each institution in terms of its own aims and objectives. This material was further elaborated and explained in discussions with senior management, faculty members, students and alumni during the course of each one-day visit to each of the institutions.³

- 1.6** In undertaking this work the committee considered matters of International context, Research, Quality Assurance, Quality enhancement and capacity building.

Section 2: Recommendations

The committee would like to thank the faculty and leadership at all five of the programs that we visited for the warm welcome and spirit of cooperation we observed. We regret that we were unable to visit in person due to the current pandemic situation, but hope that our observations and recommendations will be helpful to the Council and each of the programs. It should be noted that though all of the programs have current or developing graduate programs, the major emphasis of the review was on the entry level baccalaureate programs in physical therapy. The following are our general observations and recommendations.

- All five programs reviewed have dedicated faculty that are providing a high level of professional education at the bachelorette and master's level (N.B.: Zefat currently only has a BPT program). In particular, we were impressed with how much the programs have accomplished with such finite resources. We feel compelled to congratulate the faculty for a strong sense of professionalism and commitment.
- All four University-based programs include productive researchers on their faculty. However, for most programs there is still a need to increase the external grant support garnered by the PT faculty members. We feel that re-imagining the grantperson strategy is necessary (e.g., partnering with engineering, medicine, etc.) to be competitive for larger grants is necessary as well as working with successful researchers in a mentor-mentee relationship should be considered.
- In general, the BPT, master's, and PhD students and alumni we met with were very pleased with the education they received and spoke highly of the programs they attended.
- It became clear during our visit that there is not a culture of formal annual review of the regular faculty members by the program heads/department chairs within any of the programs we visited. We believe that this is a lost opportunity. Overall, the faculty members and program leaders agreed that this would be beneficial to the program and the faculty members. This opportunity for faculty review should also be extended to the adjunct faculty.
- Overall, within the five programs there does not appear to be a culture of regular (approximately every 5 years) formal review of the curriculum that utilizes input from outside of the faculty. This would be very helpful to ensure that programs are teaching contemporary practices and procedures.

³Prof. Yocheved (Yochy) Laufer did not participate in the visits to the University of Haifa or in the panel's discussions concerning the evaluation of this institution.

- In addition, there does not appear to be a culture of regular program and student learning outcomes (outside licensure pass rates), which are the framework of a program's mission. Overarching Program Goals are broad statements that reflect the desired results that physical therapy education program faculty and students strive to achieve. Goals are realistic and achievable statements expressing what the program must achieve to accomplish its mission. As such, Program Goals should be grounded in both the program's and institution's mission and values to ensure that assessment becomes the process of improving what key stakeholders (primarily faculty and administrators) have decided is important for the institution and program. A careful assessment of every two years is necessary to assure the institutional and program goals are being met.
- In general, greater emphasis needs to be placed on interprofessional education (IPE) within PT education in Israel, especially in programs that identify this within their mission. We feel there are opportunities to integrate patient-centered, IPE learning opportunities with other professions in a formal, well-thought manner.
- Most programs do not have in place a method for evaluating students' professional behaviour prior to participation in their full-time clinical experiences. Hence, the development and implementation of a formal professional behaviour evaluation is needed for most PT programs.
- All of the 5 Israel PT programs have faculty meetings. These meetings do not consistently occur yearly, or include adjunct and clinical faculty. To facilitate communication and integration of faculty across the curriculum, all programs should hold regular faculty meetings. One advantage of COVID-19, is the use of on-line mechanisms for meetings, which can leverage for faculty meetings.
- Contemporary educational learning processes should be embraced. Use of team based learning, problem-based learning, flipped classroom, and leveraging on-line learning resources to enable multiple learning methods. COVID-19 has demanded the use of on-line learning delivery, which can be carried forward in time.
- Diversity may not be fully represented in the faculty and students. Faculty should represent the diversity in the profession, and students should reflect the rich diversity in the Israel population. The importance of initiatives to improve the diversity of the faculty and students was missing at all institutions, even those who mention this within their mission and value statements.
- For the programs that have MScPT and PhD programs, there is strong productivity and contribution to the science of physical therapy, especially given the infrastructure and grant funding available. As these programs continue to grow, more resources and infrastructure will be needed to support increased productivity.
- The issue of moving the BPT degree to an entry level MPT came up at several institutions during our visits. This committee feels this decision should remain in the hands of each program, but that careful consideration should be made prior to implementation. Programs have reduced the credits hours required for the BPT since the previous CHE self-evaluation nearly 13 years ago, but there remains many areas in which the current BPT curriculum could be modified and streamlined, which may change one's perspective on the need to change to an MPT. Before transitioning to an MPT, the programs need to query all stakeholders (e.g., students, alumni, business partners, ministry of health) and

determine the ramifications of transitioning to an entry level MPT, such as increased costs and delayed employment for graduates (5 years versus 4), undermining the current MScPT programs, influence on faculty workloads, a fair recognition of student achievement/credentialing, and competitiveness versus other programs who may decide to remain a 4-year BPT degrees program or transition to the 5-year MPT. Furthermore, the committee strongly recommends that any move to the MPT must reflect not only a decompression of the current programs (i.e., requiring fewer in-class hours per week) but must also reflect an upgrading of the curriculum to allow greater integration of the material by the students and to more closely reflect current and aspirational physical therapy practice.

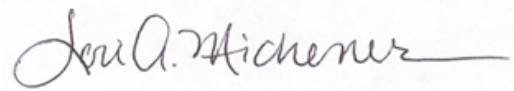
Institutions					
Category\institution	Tel-Aviv University	Ariel University	University of Haifa	Zefat Academic College	Ben-Gurion University
Management and administration	Green	Blue	Blue	Green	Blue
Self-Evaluation and QA	Red	Blue	Blue	Green	Blue
Teaching and learning	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Faculty and Human Resources	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Research	Blue	Blue	Green	White	Blue
Students	Green	Blue	Green	Green	Blue
Infrastructure	Green	Blue	Yellow	Green	Blue

Excellent	Blue
Satisfactory	Green
Room for Improvement	Yellow
Needs much improvement	Orange
Not acceptable	Red

Signed by:



Prof., Stuart Binder-Macleod
Chair



Prof. Lori A. Michener



Prof. Chad Cook



Prof. Yocheved Laufer

Appendix 1 – Letter of appointment



January 2020

Prof. Emeritus Stuart Binder Macleod
Department of physical therapy
University of Delaware
USA

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: 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.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as a member of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of **Physical Therapy** departments. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Lori Michener, prof. Chad Cook, and prof. ~~Yocheved~~ Laufer.

Ms. Alex ~~Buslovich Bilik~~ will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ido Perlman
Vice Chair,
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul, Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE
Ms. Alex ~~Buslovich Bilik~~ Committee Coordinator