



EVALUATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTER OF HERZELIA

COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCES DEPARTMENTS IN ISRAEL

July 2020

Section 1: Background and Procedures

1. In the academic year 2018-19 the Council for Higher Education [CHE] put in place arrangements for the evaluation of study programs in the field of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences in Israel.
2. The Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] participating in the evaluation process were:
 - Ariel University
 - Bar-Ilan University
 - Ben-Gurion University
 - The Hebrew University
 - The Open University
 - Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
 - Tel Aviv University
 - Ruppin Academic Center
 - Peres Academic Center
 - Natanya Academic Center
 - Tel Hai Academic Center
 - Interdisciplinary Center of Herzelia
 - Haifa University
 - Institution of Management
 - The Academic Institution of Tel Aviv Yafo
3. To undertake the evaluation, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of¹:
 - [Prof. Elena Grigorenko](#), Department of Psychology, University of Houston & Child Study Center, Yale Medical School, USA. (child development, chronic disease, epidemiology, learning disorders, public and global health) – *Committee chair*.
 - [Em. Prof. Miles Hewstone](#), University of Oxford, UK. (social psychology)
 - [Prof. Deborah Stipek](#), Graduate School of Education, Stanford University, USA. (developmental and educational psychology)
 - [Em. Prof. Moshe Zeidner](#), Department of Counselling and Human Development, Haifa University, Israel. (educational psychology and human development)
 - [Prof. Sigal Alon](#), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Israel. (social stratification and mobility)
 - [Prof. Eva Gilboa-Schechtman](#), Department of Psychology, Bar Ilan University, Israel. (clinical psychology)

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

Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik served as the Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

The evaluation process was conducted in accordance with CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (February 2018). Within this framework the evaluation Committee was required to:

- examine the self-evaluation reports submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Psychology and Behavioral Sciences
 - conduct on-site visits at 8 out of 15 institutions participating in the evaluation process, based on predefined criteria.
 - 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. The evaluation Committee examined the evidence provided by each participating institution — considering this alongside the distinctive mission set 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.
 2. This report highlights the School of Psychology at **The Interdisciplinary Center of Herzelia**. The Committee's visit to the College took place on **March 1st, 2020**. The schedule of the visit is attached as Appendix 2.

Section 2: Executive Summary

The Interdisciplinary Center of Herzelia (IDC) is a private institution that occupies a special niche in the landscape of higher education in Israel. Its academic accomplishments and physical plant are distinct and advanced. Its drive for continuous improvement is impressive. The Baruch Ivcher School of Psychology is designated as one of the cornerstones in the institution's strategic planning and development. However, although captivated by the level of activity and accomplishment at the institution, the Committee perceived specific points as relative weaknesses of IDC in general and its School of Psychology specifically that could be improved. These include the relatively moderate academic standards for admission; the somewhat haphazard system of investing in a particular area of the psychological sciences without a clear plan for its continuous support; and the lack

of independence of the School of Psychology and over-dominance of the high-level administration over the School's affairs. Overall, the Committee deemed the performance of the School of Psychology as clearly meeting the expected threshold level of performance.

Section 3: Observations

3.1 Mission and goals

The major goals of IDC Herzelia are to offer excellence in education and research and contribute to the training of future leaders in Israel and abroad. Although the students the Committee met are very satisfied with the education they receive and with their involvement with faculty research, the Committee identified several problems that prevent the fulfilment of these goals. Several stakeholders repeatedly emphasized "training for leadership" as a goal, but the institution and the School does not collect data on students' subsequent placements. Moreover, it was not clear how the School deals with the challenge of training future world leaders, given the relatively moderate academic standard of the student body at admission. Another key goal of IDC is to offer students an interdisciplinary perspective. Yet, the students in the psychology track are offered only one interdisciplinary course in their 3rd year (e.g., psychology and economics, psychology and business) and if they want to take this, they must find the opportunity to do so in the context of already demanding course requirements. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC meets the acceptable threshold level of performance with room for improvement.

3.2 Management and Administration

The School of Psychology has four undergraduate programs (psychology-Hebrew, psychology-international [in English] and Double BA (4- year) programs in Psychology and either Law or Business). It also has two MA programs (Clinical Psychology; Social Psychology), which are both applied in nature. There is also one newly approved graduate Educational Psychology program. Approval is expected to be granted to add a Ph.D. program. Decisions regarding new programs are proposed by senior faculty of the School, reviewed by the Dean and the senior staff committee, and, if agreed on, are proposed to the Provost. If approved by the Provost, the idea is discussed in the Dean's forum, and, once approved, is presented at faculty meetings where the implementation of the program is discussed. Overall, authority is highly centralized at the administrative level, with little discretion at the School level to make decisions, especially those involving resource allocation. The School has almost no discretionary funds; both the School's administration and the faculty need more flexibility to be agile in making changes that will effectively prepare students for a changing world. The School of Psychology is currently trying to recruit a clinical psychologist, and they have been approval to recruit an

additional faculty member. Their proposal for an MA in educational psychology has been approved, but they have not yet hired any faculty for this program. The faculty are roughly evenly divided by gender, although females are somewhat underrepresented at the associate professor level (42% to 58%). About 5% of the students are Arab and 2% are Ethiopian. There are also 5-7 ultra-orthodox students in the clinical psychology MA program. In 2017-18 the School initiated a new mentorship program to address the academic challenges facing Arab students. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC meets the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.3 QA & Self-Evaluation Process

The present self-evaluation document was compiled by the Associate Dean at the School of Psychology. The administrative staff contributed to the process by supplying the requested relevant information. The final draft of the report was approved by the Provost. From the report it was not clear whether, and to what degree, core faculty was involved in the approval of the document. It was clear from the interviews that the adjunct faculty were not involved in the self-evaluation process. With respect to the teaching component, IDC appears to function within a structured and streamlined system. Teacher evaluations (for lectures, seminars, practice sessions, and so forth) are sent to students at the mid-semester point as well as at the end of each semester. Teachers receive a summary of students' feedback in a timely manner. It was not clear to the Committee what kind of assistance is provided to faculty who consistently receive low evaluation scores. In addition to these quantitative reviews, heads of academic units (and the Dean) have regular meetings with students in their track for feedback and discussion. The feedback is communicated to the lecturers. In addition, to enhance the coordination between core and adjunct faculty, a systematic procedure for the evaluation of the appropriateness and comprehensiveness of the BA and MA curricula was recently initiated. With respect to mentorship, no formal program for young faculty is implemented. The adjunct lecturers seem less integrated into the School than the core faculty, as they have almost no meetings with the core faculty and communicate mostly with the Dean. The IDC did not participate in the 2008 round of the CHE evaluation because the School opened in 2007, so the self-evaluation process was new. The Committee recommends that the School entertain a less centralized decision making process, discussing self-evaluation materials with core and adjunct faculty as well as with students and alumni. We also recommend that the School create an objective measure of students' academic achievement by tracking, for example, the percentage of students taking the MITAM as well as the average scores of IDC MITAM takers. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC meets the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.4 Study program

Overall, both BA and MA programs are well-structured, and the curricula appropriately designed. Students are exposed to a demanding curriculum, much of it in English, and is generally up-to-date. The course on Philosophy of Science was a welcome novelty for BA students at this institution. A major goal at IDC is excellence in research, with a special emphasis on research training given to BA students, and involving them, hands-on, in research projects. Their first 'taste' of research comes through research participation in studies run by faculty and graduate students (currently, 12.5 hrs); students are encouraged to participate in research by working in faculty labs either as part of their course requirements or as employees. During their 2nd year, BA students are required to participate in an 'experimental lab' in which they 'follow' an instructor through the key stages of planning, carrying out and analysing a study. This experience is built on in the 3rd year when students, working in pairs, take a full-year research seminar to 'lead' their own research (from conception, to planning, data collection and analysis, and write-up) under the supervision of a senior faculty member. For the best students, IDC also offers, from the second year, a highly competitive 2-year Honors program as well as the possibility to enter the Brain and Mind program (typically working in one of the five main physiological/cognitive labs). These programs replace the research seminar taken by most students and provide these outstanding students with an opportunity: (a) to engage more deeply in the subject with other advanced students as well as faculty, and (b) to experience an individually-tailored mentoring program in research attached to a specific lab, supervised by a senior faculty member and aimed at preparing a manuscript for publication by the end of the year. Outstanding students can enter both Honors and Brain and Mind programs. The Social Psychology MA program has three main fields (decision-making, interpersonal relations, and intergroup relations) aimed at 'making a contribution to Israeli society.' It was set up, and given CHE approval, as a standard theory- and research-based course but later changed its emphasis to application and training graduates to work in organizations. Some graduates have proceeded to Ph.Ds. in competitive programs elsewhere. It was originally intended to run in both Hebrew and English, but the latter track did not attract sufficient numbers of suitable applicants. The Clinical Psychology MA program trains clinical psychologists in adult and child clinical psychology. For both MA programs, students can choose to graduate with or without a research thesis (theses can be submitted in English if desired). The School also runs an all-female MA program in Clinical Psychology for 5-6 ultra-orthodox women, supported by the same academic and administrative staff as the regular program. This program is aimed at addressing the particular need for well-trained clinical psychologists for the ultra-Orthodox community. Both BA and MA programs and their exams meet the criterion of rigor. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC clearly meets the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.5 Teaching and Learning

Overall, the School appears to provide an effective teaching environment. Teaching is evaluated, using standard surveys and multiple choice questions, during one of the last classes of each course. Students assess both the course and the lecturer. The self-assessment report states that only students present in the class at the time of the survey complete the online form activated by the team responsible for this formal assessment (using a code specially assigned for this purpose). The Committee could not find information in the self-assessment document about the participation rate for this survey, and most higher education educators are challenged to achieve a completion rate of around 50%. Hence, we wondered why students who missed this one class were perforce excluded from the evaluation. If skewed, due to a low response rate, these evaluations will not provide a reliable basis for decisions such as how well material is being taught and which instructors require remedial courses. Currently, instructors in need are provided with additional support to address course ratings that fall below the threshold. Most syllabi are sufficiently detailed and helpful. CHE recommends that all courses include clear Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) – e.g., what a student should be able to *do*, and not merely *know*, after the course. Courses at IDC tend to list ‘Course Goals’, rather than ILOs, which are not necessarily the same thing (see, e.g., Introduction to Statistics; or Philosophy of Science, which lists as a ‘prerequisite’: “No knowledge of philosophy is required;” this is clearly *not* a goal). Developmental Psychology has no course outline at all. For an exemplary statement of ILOs, see English for Psychology – Advanced 2. It is not clear whether ILOs are directly assessed in course evaluations – if not, they need to be added. IDC employs various tools to help improve teaching throughout the campus. These tools are coordinated by the Teaching Improvement Committee and the Teaching Innovation Unit (TIU), which monitor the quality of teaching, provide a Moodle workshop intended to familiarize instructors with the information technology tools available for managing courses at IDC, provide and teaching improvement workshops. The TIU was established to address the complex challenges that the academic world has faced in recent years: the rapid development of technology as well as the explosion of available knowledge. The TIU’s main goal is to enhance an innovative, high-quality teaching and learning environment at IDC. As part of the desire to strengthen the important ‘face to face’ encounters between the instructors and students, the TIU has developed a new ‘multi-directional teaching model.’ This model encourages students to share their thoughts, questions, feelings, and knowledge with both their peers and the lecturers. At the time of the Committee’s visit there were no online courses in the programs reviewed, but IDC has plans to introduce some in the near future. The benefits of the unique education offered by IDC in the Israeli context were evident to the Committee in our meetings with past and present BA students,

who acquitted themselves extremely well when asked a series of challenging questions about research and scholarship in psychology. The Committee did, however, hear from these students that they found components of the curriculum concerning how to write a scientific article very useful but would have welcomed this earlier in the program (i.e., in Yr. 2). Alumni from the first classes at IDC also reported that the institution was very responsive to their feedback. Aspects such as the practicum that was previously reported as ill-prepared, had since been much improved. From the material provided and the Committee's site visit, it was clear that the faculty currently provide an effective learning environment. The exams (for both BA and MA programs) appear to be comprehensive and rigorous. The MA program is balanced between practice-based (mostly psychodynamic and psychoanalytic) and empirically-based (both dynamic and non-dynamic) approaches. The course materials appear to be both comprehensive and up-to-date. Moreover, the program encourages students to initiate their research work as soon as they are accepted to the program. The encouragement to begin research early has assisted students with completing their MA and research work within 2.5 years of beginning of the program. An additional strong point of the program is having an internal research-oriented treatment clinic. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC clearly meets the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.6 Faculty

The School of Psychology has 36 full time faculty (8 full professors, 12 associate professors, 10 senior lecturers, and 6 lecturers) serving over 1000 BA students (419 in the Hebrew program, 194 in the English program, 183 in psychology and law, and 222 in psychology and business). In 2019-20 there are 60 MA students in social psychology, 57 in clinical psychology (adult) and 49 in clinical psychology (child). Between 2016 and 2018 there were 2 retirements and 4 new faculty members were recruited. They prefer to be very strong in a small number of areas of psychology rather than spreading themselves thinly across many areas. Every full-time faculty member has an annual review and meets with the Dean with the goal of, inter alia, helping faculty identify resources to help them develop professionally. There is no formal mentoring program, and it is recommended that the School initiates one. The faculty interviewed believed that they require additional clinical faculty, particularly someone who conducts research on the effectiveness of clinical treatments. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC clearly meets the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.7 Research

As noted, the School of Psychology has two graduate programs (social psychology and clinical psychology), with approval granted for a new MA in Educational Psychology. In keeping with the vision of the IDC, the School has placed great emphasis on both teaching and research as well as practice and the

training of future leaders. This is done by providing educational programs that combine academic study with practical, hands-on training and encouragement for innovative thinking. Faculty research has focused on the following areas of psychological science: social, affective and cognitive neuroscience; developmental psychology and neuroscience; judgment and decision making; interpersonal relationships; intergroup relations and conflict resolution; and clinical and educational psychology. Overall, the faculty evidence a high degree of research productivity. This is indexed by the quality and quantity of research papers in highly visible journals, receipt of competitive national and international grants (ISF, GIF, DFG, and ERC), and normative indices of research quality. Yet, it is unclear, whether this productivity is the result of being at IDC or a precondition to be recruited by IDC. Students are also encouraged to participate in research, and many students work in research labs either as part of their course requirements or as paid research assistants. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

3.8 Students

The stated threshold for entry is quite high (matriculation score of 100 or combined matriculation and psychometric score of 600+), yet most students are below these entry requirements. In 2019, for example, the mean matriculation score of freshmen was only 96. Of the 143 freshmen in 2019, about 75% students had a matriculation scored below 100. Only 48 students had a psychometric score (averaging 593 points) and, of them, 62% had a score below 600. The share of admitted students on probation is merely about 7%, which is puzzling given that so many others are below CHE-approved entry thresholds. All in all, the data for recent cohorts suggests that the student body at IDC is academically weak. The admission data provided in the report is also perplexing given that, in all years and all tracks, the number of admissions is higher than the number of applicants. For example, in 2017/2018 there were 201 applicants to the psychology track and 230 admits. This is likely a problem in counting applicants and admissions (unique to this institution), but without accurate information, neither the School nor the Committee can know the School admission rate. The MA program (Clinical/Social Psychology, without thesis) accepts 23% of applicants (entry requirements: BA Psychology, average score 90; and Mitam 100). In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC fails to meet the acceptable threshold level of performance.

3.9 Infrastructure

The School of Psychology includes a large complex of over twenty experimental laboratories devoted to the study of human mind, brain, behavior, and social processes. The Library building houses the newly founded Center for Developmental Social Neuroscience and the Hormonal and Molecular Biology Lab; the Committee was duly impressed with our visit to this lab with its state-of-the-art equipment for hormonal analyses but concerned about how the costs

of maintaining and equipment amortization will be addressed. Furthermore, the campus equips researchers and graduate students with workstations that allow the for use of a wide array of tools available for academic research, including access to databases, support for software packages, and solutions for any computing issue. Every classroom is equipped with a fast computer that is connected to the Internet and all campus databases. In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that IDC clearly meets the expected threshold level of performance.

Section 4: Recommendations

Essential recommendations:

- IDC must raise admission and academic standards of the BA program.
- By the next academic year, develop a mandatory course on scientific writing in English for MA students.
- By the next academic year, add learning outcomes for each course, and ensure that a uniform template for syllabi is used.

Important recommendations

- The committee recommends that the School entertain a less centralized decision making process that engages core and adjunct faculty as well as students and alumni.
- The committee recommends that the School create an objective measure of evaluation of students' academic achievement by tracking, for example, the percentage of students taking the MITAM as well as the average scores of IDC MITAM takers.
- The College Administration needs to give more decision-making authority to the School of Psychology related to the allocation of resources for teaching.
- The Department should continue diversifying teaching methods, with the enhancement of a distance learning component in its teaching portfolio.

Desirable recommendations

- If the IDC aspires to train leaders and publicizes this as a key quality of the College, it should follow students' career trajectories for at least a few (3-5) years after they graduate to determine whether they are achieving their goal.
- Use an online survey for students to evaluate courses to ensure that all students enrolled in the class have an opportunity to respond.
- The College needs to develop a strategy for meeting the ongoing costs of labs after start-up costs expire.

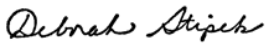
Signed by:



Prof. Elena Grigorenko - Chair



Prof. Miles Hewstone



Prof. Deborah Stipek



Prof. Sigal Alon



Prof. Eva Shehtman Gilboa



Prof. Moshe Zeidner

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



February 2020

Prof. Elena Grigorenko
Department of Psychology
University of Houston & Child Study Center
Yale Medical School
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 chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of **Psychology and Behavioral Sciences** departments. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Em. Prof. Miles Hewstone, Prof. Deborah Stipek, Em. Prof. Moshe Zeidner, Prof. Sigal Alon and Prof. Eva Shtetman Gilboa

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

Appendix 2: Schedule of Visit



| Psychology and Behavioral Sciences - Schedule of site visit The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliva Sunday, March 1st , 2020, Arazi-Ofer Building Meeting Room C228 | | |
|--|---|---|
| Time | Subject | Participants |
| 09:00-09:30 | Opening session with the heads of the institution | Prof. Uriel Reichman, President Prof. Rafi Melnick, Provost Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, Chairman of the IDC Board |
| 09:30-10:15 | Meeting with the Head of School of Psychology | Prof. Daniel A. Levy, Dean, Baruch Ivcher School of Psychology |
| 10:15-11:15 | Meeting with senior academic staff * (including academic heads of programs) | Prof. Gilad Hirschberger, Associate Dean Prof. Mario Mikulincer, Founding Dean; Chair, Psychology Ph.D. Committee Prof. Anat Brunstein-Klomek, Head of the M.A. Program in Clinical Psychology Prof. Shachar Ayal, Head of the M.A. Program in Social Psychology |
| 11:15-11:30 | Break | |
| 11:30-12:00 | Meeting with Adjunct academic staff * | Dr. Limor Shtoots Dr. Sharon Riwkes Dr. Joshua Weiss Dr. Noa Albelda |
| 12:00-12:45 | Open slot | Laboratories tour |
| 12:45-13:30 | Lunch (in the same room) | Closed-door meeting of the committee |
| 13:30-14:15 | Meeting with BA students** (up to 10 students) | TBD |
| 14:15-15:00 | Meeting with MA students** (up to 10 students) | TBD |
| 15:00-15:45 | Meeting with Alumni** (up to 8 Alumni) | Valery Kostovetski, Nathalie Talmasky Nur |
| 15:45-16:00 | Closed-door meeting of the committee | |
| 16:00-16:30 | Closing meeting with heads of institution and the Head of the school of Behavioral Sciences | Prof. Uriel Reichman, President Prof. Rafi Melnick, Provost Prof. Daniel A. Levy, Dean |

* The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.

*** The visit will be conducted in English with the exception of students who may speak in Hebrew and anyone else who feels unable to converse in English.