



# EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AT BEN GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

## 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 programs 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 of the Negev
  - Tel Aviv University
  - Zefat Academic College
  - University of Haifa
- 1.3 To undertake the evaluation, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of<sup>1</sup>:
  - 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**- (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 Biyalistok Cohen served as the Coordinator 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

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<sup>1</sup> The committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 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 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.
- 1.6** This report deals with the **Department of Physical Therapy, Leon and Matilda Recanati School for Community Health Professions at Ben Gurion University of the Negev**. The Committee's visit to **Ben Gurion University of The Negev (via Zoom)** took place on **14-15/3/2021**. The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2**.

## **Section 2: Executive Summary**

As external committee members, we take our roles and responsibilities seriously. Within this document, we make a number of suggestions that are designed to improve the faculty and student experience during the educational process. Consequently, all suggestions are made in good faith and are endorsed by the committee as a whole. We truly appreciate the opportunity to provide this feedback and consider it an honor.

The committee recognizes the incredible leaps the department has made since the 2007 report. The theme “doing more with less” is self-evident in our review; BGU’s department of physical therapy has accomplished a tremendous amount with few resources. Their research is extraordinary, despite having only 3.5 dedicated research faculty. In addition, their commitment to teaching is clear within the document, during our encounters with faculty, and during the discussions with students. Simply stated, the department should be commended on their work, their drive, and their relentless pursuit of a better product. This effort is not lost on us.

We have divided our recommendations as 1) essential, 2) important and 3) desired. We wholeheartedly support the recommended essential changes within the executive summary that are outlined each below. The body of the document contains further explanation on why we’ve made the recommendations we have.

*Essential Recommendations:* Our essential recommendations involve two primary focuses. First and foremost, we feel the department needs to further consider the implications of moving to a 5-year entry level, non-thesis master’s degree. We are concerned that the suggested plan is mostly associated with a decompression of the curriculum (of which we see a number of areas for further consolidation or revision) and is not associated with a scope of practice expansion or the needs of the profession.

The second essential recommendation is the hiring of an additional minimum of 0.5 FTE administrative support staff (up to a 1.0 FTE more closely match other programs) within 1 year as well as 2 new faculty within the next three years. In addition to this recommendation, an effort must be made to accommodate the space needs of the junior, adjunct and new faculty members for their research.

*Important Recommendations:* There are two focuses associated with our important recommendations: 1) educational exposure, and 2) a culture of assessment and reporting. Our first focus reflects the student experience during their educational exposure. We recommend a redesign of the interprofessional educational experiences from the current model, we recommend bringing the fourth-year students back to the university for a mini-semester at the end of their clinical affiliations. Lastly, we recommend that BGU carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies in their instructional methods as well as evaluating the faculty. This should include online learning, flipped classrooms, a repository of video support tools for class and more problem-based methods of assessment. This includes peer evaluations to balance student evaluations of faculty. Annual evaluations of the faculty should improve the likelihood of promotion of teaching quality as well. Further, this fits within the Vice-Rector's plan of regular self-assessment and will build a culture of assessment.

*Desired Recommendations:* Only one desired recommendation is provided. We feel that the department should work with the university to identify statistical help for current PhD students.

## **Section 3: Observations**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The committee would like to thank the department of physical therapy, the university administration, and the quality assessment committee at Ben-Gurion University (BGU), for the preparation and comprehensiveness of the self-evaluation. We found the information useful and clear. It is evident that the department of physical therapy at BGU (like many of the other Israeli programs) is markedly more sophisticated and accomplished since the 2007 self-evaluation report.

It is clear that the rationale, mission, and goals of the university are shared and endorsed by all of the faculty that we encountered. Based on the self-evaluation and the university website, the faculty of the university periodically re-examine the mission, vision and objectives, with changes made by the academic council and BGU authorities. The department has local initiatives that are related to the larger

initiatives of the university. They appear to be “living” their mission and have an earnest interest in improving the outcomes of their students’ experiences and the research that they create.

Within the framework of the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Recanati School endeavors to be a leading research unit nationwide and worldwide. Its goal is to provide quality education to students in an academic environment and on integrated primary care and preventive care, with special emphasis on community-oriented care. The mission of the Recanati School has four described levels of objectives:

**Research** – In general, we suggest an addition of research faculty hires and providing financial support to trainees, for start-up packages, and for research facilities.

**Teaching** - Using progressive, quality teaching methods, using simulation training, Team-Based-Learning to improve student participation, using progressive examination procedures, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), oriented towards emergency care, primary care, and rehabilitation. Improving the examination administrative infrastructure and providing meaningful inter-professional education (IPE students teaching).

**Service** - Collaborating in the development of effective preventive and curative health services (e.g., national fall prevention program) with special emphasis on the provision of services to all, with sensitivity to the needs of individuals and communities.

**Developing new educational programs** - Interweave new programs with the existing ones in order to increase the relative advantage of the School such as 1) Occupational therapy; 2) Prosthetics (with collaboration with the ministry of health); 3) Master program in Rehabilitation (MScRehab); 4) Expertise programs in Nursing; 5) MPTe, entry-level Physical Therapy, based on the higher education council (CHE) suggestion in the 2007 report.

Although many of these objectives are specific to the developing programs and the two departments outside of physical therapy, the committee feels that these four levels are an appropriate and worthy framework for the department to work within. Within our document, we will outline how we feel the department has accomplished the objectives of these four levels, but will limit our report to the objectives that are specific to the physical therapy department. We feel that in some areas, the physical therapy department of BGU exceeds their own objectives, whereas in others, we will make suggestions to improve their own defined goals.

### 3.2 Management and Administration

The Department of Physical Therapy falls under the parent unit of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and is part of the Leon and Matilda Recanati School for Community Health Professions at Ben-Gurion University. The Head of the Department of Physical Therapy reports to the Head of the School for Community Health Professions. The

Head of the Department is elected by the faculty (senior lecturer or higher rank) for a 2-year term and can be re-elected for a 2nd 2-year term. The Head of the Department also meets with the Dean of the Faculty, which is currently Dr. Angel Porgador.

The Department of Physical Therapy offers the Bachelor's in Physical Therapy (BPT) program and 2 Master's programs; MPT (non-thesis) and an MScPT (thesis). There are separate appointed heads for the BPT program and Master's programs. The Department also sponsors PhD students that matriculate in the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate studies. The Department of Physical Therapy has a large body of students; in the 2019/2020 years there are 164 in the BPT, 37 students in the 2 Masters programs, and 12 students in the PhD program. The Department has 8 faculty (7 full-time equivalent), and 1 secretarial support staff. The Departmental structure is appropriate for the current programs. Given the number of faculty and students, the Department should have more secretarial support staff.

**Recommendation (Essential):** Hire an additional minimum of 0.5 FTE administrative support staff (up to 1.0 FTE to more closely match other PT programs) within 1 year.

In the self-study report and in our meetings during the evaluation visits, the Rector, Vice-Rector, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and Head of the School all expressed strong support for the Physical Therapy programs. The administration groups indicated that the physical therapy program was the most research productive department within the School. The faculty demonstrated a clear understanding of the organizational structure of the School and Faculty, as well as function of committees. The faculty described a community feel in the department that facilitates an ease of communication to discuss students, programs, faculty, and research.

**Recommendations:** None

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University exceeds the expected threshold level of performance.***

### 3.3 QA & Self-Evaluation Process

The self-study was well organized and clearly presented. There was consistent evidence of self-reflection in the self-study and during our discussion with the faculty and university leadership. All senior faculty reported providing considerable input to the self-evaluation process and were very supportive of the document submitted.

It was also clear from our discussions with the Rector and Vice-Rector that although there is currently no formal program in place for ongoing quality assurance and self-evaluation other than the CHE's QA program, the University is beginning to place

great emphasis on ongoing quality assurance within all units. The Vice-Rector outlined the plan to implement a new initiative that will require each department to submit structured reports approximately every three years that will assess both the teaching and research operations within each department. We applaud this effort.

**Recommendations (Important):** The committee would like to see implementation of the Vice-Rector's plan to require each department to submit structured reports as soon as possible. We would also like to see an effective follow-up process be put in place to assure remediation of identified deficits.

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University exceeds the expected threshold level of performance.***

### 3.4 Study program, teaching and learning

It is clear from the report as well as the discussions with the faculty that much thought is put into the overall design of the programs, the updating of course content, and the process of student evaluation. Both the Heads of the Department and of the BA program have an open-door policy, and suggestions made by positioned faculty as well as adjunct faculty are reflected upon and incorporated as needed. This is reflected in the students' evaluation of their learning experiences and their commitment to being life-long learners.

#### BPT program

BPT alumni noted a high degree of satisfaction with the BPT program and described BGU as a "second home." The alumni believe that a major strength of the program is the unique relationship between students and faculty. They describe the faculty as being "open-minded" and responsive.

The program consists of 196 credit hours. Despite this number, faculty and other interviewed stakeholders mentioned a number of areas that were under- or poorly represented within the program. Time in class was estimated at ~40 hours/week during year 1, ~40 hours/week during year 2, 30 to 35 hours/week during year 3, and ~35 hours/week during year 4. Although these hours are consistent with other Israeli programs, these onsite hours do not reflect the travel that many students endure, nor does it reflect the out of class time for students to study the materials. Although the department recently reduced their credit hours from 220 to 196, there still appears to be overlap of some materials, and concerns that some of the information taught was outdated and could be revised or removed (via discussion with clinical instructors and students).

It was also noted that although considerable progress has been made in making the program evidence based, there are still courses that do not reach this level. There were also several suggestions to continue to increase the modern material included in the curriculum (e.g., telemedicine, technology, Pilates, palliative care, nutrition). Thus, although it is clear that the efforts to modernize the program over the past 5 years have been substantial and successful, additional work is needed. as indicated by faculty, leadership, clinical instructors, and students.

**Recommendation (Essential):** If the program either remains a four-year BPT or moves to five-year Master's program, a formal process of program curriculum review must be undertaken to continue to consolidate and modernize the current curriculum. Outside reviewers, including alumni, clinical instructors, and outside experts must be included in the process. This formal review of the program curriculum should occur on a regular basis more often than the current 10-12 year review cycle of the CHE.

The most compelling element of the self-evaluation report is the desire of the department to transition to an entry level **non-thesis** MPT. It is clear from the discussion with the department leadership and faculty that they support this move. Senior University administration also supports this suggestion as they frequently quoted the 2007 Binder-Macleod report as a supporting document. However, it is also clear that it is still early in the process of transitioning and there is inconsistent knowledge among stakeholders and there are outcomes (e.g., student costs, admissions) that haven't been considered. After continued discussion with BPT and MS PT students (and clinical instructors and alumni as well), it is clear that many do not fully understand the pros and cons of transferring to a five-year MPT. It was clear that the MS PT students had concerns that a transition to an entry level MPT program would harm the existing recruitment of the MS PT program. When we discussed the fact that the MPT program would not be a thesis generating degree, they were less concerned, but did feel it would lessen the overall numbers who apply to the program. The committee recommends the Department and Administration take additional time to think about ramifications of this move at BGU and throughout Israel. Essentially, the five-year degree differs only minimally with the current BPT four-year degree. How will this influence admissions? How will a transition influence the current MS PT program? Will costs be prohibitive to students? How would BGU message this information to their stakeholders, specifically, why is this transition necessary? The message the committee received was that the transition was based on the need to spread out learning (and reduce compression of content) to five years. Whereas we understand this, we feel the message also needs to reflect the expansion of the scope of practice of a physical therapist as well.

**Recommendation (Essential):** The committee feels that the department should carefully reevaluate this transition and query all potential stakeholders, consider finances, and make a decision that is not purely based on curriculum bloat. Further, with the expansion of the scope of practice, carefully evaluate additional material that reflects modern physical therapy for inclusion to the degree.

In the previous evaluation in 2007 the committee suggested that concentrating all clinical affiliations to the fourth year is educationally wrong. Among the important curricular changes made since then is that now the students have one or two clinical short (120 hour) internships between the second and third year. However, some students noted that having just 20-24 weeks of clinical affiliations during the fourth year is not a full academic year.

**Recommendation (Important):** Consider bringing the students back to the University for a short semester during the fourth year that can be used for didactic



learning of courses not critical for the affiliations. This may reduce some of the overload in the first 2 years of the program.

One of the goals of the Department and the Recanati School for Community Health Professions is to provide meaningful interprofessional education (IPE students teaching). However, based on our virtual visit, it is clear that this could be improved. The IPE experience involves early and later experiences. The early experiences are likely at a point when the students lack a professional identity. The committee feels that IPE are best when patient centered, case based, and designed in a way in which professions collaborate in a manner similar to a real-world experience. This excludes the concept of “side by side” learning of topics such as anatomy or psychology, as these aren’t profession centric.

**Recommendations (Important):** The department and the School should consider redesigning the IPE experience for the PT student’s later years with a patient centered focus in design

Although the mission of the university promotes the use of progressive, quality teaching methods, using simulation training, Team-Based-Learning, and flipped classroom strategies, to improve student participation, it was unclear how frequently this was being used in the program. Current students and former graduates reported a majority of traditional instructional methods used in the classroom (i.e., lecture). There was no discussion about transitioning post-COVID the use of some of the online strategies that worked during the 2020-2021 academic year. The committee thinks that to match the mission, BGU should carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies.

**Recommendation (Important):** BGU should carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies in their instructional methods. This should include online learning, flipped classrooms, a repository of video support tools for class and more problem-based methods of assessment.

### MPT programs

The students were, in general, very pleased with their learning experience both through their research project and their course work. In fact, the students felt that the inclusion of relevant clinical courses in addition to their thesis work was a major advantage of the program in BGU compared to other PT master programs offered in Israel. The alumni of the Master’s programs noted the close professional relationships developed between students and faculty and appreciated the lack of competition and helping attitude of the faculty. They also reported a good selection of courses for study and were pleased at the contributions of the program.

**Recommendation: None**

Studying during the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the advantages of incorporating into the program courses offered through distance learning. The students stressed

that this not only shortened the very long study days on-site (8-10 hours), but also encouraged more integrative learning experiences (e.g., small group discussions via Zoom, creative assignments vs. standard multiple-choice tests). The students also commented that they would like more opportunities to participate in courses in other departments which are relevant to their research and clinical work.

**Recommendation (Important):** Review and diversify learning experiences for the master students.

### PhD program

Although the Physical Therapy Department does not offer a PhD program, we did have the opportunity to meet with several current and former PhD students who were mentored by current PT faculty members. All current and former students were very supportive of their training and would not hesitate to recommend the PhD program to a colleague. All felt well trained by outstanding mentors in laboratories that had state-of-the-art equipment. One suggestion was that the Department would benefit from having a statistician familiar with research designs relevant to the types of work being conducted in the PT Department (e.g., patient, small-sample studies).

**Recommendation (Desired):** The Department should work with the appropriate University officials to attempt to identify a biostatistician that can be assigned to the Department and provide consultative services to the PhD students.

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University meets the expected threshold level of performance.***

### 3.5 Faculty

The Department of Physical Therapy faculty are a cohesive group, describing themselves as a 'family'. All faculty stated they are easily able to contact each other and the administration with any issues and concerns. The self-evaluation and meetings with faculty demonstrated a culture of collegiality and collaboration among the academic, clinical, and adjunct faculty. Clearly, the faculty are passionate and dedicated to the program and the students. Multiple student and clinical instructor comments indicate that the faculty are very flexible and want to make sure they are always trying to improve the program. The adjunct and clinical instructors reported excellent lines of communication with the Department, feeling part of the program, and supported by the Department. They described a culture of free and regular exchange with the full-time academic faculty on informal and formal assessments of the curriculum. The self-evaluation report describes, and the adjunct faculty concurred the integration of the adjunct faculty in decision-making regarding the classes they teach. There are regular faculty meetings, however the adjunct and clinical instructors are not regularly invited to these meetings.

**Recommendation (Important):** Schedule Department meetings 2 x per year for the academic faculty, clinical instructors, and adjunct faculty to attend. This will facilitate discussion and interaction between all faculty members teaching the BPT and Master's students.

There are 8 senior faculty in the Department of Physical Therapy; 2 faculty are 50% effort, resulting in 7 FTE equivalent faculty. The breakdown of the faculty responsibility is 4 research faculty (3.5 FTE equivalent), and 4 parallel teaching faculty (3.5 FTE equivalent). The research faculty is low, limiting their ability to deepen and expand their research agenda for the Department. The majority of academic faculty are physical therapists (7), providing strong support for educating the BPT and MPT students in the art and science of physical therapy practice. The number of research faculty is relatively low compared to other University based physical therapy departments in Israel.

**Recommendation (Essential):** Hire 2 new faculty (in addition to the planned replacement for retiring faculty) within the next 3 years to support the teaching and research missions of the Department.

Teaching effectiveness is evaluated largely by student evaluations. Student evaluations are provided for all faculty; full-time, part-time, and adjunct. If student evaluations indicate that there are deficiencies, then recommendations to remedy these deficits are made by the Head of the Department or the teaching committee. Peer evaluations of teaching are not performed.

**Recommendation (Important):** Peer evaluations may be helpful for faculty. The department should consider peer evaluations, to substantiate student evaluation findings and to provide additional assessment of teaching.

Yearly comprehensive performance evaluations of teaching, service, and scholarship of the 8 academic faculty are largely informal. The Head of the School and Dean report regular yearly meetings with faculty who are on the tenure track during the probationary period, but after tenure this is limited. All faculty would benefit from standard yearly evaluations for all aspects of the faculty profile of teaching, research and service as appropriate for each faculty's profile.

**Recommendation (Important):** Develop and implement yearly assessments of faculty performance for teaching, research, and service in the next year. This currently occurs on an informal basis. A scheduled yearly assessment, and review by the Head of the Department would provide faculty with regular evaluation and feedback on performance to enable growth and development. This yearly evaluation would also measure whether the faculty are aligned with programmatic mission and goals, and whether they are on track for promotion and tenure.

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University meets the expected threshold level of performance.***

### 3.6 Research

The improvement in the research culture, productivity, infrastructure, and passion, are potentially the most notable changes from the 2007 report. With only 3.5 dedicated research faculty, the department averages 25 publications per year, supervises 12 PhD students and ~15 master's level students. They have been

successful in securing external funding to support their work. They involve BPT students in research and have recorded over 15 publications with one or more students as co-authorship. Their reputation as productive researchers are recognized by the MScPT and BPT students and alumni. Although the committee spent the least amount of effort engaging the department in this area, this should be recognized as their most notable achievement.

Nevertheless, several concerns surfaced during our meetings. Although the Department has made outstanding progress in growing the research program and capacity, 3.5 research faculty is still considerably below the number of research track faculty at other university-based PT programs in Israel with comparable numbers of students. During our visits we have noted that the other university-based programs have approximately 8-10 research track faculty members in their physical therapy departments. In addition, at present, there are 4 research laboratories, with no additional space available for expansion. Thus, the hiring of any new research track faculty (either to replace retired teaching faculty or for the expansion of the faculty) will need to include allocation of additional research laboratory space commensurate with the needs of the new hires. Also, as noted by the heads of the Faculty, School, and Department, there is currently no University funded engineer assigned to the Department to support the research programs. Finally, although this may be changing, it appears that the Faculty only provides writing assistance for grant proposals to new faculty members (< 3-years) within the Department and there is no assistance with statistical analysis provided to faculty members by the University.

**Recommendations (Essential):** All of the above noted concerns must be addressed. As noted previously, the current plan to replace retiring teaching faculty with research faculty must be implemented and the Rector should prioritize the hiring of 2 additional faculty members to enhance the teaching and research mission of the Department.

**Recommendation (Important):** Additional research space must be found to accommodate the research needs of any new faculty members hired. Also, within the next year a 1.0 FTE engineer position should be assigned to the Department. Finally, the planned increase in University support for technical writing and statistical analysis should be made available to all faculty members within the next year.

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University exceeds the expected threshold level of performance.***

### 3.7 Students

#### BPT program

It is clear within the document that the department of physical therapy at BGU is a destination site. The psychometric and matriculation scores are very high and the department receives multiple applications for each of the 41 designated positions. Throughout our interviews with faculty, graduates, clinical instructors and other students, it was clear that students from BGU are considered to be “mature” and adaptive for a clinical environment. As indicated within the self-evaluation report,

students appear to truly “care” for the patients they treat and endorse and contribute to a culture of quality care for patients.

The students describe their educational setting as a “family”. They called the setting a “bubble”, which represented an idyllic learning environment. They speak very highly of the collegial atmosphere that has been created by the faculty, and it is clear that they are appreciative of the efforts that the faculty have made to improve the program. They admire the work ethic and productivity of the research faculty and feel that they have made a very good choice in their decision to attend BGU. Every last one of the BPT and MS PT students indicated they would select BGU again. The committee was impressed and appreciative of the efforts of the faculty and administration.

**Recommendations: None.**

#### Master’s Programs

There was unsolicited praise for the research faculty in the Department of Physical Therapy. It is very evident that their accomplishments were the lure that brought the current students to BGU. Two of the students were recipients of the BPT excellence program, which allows students to initiate their master’s within the BPT curriculum. They identified their research faculty as productive, responsive, caring and producers of meaningful research.

**Recommendations: None**

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University exceeds the expected threshold level of performance.***

### **3.8 Infrastructure**

The faculty, students, and alumni with whom we met identified no concerns with the current teaching or research spaces to meet the current needs of the Department. The PhD students were very complimentary of the resources available to them to conduct their research. However, significant concerns were raised regarding the current level of administrative support within the Department (1.0 FTE) and the ability to meet the space needs to allow growth. Currently there is no research space to accommodate the anticipated hiring of a research track faculty member to replace a teaching faculty member who is retiring. Similarly, both office and research space will need to be identified if there is any growth of the faculty. Finally, it appears that there are junior faculty members who are interested in conducting research and would benefit from dedicated or shared research space.

**Recommendations (Important):** See Recommendations outlined above within the Research section above. In addition, an effort must be made to accommodate the space needs of the junior, adjunct, and new faculty members for their research.

***In this area of evaluation, the Committee determined that Ben Gurion University exceeds the expected threshold level of performance.***

## **Section 4: Recommendations**

### **Essential**

1. Hire an additional minimum of 0.5 FTE administrative support staff (up to 1.0 FTE to more closely match other PT programs) within 1 year.
2. If the program either remains a four-year BPT or moves to five-year Master's program, a formal process of program curriculum review must be undertaken to continue to consolidate and modernize the current curriculum. Outside reviewers, including alumni, clinical instructors, and outside experts must be included in the process. This formal review of the program curriculum should occur on a regular basis more often than the current 10- to 12-year review cycle of the CHE.
3. The committee feels that the department should carefully reevaluate this transition and query all potential stakeholders, consider finances, and make a decision that is not purely based on curriculum bloat. Further, with the expansion of the scope of practice, carefully evaluate additional material that reflects modern physical therapy for inclusion to the degree.
4. Hire 2 new faculty (in addition to the planned replacement for retiring faculty) within the next 3 years to support the teaching and research missions of the Department.
5. All of the above noted concerns must be addressed. As noted previously, the current plan to replace retiring teaching faculty with research faculty must be implemented and the Rector should prioritize the hiring of 2 additional faculty members to enhance the teaching and research mission of the Department.

### **Important**

1. The committee would like to see implementation of the Vice-Rector's plan to require each department to submit structured reports as soon as possible. We would also like to see an effective follow-up process be put in place to assure remediation of identified deficits.
2. Consider bringing the students back to the University for a short semester during the fourth year that can be used for didactic learning of courses not critical for the affiliations. This may reduce some of the overload in the first 2 years of the program.
3. The department and the School should consider redesigning the IPE experience for the PT student's later years with a patient centered focus in design.
4. BGU should carefully evaluate, assess, and set objectives toward utilizing progressive teaching and learning strategies in their instructional methods. This should include online learning, flipped classrooms, a repository of video support tools for class and more problem-based methods of assessment.
5. Review and diversify learning experiences for the master students.

6. Schedule Department meetings 2 x per year for the academic faculty, clinical instructors, and adjunct faculty to attend. This will facilitate discussion and interaction between all faculty members teaching the BPT and Master's students.
7. Peer evaluations may be helpful for faculty. The department should consider peer evaluations, to substantiate student evaluation findings and to provide additional assessment of teaching.
8. Develop and implement yearly assessments of faculty performance for teaching, research, and service in the next year. This currently occurs on an informal basis. A scheduled yearly assessment, and review by the Head of the Department would provide faculty with regular evaluation and feedback on performance to enable growth and development. This yearly evaluation would also measure whether the faculty are aligned with programmatic mission and goals, and whether they are on track for promotion and tenure.
9. Additional research space must be found to accommodate the research needs of any new faculty members hired. Also, within the next year a 1.0 FTE engineer position should be assigned to the Department. Finally, the planned increase in University support for technical writing and statistical analysis should be made available to all faculty members within the next year.
10. See Recommendations outlined above within the Research section above. In addition, an effort must be made to accommodate the space needs of the junior, adjunct and new faculty members for their research

### **Desired**

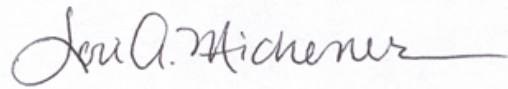
1. The Department should work with the appropriate University officials to attempt to identify a biostatistician that can be assigned to the Department and provide consultative services to the PhD students.

**Signed by:**



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Prof. Stuart Binder-MacLeod,  
Chair



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Prof. Lori A. Michener



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Prof. Chad Cook



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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

## Appendix 2 – visit schedule



<b>Physical Therapy Evaluation Committee - Schedule of online visit</b> <b>Ben Gurion University</b>		
<b>Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> 2021</b> <b>*The visit will be divided into 2 half days, starting at 17:00 (Israel time)</b> <b>*Meetings are conducted in a Q&amp;A format</b>		
Time	Subject	Participants
17:00-17:30	Opening session with the heads of the institution	Prof. Chaim Hames (Rector) Prof. Gal deBotton (vice Rector) Eve Lee Perelman (QA coordinator)
17:30-18:00	Meeting with the Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences*	Prof. Angel Porgador
<b>18:00-18:15</b>	<b>Break</b>	
18:15-18:45	Meeting with the Head of School for Community Health Professions	Dr. Igal Plakht
18:45-18:55	Presentation by the Head of the Department of physical therapy *	Prof. Leonid Kalichman Dr. Ilan Kurz (Head of the bachelor's degree program)
18:55-19:45	Meeting with the Head of the Department of physical therapy (Q&A)*	Prof. Leonid Kalichman Dr. Ilan Kurz (Head of the bachelor's degree program)

Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

17:00-18:00	Meeting with senior academic staff * (including academic heads of programs)	Dr. Ilan Kurz Prof. Itshak Melzer Dr. Shelly Levy Tzedek Dr. Simona Bar-Haim Elisha Vered Offra Evan Chaime Yehudit Melzer Galia Greenberg
18:00-18:15	break	
18:15-18:45	Meeting with Adjunct academic staff *	Avi Barash Erel Hershko Ori Elbar Dr. Tzvika Greenbaum Dr. Deborah Alperovitch-Naienson Dr. Lior Zeller Ayala Katzir Tomer Nobel  Adi Pauker
18:15-18:45	Meeting with instructors/Clinical instructors/Clinical center heads (in relevant <u>disciplines</u> )*	Renana Adani Karel Levi Tali Mori Liraz Tencer Mohamad Alkrenawi Amos Kluska Hagit Vatario Lior Sulam
18:45-19:00	break	
19:00-19:30	Meeting with BA students**	1 <sup>st</sup> year ***  2 <sup>nd</sup> year ***  3 <sup>rd</sup> year ***  4 <sup>th</sup> year ***

\* 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.

19:00-19:30	Meeting with Alumni**	***
19:30-20:00	Meeting with MA students**	****
19:30-20:00	Meeting with <u>Ph.D</u> students**	

\* 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.