



**Committee for the Evaluation of Public Health and Health System
Management**

**University of Haifa
School of Public Health
Evaluation Report**

September 2017

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Chapter 1: Background

Following the decision of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) to evaluate study programs in the field of Public Health and Health System Management. The Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- [Prof. Gerald Kominski](#)- Professor of Health Policy and Management and Director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, UCLA, USA; Committee Chair.
- [Prof. Joan R. Bloom](#)- Professor of the Graduate Division, Program in Health Policy and Management, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, USA.
- [Prof. Joseph N.S. Eisenberg](#)- John G. Searle endowed Chair and Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health, University of Michigan, USA.
- [Prof. Jack Zwanziger](#)- Professor of Health Policy and Administration, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA.
- [Prof. Joseph S. Pliskin](#)¹- Professor Emeritus, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, and Department of Health Systems Management, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

Ms. Daniella Sandler and Ms. Inbal Haskell-Gordon served as the Coordinators of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:²

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Public Health and Health Management, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

¹ Prof. Pliskin did not take part in the evaluation, visit, discussion and writing of the BGU report due to Conflict of Interest.

² The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of September 2015).

Chapter 2: Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meeting on May 7th, 2017, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Electrical and Communication System Engineering Study programs in Israel.

In May 2017, the Committee held its visits of evaluation to 7 institutions: Tel-Aviv University, Ariel University, Ben-Gurion University, University of Haifa, Academic College of Emek Yizraeel, Bar-Ilan University and Hebrew University. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

This report addresses the School of Public Health in the University of Haifa. The Committee's visit to the University took place on May 14th, 2017.

The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The Committee thanks the management of the University of Haifa and the School of Public Health for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit at the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the School of Public Health

University of Haifa

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.

1. Executive Summary

The University of Haifa (HU) is the major public research university in the North of Israel. It was first established in 1963 in affiliation with Hebrew University, became independent in 1970, and was accredited by CHE in 1972. The School of Public Health (SPH) was established in 2003 and resides within the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences. SPH offers 7 degrees at the Masters level (6 MPH, 1 MHA), as well as joint MD/MPH and MD/MHA degrees and a PhD program. The Health Administration track was separated into two-degree programs in 2005 that now reside in the Health Systems Management track; the MHA focusing more on health systems administration and the MPH focusing more on health policy, although these tracks share many of the same classes.

The Committee was impressed by the organizational structure of the School, which closely resembles the structure of U.S. Schools of Public Health that are organized around the five core educational areas of public health. We also found the Mission Statement and Goals to be very comprehensive and appropriate for a School of Public Health; clearly, the faculty have given a lot of thought to the School's mission. Overall, the Committee found the School to have strong programs, faculty, and students. Infrastructure challenges should be resolved when the construction of the new building is complete. Our recommendations for Haifa University focus on ways to further strengthen what is already a strong School of Public Health.

2. Mission and Goals

Observations and findings

The Committee found the Mission Statement and Goals of the School and Programs to be very clearly presented and highly relevant to each of the core areas of public health. **One element of the School's mission not reflected in the self-evaluation report that we learned of during the site visit is the focus on serving the needs of the population of North Israel. This commitment is evidenced by the recent collaborative agreement between the University and Rambam Hospital.** The Committee believes this is an important part of HU SPH's mission, and should be reflected in a revised mission statement. Otherwise, we believe the School's mission and goals are presented with absolute clarity, and identify the important role for the School and all its educational tracks.

Recommendations

Essential: Update the School's Mission Statement and Goals to reflect the School's commitment to serving the population of North Israel.

3. Organizational Structure

Observations and findings

The Committee found the organizational structure of the HU SPH to be very similar to Schools of Public Health in the United States, which must include education in 5 core areas of public health. The Committee learned during its site visit that this similarity was not a coincidence, but in fact was a deliberate choice by the founding faculty of the HU SPH because they all trained in U.S. Schools of Public Health and continue to be committed to the broad perspective of this model. The one notable exception is Biostatistics, which is currently not a program area in the School.

The HU SPH is located within the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, which also appears to be the correct organizational "home" for the School.

Recommendations

Essential: Develop Biostatistics as a new track of study for the MPH degree, with and without thesis.

4. Study Programs and Teaching, and Learning Outcomes

a. Study Programs

Observations and findings

The University of Haifa established the faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences in 1996-97. Undergraduate degrees are granted in six of its academic units, but not in the School of Public Health. The School of Public Health (SPH) grants degrees in 10 academic programs. The programs offered by Haifa University in its School of Public Health are all graduate degrees—MPH, MHA, Masters of Applied Nutrition (MAN), and PhD.

Recent changes include a joint MD/MA option, offered jointly with Technion, commenced in 2016. To attract international students, in 2015 a one year program in English was initiated. Finally, an MPH in community mental health began during the current academic year (2016-17). The majority of students enrolled in these programs are employed. Another 16% become employed soon after enrollment.

The SPH does not see itself having a strong alumni association. However, the SPH invites its alumni to attend School sponsored events and it keeps an updated Facebook page on which information and updates about alumni and events are posted. Approximately 29% of its alumni from the Masters degree programs go on for advanced degrees.

The faculty found that students wanted more practical content in their courses, and particularly liked courses that focused on practical problem solving.

Overall, the Committee found the HU SPH has a broad and appropriate spectrum of programs covering public health, with the exception of Biostatistics.

b. Teaching and Learning Outcomes

Observations and findings

The quality of teaching was one of the foci of the SPHs self-evaluation process. Surveys were conducted with both active students in the MA and PhD programs as well as with alumni. Based on the results of the alumni surveys and discussion amongst current students and faculty, the SPH should actively engage in recruiting highly qualified persons who have completed postdoctoral training abroad to improve not only the quality and quantity of research and but also can teach needed courses in the SPH. Currently, they are actively looking for faculty in HSA, biostatistics, health promotion, community health and epidemiology. They have provide strong support for new faculty by reducing teaching during the first two years by 2 teaching hours (one course reduction) and as well as strong support in teaching technology including classroom visits as well as teaching evaluation. However, to fulfill their assistance to new faculty in both teaching and research will require more resources!

HU has not only developed Learning Outcomes (LOs), consistent with the LOs established by the Bologna working group on qualifications, but has also presented them in the Self- Evaluation of their SPH. They are included in the SPHs goals, mission statement, and vary by track. They are included in course syllabi available

on their website and on the Moodle site and are specific for each course (being more specific than for each track) and are overseen by the MA and PhD Program Committees.

Recommendations:

Essential: Continue to be a role model for other Universities in Israel by providing Learning Outcomes for each course and Track, which are overseen by a faculty Committee to prevent overlap and gaps in curriculum content.

Desirable: As mentioned above, the School should develop Biostatistics as an MPH degree track, with and without thesis.

Advisable: Increase the practical content of courses across the degree programs wherever possible.

5. Human Resources / Faculty

Observations and findings

The School of Public Health has 13 slots for senior faculty members. Five of them have been recruited in the past 5 years. Of the 13, nine are full time faculty. One of them, Prof. Shai Linn, is on sabbatical before retirement, which leaves eight filled full time slots. Five faculty members have appointments of 50%, and two have 25% and 33%. There are 3 Full Professors, 2 Associate Professors, 3 Senior Lecturers with tenure, and 3 Lecturers. One of the slots is split among 10 MDs who hold small part time appointments. Two of the part time faculty head two of the programs. A majority of faculty are women. They currently do not have a full time faculty in health administration, nor in biostatistics. They have a green light to recruit 2 faculty members with priorities for biostatistics and health administration. They will have 15 slots after these two are recruited. They currently have 32 students per faculty

member. With 2 new faculty members, the ratio will go down to 28 and they want it to be 26 per faculty. They expressed a need to find a health economist. The problem is that they have one health economist who is only part time.

The faculty feel very involved in school affairs and receive support for writing and managing grants. Every junior faculty member receives mentoring from a senior one. The faculty complained that the teaching load is particularly heavy. It is 8 weekly hours that are spread over 4 courses. This implies 4 preparations in every semester.

They feel they do not have enough faculty that can supervise doctoral theses as this requires at least a Senior Lecturer rank. The faculty indicated they need at least 15 faculty members that can supervise theses.

The faculty complained that they cannot recruit a faculty member that did not do a postdoc abroad. We find this rather restrictive, resulting in the loss of potential excellent faculty.

Recommendations

Essential:

1. Complete approved recruitments for a biostatistician and a health administration specialist.
2. In some circumstances, allow recruitment of faculty candidates who have not completed postdocs abroad in order to broaden the pool of candidates and to recognize the special circumstances that limit ability to pursue post-doc opportunities outside Israel for some qualified candidates.

Desirable:

Have only full time faculty members head the various programs or tracks.

Advisable:

Try to change the status of the health economist from part time to full time.

6. Students

Observations and findings

The SPH is embedded in the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences which is the 2nd largest faculty in UH. There are 4 schools and 8 departments in this faculty. SPH grants the MPH, MHA and MAN (with and without thesis) and the PhD degrees. The Masters degrees are in Community Health, Health Promotion, Epidemiology, Health Systems Policy and Administration and Health System Management, Environmental and Occupational Health, and Applied Nutrition.

Students apply directly to the various programs so that the more popular ones can be more selective (with heads of each track setting annual limits but admitting beyond that if there are attractive students). There are a total of 426 students enrolled in SPH, with the Health Policy and Administration the largest track in total and Epidemiology and Applied Nutrition having the largest number of Masters students with thesis. The majority of Masters students do not complete a thesis. The proportion of students choosing the thesis option is particularly small for both Health System Policy and Administration and Health System Management. As noted, Epidemiology and to a lesser extent Applied Nutrition are the only programs with a higher proportion of thesis students.

There are 22 PhD students. The majority of PhD applicants accepted to the program matriculate suggesting a good match in the acceptance criteria.

Forty-seven percent of the SPH students are Arab and 70% were female. Ethiopian students are doing well in the Masters programs.

Students in the non-thesis track have two years to complete their degrees. Thesis track students must complete their course requirements within two years, and are entitled to take a third year to complete their research and write their thesis. In rare

cases, a fourth year may be approved, but in this case, these students forfeit their right to graduate with honors. Attrition generally takes place in the first year with an essentially stable attrition rate over time. There is some variability between tracks with nutrition, community and EOH having somewhat lower rates of completion.

Students are all working, mostly in the health system so they find the one-day program a big draw. They utilize Moodle to get access to course material, assignments, readings.

Seventy-five percent of the MA alumni interviewed (211 of the 281 employed graduates) were already working before beginning graduate studies; 45 alumni (16%) began working during their graduate studies. Of the 282 MA alumni that are working and provided details about their jobs, 273 (97%) hold positions in the field of public health. Approximately 29% of its alumni from the Masters degree programs go on for advanced degrees.

The committee found that some students and faculty reported that language was still a barrier to success in the program.

Some PhD students found their progress impeded by inadequate financial support.

Recommendations

Essential: The School should provide academic support for students for whom Hebrew is not the first language and for those who need additional instruction in academic English.

Desirable: To better reflect the SPH student body, the School should recruit Arab faculty.

Advisable: An increase funding for PhD students should be pursued.

7. Research

Observations and findings

Faculty research spans a wide range of public health areas including chronic and infectious disease epidemiology, health behavior, promotion and communication, healthcare policy, systems and management, environmental health and nutrition. Biostatistics, however, is the one core area that is not represented.

An important strength of the school is that there is a significant amount of research focusing on issues that impact the demographics represented in the Haifa region and the student body. Two centers that support these research activities are: The Evaluation of Health Promotion Interventions and The Health and Risk Communication provide important research infrastructure.

Research funding (approximately \$2M in past 5 years) provides important resources for ongoing projects. The committee was impressed with the fact that grants and funding has steadily increased over this time period and are distributed across nine faculty. In all, 17 faculty are contributing towards research through grants and/or publishing. These faculty are averaging two publications per faculty per year (four faculty had over 20, 4 had between 10 and 20, and 4 had no publications). Clinical research opportunities will increase once the research institute at the Rambam Medical Center is completed

Recommendations

Essential:

The school should prioritize hiring more faculty with biostatistician expertise

Desirable:

To increase the impact of publications and to be more competitive in obtaining grants, the committee recommends developing more structural support. Specifically, we

recommend more detailed writing support beyond editing, which may include a) writing workshops, b) personal mentoring, c) the development of a formal internal review process for helping faculty write strong proposals, and d) providing dedicated time for writing proposals.

8. Infrastructure

Observations and findings

We learned from the self-evaluation and site visit that a new building would house the School when it opens in 2019. Faculty identified space limitations as an issue currently, but expect this problem to be addressed by the new building. We did not identify any other infrastructure needs.

Recommendations:

Desirable: The School should reevaluate its space needs when the new building is completed and space allocations have been finalized.

9. Self-Evaluation Process and implementation of previous recommendations

Observations and findings

The Committee had no concerns about the self-evaluation process.

Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations

Essential Recommendations:

- Update the School's Mission Statement and Goals to reflect the School's commitment to serving the population of North Israel.
- Develop Biostatistics as a new track of study for the MPH degree, with and without thesis.
- Continue to be a role model for other Universities in Israel by providing Learning Outcomes for each course and Track, which are overseen by a faculty Committee to prevent overlap and gaps in curriculum content.
- Complete approved recruitments for a biostatistician and a health administration specialist.
- In some circumstances, allow recruitment of faculty candidates who have not completed postdocs abroad in order to broaden the pool of candidates and to recognize the special circumstances that limit ability to pursue post-doc opportunities outside Israel for some qualified candidates.
- The School should provide academic support for students for whom Hebrew is not the first language and for those who need additional instruction in academic English.
- The school should prioritize hiring more faculty with biostatistical expertise

Advisable Recommendations:

- Increase the practical content of courses across the degree programs wherever possible.
- Try to change the status of the health economist from part time to full time.
- An increase funding for PhD students should be pursued.

Desirable Recommendations:

- As mentioned above, the School should develop Biostatistics as an MPH degree track, with and without thesis.
- Have only full time faculty members head the various programs or tracks.
- To better reflect the SPH student body, the School should recruit Arab faculty.
- To increase the impact of publications and to be more competitive in obtaining grants, the committee recommends developing more structural support. Specifically, we recommend more detailed writing support beyond editing, which may include a) writing workshops, b) personal mentoring, c) the development of a formal internal review process for helping faculty write strong proposals, and d) providing dedicated time for writing proposals.
- The School should reevaluate its space needs when the new building is completed and space allocations have been finalized.

Signed by:



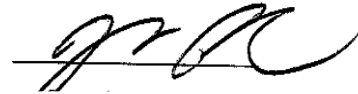
Prof. Gerald Kominski- CHAIR



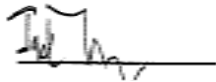
Prof. Joan R. Bloom



Prof. Joseph N.S Eisenberg



Prof. Joseph S. Pliskin



Prof. Jack Zwanziger

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment

May 2017

Prof. Gerald F. Kominski, Ph.D
Department of Health Policy and Management
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
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 the study programs in **Public Health and Health System Management**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Joan Bloom, Prof. Joseph N.S. Eisenberg, Prof. Jack Zwanziger, and Prof. Joseph Pliskin.

Ms. Daniella Sandler 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 Chair 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. Daniella Sandler, Committee Coordinator

Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule

School of Public Health – Schedule of Site Visit
Sunday, May 14, 2017

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
09:30-10:00	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment – both teams	Prof. Lily Orland-Barak , Dean of Graduate Studies, Administration representative Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum , Manager, Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector Dr. Michal Daloya , Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector	Eshkol Tower, Room 712
10:00-10:45	Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences	Prof. Faisal Azaiza, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences	Eshkol Tower, Room 712
10:45-11:30	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the School of Public Health	Prof. Orna Baron-Epel , Head of the School of Public Health Ms. Gila Filosof Asas , Administrator of the School of Public health	Eshkol Tower, Room 712
11:30-12:40	Meeting with senior and adjunct academic staff*	Senior MD, MPH Yonah Amster (Head of the Environmental and Occupational Health program) Dr. Shuli Brammli-Greenberg (Head of Health System Management) Prof. Ronit Endevelt (Nutrition, Health Promotion) Dr. Anat Gesser-Edelsburg (Head of the Health Promotion study track) Prof. Manfred Green, MD (Head of the I-MPH program; head of the PhD committee) Dr. Maya Negev (Environmental and Occupational Health) Prof. Shmuel Rishpon, MD (Head of the Community Health study program) Dr. Sharon Sznitman (Health Promotion) Dr. Galit Weinstein (Head of the Epidemiology study track) Dr. Shira Zelber-Sagi (head of the Nutrition and Behavior study program; head of the MA Committee) <u>Adjunct</u> Dr. Shiran Bord (Health Promotion) Ms. Lilach Melville (Health Promotion)	Eshkol Tower, Room 712

Time	Subject	Participants	Room/Location
12:40-13:40	Lunch (in the same room)		Eshkol Tower, Room 712
13:40-14:25	Meeting with PhD students / Junior academic staff*	Ms. Nur Abed-Al'ahadi Shahbary (1 st stage) Ms. Ella Berkovich (2 nd stage) Mr. Marcelo Lo (2 nd stage) Ms. Michal Rein (1 st stage)	Eshkol Tower, Room 712
14:25-15:10	Meeting with MA students		Eshkol Tower, Room 712
15:10-15:45	Meeting with Alumni**		Eshkol Tower, Room 712
15:45-16:45	Campus tour	Prof. Orna Baron-Epel (Head of the School of Public Health) and MD, MPH Yonah Amster (Head of the Environmental and Occupational Health program) will accompany. The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library Yardena Lewenberg (Library staff) <u>Short tour of the Eshkol Tower Observation Gallery</u> (30 th floor)	Main Building Eshkol Tower
16:45-17:15	Closed-door meeting of the Committee		Eshkol Tower, Room 712
17:15-17:45	Summation meeting	Prof. Lily Orland-Barak , Dean of Graduate Studies, Administration representative Prof. Faisal Azaiza, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences Prof. Orna Baron-Epel , Head of the School of Public Health Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum , Manager, Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector Dr. Michal Daloya , Unit for Academic Quality Evaluation, Office of the Rector	Eshkol Tower, Room 712

* 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.